Infrared vs. Traditional Saunas: The Future Of Detox And Recovery Transcript

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Introduction to Sauna and Longevity

Welcome, everybody, to another edition of the Exponential Longevity Summit. I'm your host, Doctor Jeffrey Gladden. And as always, we're here discussing how we're leveraging AI to outlive disease and to live on for a lifetime.

And in that whole construct, one of the really important things that I figured out, early on in my career was the value of sonas in terms of promoting longevity and health.

And today we're going to be joined by a guest, Vic Riffle, who basically is, central figure, figure and partner at Sunlight and sunlight and is a world leading producer of infrared saunas.

And, so today we're going to be talking about saunas in general and infrared in particular. And Vic, welcome to the show. Thank you so much for having me.

I'm excited to be here. Yeah. Great. So tell us a little bit about how you got involved with saunas. I was sure a five year old. You didn't think, you were going to grow up to be playing around with sauna.

So how did you get down to that? Yeah. So I've always been an optimizer. I mean, growing up, I swam, swam collegiately, and I thought I knew a lot about, just a way to be peak as far as performance and mind and everything.

But, that definitely wasn't the case.

Vic Riffle's Path to Infrared Saunas

It wasn't until I learned about this role that I really even discovered that the true, profound effects that infrared sauna can have on your body, and it was just through some connections that I had in the holistic space that I got introduced to Connie Zak, one of the co-founders, and ended up here at sunlight and and, since then, I really have realized how far off I was.

I mean, I was on the right path in many, many ways, but it wasn't. I didn't have that whole purposeful person part down. It's mind, it's body, and it goes beyond just, okay, I want to perform well, and in my main, activities that I'm training for, you know, it's, it's it goes well beyond that.

And yeah, it's not just about exercising. Right. So, yeah, for sure. So, you know, one question that we get a lot from people is, you know, I'm thinking about a sauna.

I've heard they have benefits. You know, but there's different kinds of saunas out there. Do you want to walk us through that a little bit? I mean, you've got, you know, the Norwegian, sort of the hot sauna where you throw some water on the on the coals.

So are the rocks, the hot rocks. You've got infrared saunas, you've got different kinds of infrared sauna and you've got infrared sauna and that are combining red light.

For the consumer, that can be a little confusing. You want to walk us through a little bit how to think about those. Absolutely. So with traditional saunas and steam saunas, the main mechanism of action for your body is the hot, static air that's outside of your body.

So you're cooling yourself. And that interaction is providing profound benefits. We've seen a lot of studies, showing infrared or traditional saunas can help with the heart longevity.

Just all cause mortality is reduced. So there's obviously a lot. Of farmers too. Yeah. And also farmers have some some big benefits, right. Even decreased cancer risk.

So it's not real what what's right. Yeah. So it's it's profound like the effects are incredible. But that high heat it's not for everybody.

Traditional vs Infrared Sauna Types

Not everybody can withstand, that oppressive heat. And I think that is where infrared stands out in that. It is heat and it is light, and the heat is typically not near as high as what you would experience in an infrared in a traditional sauna.

So you're talking temperatures 145. Sunlight in has a model that's getting up a little bit hotter than that, too. But we're not just looking at how we're heating up the outside with infrared light.

It's part of the spectrum of light. So if you think about the rainbow, we all know, all the different colors. Well, next to red on that spectrum is infrared.

So that's where infrared even gets its name. And so it's a whole part of the spectrum that a lot of people don't know about. Infrared is definitely not new, but it's new to a lot of people.

And as you said, it can be confusing. So for us we just love it. Let me just button for just a quick second. So infrared is not something that we typically can see.

And it's, it's associated with night vision goggles. The Jane Austen Telescope, which is sending back all these amazing images of the early universe and all this sort of thing is an infrared telescope.

Right. So now we're seeing we're seeing the cosmos through that lens of infrared. So it's basically a, a longer wave, like a slower wavelength of light, than what we typically see at the end of our, you know, visual acuity, if you will.

So just to tee that up for people, you can't see infrared when you get it into an infrared sauna, you don't see the light purpose per se. So yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. No, that's really fun to see that in those stories out there of these telescopes and the imagery, it's like, oh my gosh, infrared. I know about that. Right.

So you nailed it though. It's longer. So the energy it's less energy than like say blue light. So blue light high frequency high energy. And then same thing when you're going through these different infrared wavelengths, near infrared is the shortest wavelength.

