Health and Safety Advice

We want our Cold Water Challenge to be fun, but most importantly we want everyone to be safe. Please read all the advice below.

Before you take the challenge:

- Minimum age to take part is 18 years.
- You will be undertaking the challenge entirely at your own risk, so do assess your swimming ability (maybe not so important for a 30 second cold shower but vital if you are thinking of heading into open water) and overall health before you take part. Wildlife Vets International shall not be liable for any injury, damage or loss to you or your property that might occur as a result of your participation.
- If you have any underlying health conditions (e.g., heart disease, asthma, a lung condition) that might be affected by exposure to cold water, or if you are pregnant, please seek appropriate medical advice before taking part.
- If you are undertaking the challenge at home alone (e.g., a cold shower or ice bath), please make sure someone knows you are doing it, and make sure you know where to go for help if necessary.
- If you decide to take the challenge in open water, read the advice in the links below and do not go alone. Choose your location carefully and follow local advice. Preferably go somewhere you know well, and make sure you can get in and out of the water safely. Always have a mobile phone with you and make sure that it is charged.
- Do not go into the water in the dark, and never get into cold water under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Getting In:

- You may want to wear a wetsuit to help with your buoyancy and to keep you warmer. Neoprene boots and gloves can also make a big difference to stopping your feet and hands from getting too cold.
- Wear something brightly coloured that will make you easy to spot from the shore. A swim cap or woolly hat is always a good idea as it will help you retain body heat even in the shower!
- If you are new to cold water immersion, take it slowly. Start small and build up gradually. Do not go beyond your comfort zone.
- Enter the water gradually. Do not jump in as this could cause cold water shock.
- Do not go into deep water. Only go in as far as you can stand.
- Seek immediate help if you feel very cold, nauseous, disorientated, dizzy or faint.

Getting Out:

- As soon as you get out of the water, get dry and put on warm layers.

- Go to a sheltered location and warm up gradually, perhaps with a hot chocolate or a cup of soup.

For further information:

https://rnli.org/safety/choose-your-activity/open-water-swimming#(link is external)
https://www.outdoorswimmingsociety.com/tips-on-winter-swimming/(link is external)
https://outdoorswimmer.com/open-water-safety
https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/get-involved/cold-water-challenge/cold-water-challenge-health-and-safety-tips