It is next to red on the spectrum. And then mid-infrared is a little bit longer. And then far infrared is the longest. And I've heard you use some analogies comparing it to sound.

And that's a great way to think about it, because we've all heard, how deep bass is. And you can hear it from the room next to you where like the treble and those higher notes, you don't really hear that.

So kind of the same concept then for this infrared energy. Yeah. So you know when you think about light, we all know that UV light can be damaging to the skin can increase risk of skin cancers, melanoma, things like that.

So again high energy these sun is do not contain that high energy light. They're basically light that you can't see. So they're low energy by definition.

But then there's a spectrum of energies even there where you get this, sort of deep bass, if you will. And the difference is, it has the ability to penetrate the body.

So the way I like to think about it is, traditional sun is heating you from the outside in, and these are heating you from the inside out because that that wavelength is penetrating into the body and kind of heating you.

You don't even feel warm in there initially. I mean, it may be a little warm, but it's not like it's not to your point, like it is to jump into, a regular traditional steam song or certainly a steam room where there's a lot of, heat on the skin.

It's really kind of catches up to you, though, because you're in there for ten, 20, 30 minutes, you walk out and you may have started to sweat while you're in there, but oh my gosh, after you get out of it, you're really just pouring sweat, right?

So it's a different experience if you haven't tried that, do you want to talk a little bit about, the safety of infrared, and that kind of thing. Yeah, absolutely.

So it is safe. I mean, it's over 50% of the sun's rays are infrared. And as you were just talking like UV, that high energy that's breaking bonds, that's kind of breaking down.

Some of the, the good things that we, want to be stopping. So that is where with infrared, it is not a dangerous thing at all.

Infrared Wavelengths and How They Work

Like some people think about it because it is part of the electromagnetic magnetic spectrum that, wow, this is this is dangerous. But, even in hospitals, they, premature babies and so, like.

When the sun is behind the clouds and it's kind of chilly, as soon as that sun comes out behind the clouds, you feel that warmth. You feel that good feeling.

And everybody associate sunshine with that warm kind of embrace. Everyone loves to be on the beach, with infrared and especially with our technology. We harness the good, healthy parts of the sun and brought it in for us because in today's environments, we're constantly inside with these temperature controlled rooms, and we're not getting the good life.

We're getting a bunch of junk light from some of these led, light systems. And, we've kind of got to pick and choose, especially when we're thinking about our health and vitality and longevity, how we can harness the good parts of the sun and use them to our advantage, especially thinking about these three different wavelengths, and even red light that's right next to infrared.

I mean, there's a lot of health benefits that you can get from them. Yeah. And the nice thing about the sun is you, you can get into a sauna now that actually has multiple wavelengths in it, right?

It used to be that you kind of picked the sun and you were getting either low or medium or higher, you know, infrared frequencies. But now I think you're mixing them in these songs, if I'm not mistaken.

Is that correct? Yeah, that is correct. So, each of our sauna options, they are going to have far infrared. That's kind of, to us a foundational, wavelength because it, it penetrates, mostly because of the absorption to water molecules.

So that's the photoreceptor that really gets excited. It starts moving. Helps with detoxification. It's going to increase your core temperature and kick off some of those for medic effects that you would want from traditional saunas.

And then from there there's these other wavelengths like we've talked about. The mid infrared helps with inflammation and muscle recovery, that kind of thing.

Near infrared is mostly interacting with mitochondria. So when we're talking about, longevity and health, if we're supporting our energy systems and our mitochondria, like the benefits, I mean, essentially helps every system of the body.

Just with that in mind. But then some of the more fun benefits include skin health. So, collagen production, reduced fine lines and wrinkles, that kind of thing.

Especially as we're aging, if we can harness that, those light energies and, and. That's, that's a key takeaway that everybody can feel. I mean, with a single use, it's not even after extended use.

I mean, you can feel it right away. Yeah. No, it's it's exciting stuff. So you mentioned a word for medic stress. And if you're listening to this, you know, that chronic stress is bad for us.

You know, that acute stress will happen. You know, if a bear comes to the door, or medic stress, a medic stress is basically a stress that makes you stronger.

So it's kind of like if you go for a run, that's a horror medic stress. If you jump in cold plunge, that's a horror medic stress. If you jump in a sauna, that's over.

Medic stress, it's enough to stress the system. But it's it's short lived. And because it's short lived, it's not chronic. So it's not a chronic stress, which is, you know, very destructive.

But it also it's enough of a stress that your body has to respond in certain ways to get quote unquote, stronger. And there are a variety of ways in which that happens.

That's sort of a generic term to think about, but with soreness, you're really up regulating, a number of things related to cellular health. Do you want to talk about that a little bit?

Yeah. Of course. So that's where the whole absorption into the body and, and just these three different wavelengths interacting with different parts of our, anatomy and physiology.

It's it's the mitochondrial support that I would start with because, energy is produced by the mitochondria. That's one of those lessons and science class from third grade that has stuck with a lot of people out there.

And if we're able to support mitochondrial health, even help them produce more mitochondria, that's just more energy. And our fuel, are more fuel for our systems.

So, from there, I mean, heart health is one of the top reasons that people are dying.

Hormetic Stress, Cellular Health, and Recovery

So, if we can help the mitochondria that are in the heart, I mean, every single cell in our body, we're just absolutely filled with mitochondria. And there are proven interactions of, light just assisting and helping mitochondrial health.

So that is, just a great place to start. Yeah. One of the other nice things about it to compliment that is that when you're sitting in a sun and you're getting heated up, so to speak, is that your body releases, something called heat shock proteins and these heat shock proteins to actually help your proteins, your other proteins fold properly.

So as we age, not only do mitochondria become less efficient or less able to make ATP, and if you don't have enough ATP, then your body doesn't know what it needs to repair the DNA and for you to do all the things you want to do, and for you to feel energetic and your brain to work properly and everything else to work.

Right. So, but the other thing that happens as we age is that there becomes infidelity. Maybe that's not the best word, but there's a loss of fidelity between the DNA and the messenger RNA and the protein that's ultimately made.

And consequently, the proteins that are made may not represent the exact blueprint that the gene was originally coding for. And so being able to identify those proteins and have them undergo autophagy where they're broken down and recycled.

But the ones that are are pretty good. They may need some some help in folding properly. Hedgehog proteins are something that chaperon that folding to enable your proteins to work better.

So you're actually getting a couple things from this. You're actually increasing autophagy, which is recycling out bad proteins. If you will, and then helping your proteins to fold so you get optimal function of those proteins.

Proteins inside of the cell are basically doing all the work. Right. So the DNA is just sitting there as a master, you know, blueprint if you will. But is the proteins that are actually running around and literally moving around inside the cells doing lots of work for you.

So, lots of benefits there. Mitochondrial as well as, cellular integrity, structure and function. That's pretty sure. Absolutely. And with the heat talk proteins, we kind of refer to them as trainers for your cells.

Is that everything that you just mentioned? If you think about it as in yourself, like there at the gym, helping you learn to get stronger in different ways.

And, that's exactly what they do. And to touch on that, to adjust the cellular health. Cellular senescence is another process that infrared saunas can help with.

Zombie cells is a newer concept, and especially when it comes to longevity, and that is cells that have essentially died and are just remained in the body.

And it's kind of like with traffic. I mean, if there's a traffic jam, there's usually one cause of that problem. And that could be in this case, those dead cells that just have not been removed.

So that is something else that is, kind of in the news lately is as how infrared and saunas in general can help remove those cells that might be causing the backups and the problems and probably inflammation.

So we need to get those out and get them out, quickly because problems arise. And then next thing we know, we've got, just immense problems in the body and we don't have the capacity to help relieve that stress. So, just like with the heat shock proteins, I mean, a lot of that has to do with that, hermetic stress that we talked about a bit ago, where we're just making ourselves stronger.

Yeah. No, that's a good point. You know, one of the other interesting things is, you know, you can get in the sauna and enjoy it for, you know, 20 minutes, maybe four days a week.

Five days a week, something like that. 30 minutes. The other thing, though, is that there's if you're looking on the performance side of the equation, you kind of got into this from the performance side.

Saunas can actually augment cardiovascular performance. Do you want to talk to us about that a little bit? I don't know how that's used, because I'm aware of the fact that, athletes, particularly endurance athletes, will, do their training and then jump in the sauna, and it actually helps them to hang on to higher levels of hemoglobin.

For example, let's say they go to Boulder, Colorado to train, and they're building up more hemoglobin because they're at elevation. Then they come down to a lower elevation, but they don't want to lose that hemoglobin.

They'll go work out and, and jump in a sauna. And it helps them maintain that concentration of hemoglobin and gives them an edge. Is that anything that you ever played with or that you started?

I mean, it can be used for recovery but can also be used for performance enhancement. Any, any. So I. I haven't I wasn't aware of the hemoglobin piece, but it makes sense.

And with that said to you, what you're doing is you're just extending. So once you're done exercising, your body's okay. I'm relaxing now, I can my heart rate can lower.

And that's exactly what saunas can do too, is they can increase your heart rate at least while you're in it. And help with circulation. And, I mean, that's the the heart benefits that we're talking about reduce blood pressure overall.

But, it's the circulation piece. I mean, that's incredibly important for helping with inflammation. So on that side, it's probably more of the muscle recovery.

But you're just stacking your workout and activating these different systems, after those workouts to, to keep that process moving. And we even talk about saunas as an exercise mimetic.

For people who can't maybe get their heart rate up and exercise and move a lot. Yeah. So people that are not, immobile are able to sit in here in a relaxed capacity and get some of those benefits that you would get from training.

So, that's one of the beautiful things too, is like, yes, optimizers and people looking to increase longevity can really utilize saunas.

Cardiovascular and Cognitive Benefits

But the other end of the spectrum too, where these are people just trying to do absolutely anything, it's a great jumping off point. Yeah. No, that's that's that's a great point.

You know, when we were in our training for, cardiology and doing cardiac rehab training as part of that, we were told that, cardiac rehab patients should never get in a sauna or get in a hot tub or whatever, because it would be too much of a stress, right?

Their heart rate was go too high as a form of exercise, if you will, and now what's become understood is that cardiac rehab patients actually do better when they get in saunas because they are getting some increased exercise.

In fact, studies out of Japan, have shown that people with angina, right, which is heart pain related to poor blood flow through the through the arteries, feeding the heart actually improve their angina just from sitting in a sauna.

They could walk much further. People with congestive heart failure. They had weak heart muscles. Again, do your mitochondrial, part of the conversation actually improve their heart failure and their hearts beat more strongly?

Right. And then people that had blocked arteries in their legs and the lower extremities, it's called claudication. Angina and the heart claudication in the legs.

Both of those are pain syndromes that occur because of the lack of blood flow getting where it's supposed to go. They did soreness for people with claudication, and they were also able to significantly increase their walk distances before they would develop pain.

So it really has a wonderful impact on cardiovascular health, which is really great. And then the data out of, out of, Scandinavia for traditional saunas on dimension Alzheimer's is spectacular.

I mean, it's really crazy good. It's like 65% reduction in dementia and Alzheimer's. So if you have this in your family, you might want to, you know, buy a sauna, stick it in there.

You know, your return on investment could be massive. So we think saunas are wonderful for, cognitive health as well. Yeah. And a big part of that, too, has to do with the near-infrared, and photo bio modulation as well.

So direct impact on the brain, and some of those applications may be different than what you get out of a sauna. But that's again where I feel sunlight and can stand out in the crowd is we're able to deliver these different wavelengths and optimal levels.

So thinking about future implications when we're talking longevity and how we can. What's going to happen to you based on your data, your results and your point of life?

And you maybe need a certain dosage of this light. That to me is the future. Like that's exactly where we're going to head. As soon as we get more data.

Yeah, 100%. So, you know, people may be thinking, well, a sauna, you know, some kind of a big item. I think you've got a variety of sizes, and, maybe you can talk people through.

You know, I think people sometimes feel like, well, I've got to have a lot of space. So for me to put a sauna in or some people have a lot of space and think, well, geez, I'd really like to have one, that 2 or 3 people could get it in at time.

Do you want to walk them through that a little bit is, how that works. Yeah. So we do have multiple options. And each option also has different light combinations.

So our most, portable, space conscious sauna, is called our solo. You lay down in it and it has a telescoping functionality so that you lay in a lower dome and then can pull it up over you so that it's right up to your neck, essentially.

And that sauna is far infrared only. So great for detox. We've had a number of partners and people show us lab results of their heavy metals that they've been able to detox through infrared therapy.

And then we have other options for cabin saunas that are one person, two person all the way up to five person. You can even create custom saunas. I said it earlier, but we have a sauna that gets a little bit hotter too, and that has all of the different wavelengths.

But it's our impulse sauna that has the most personalization and customization, as well as the, the optimal wavelength, for each of these. So we deliver the near infrared as well as red light now and that sauna, through LEDs.

Because that's the best way to deliver that. Those wavelengths. And we also have a new red light panel. So that is something that can absolutely go anywhere.

And it was just at a conference. And it's really neat to see all these light devices that are out there because it's healthy, it's natural. This is not us taking supplements that have side effects.

This is stuff that you can do at home. And I know you're big on this like it's the at home application. Like you need to make your space, something that you can go to and utilize.

That's when we're seeing these best results. So all the studies about sauna use, and traditional saunas, it's through continued use. So if you have it at home and you step out of your bathroom first thing in the morning and look over and see that sauna, you're probably going to use it because you know how good it makes you feel, and you know how much it's going to help your health.

Yeah, I think I think there's two things that you brought up there. One is, on the detox side of things that we've been so impressed that we can detox people, very efficiently through saunas.

You know, there's really different ways to get things out of your body. Right through your stool, through your urine, or through your skin. And really, the least traumatic way to get it out of your system is through your skin.

So to your point, people would come to us with very high mercury levels or other things since like, do you want to do chelating?

Sauna Options, Detox, and Home Use

Well, I don't know. You got to rush all that through the kidneys. That's hard on the kidneys. There are some things you can do to help get it out through the stool.

Of course. You need to decrease your intake of mercury or rich fish or things like that. But. But the sauna, works amazingly well for detox. Not only for metals, but for other things as well.

So if you're if you're wanting to think about a song and think about all the detox benefits as well. The other thing is that we've come to realize that you really need to architect the four main environments that you live in.

If you're going to succeed in this longevity game. And that's your home, your office, and then you need to think through business travel and vacation travel.

And so, if you have this equipment in your home or even in your office, if you have a gym in your office and you have it, there are two, the easier that you can make it to use this stuff, the more you trip over it, so to speak, the bigger the impact will be.

And so think about that. And even if you're traveling, think about, am I going to stay at a hotel that has a sauna? All right. These are questions that you can easily find out.

Do they have a gym? Don't have a cold plunge. Do I have a sauna? There's so many resorts and and hotels down there becoming, quote unquote health conscious, if not longevity conscious, that they're putting these things in because people are demanding them. So, just think about that, as a way to really architect it.

But of course, the number one place you're likely to be is your home. So that would be the place to start. I think if you have to drive down the street 30 minutes to it, or ten even ten minutes and get out and undress and get in and drink drives and get back and go home, you know, that's that's a barrier to entry, quite honestly.

So if you can lower the barrier to entry, to tap into a technology like this, I think it's a major win for you. Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. And I love the detox part, too.

I mean, thinking about longevity for me especially, I'm still, looking ahead far, but I've got to work on the foundational pieces the inflammation, the detoxification and our environments today.

It's scary what all is out there and what we've consumed over time, what we're breathing. So to think about this tool as that foundational piece, I mean, it's up there with diet and exercise for me.

Like as far as what I need to make sure I'm doing, I know I cannot keep all toxins out, but I want to support my kidney and my liver as much as possible.

Because that, as you said, it's it's an easier way for that detoxification process to happen. And it's just supportive so that the liver, can work more efficiently and not have to worry about the burden that it has.

So yeah. No. That's great. So if people want to learn more about sunlight, where would they go? How did that how did they find how did they find out more?

So sunlight inc.com. And if you mentioned the summit with Doctor Gladden, then you're going to get a nice discount. So, definitely do that. There's going to be some links that you can click as well.

But the website follow us on all of our social channels. And I love our website too, because we've done a lot to work on education, because as with the know or with the notion that infrared is is still new to a lot of people, there's a lot to learn.

So we've got some great blogs, some great information. We have a page dedicated specifically to longevity because we talk about five of the hallmark for five of the hallmarks of aging that infrared impacts directly.

And just a lot of information that you can take home and digest and think about. Because this is not necessarily a small purchase. I mean, this is something that you should keep in your life, and use, as much as possible.

So we want you to feel good about what you're about to do. And and that's where our team excels as well as we have sonic consultants that'll talk through everything that you have to ask.

Everybody's in a different spot. So if if maybe you are suffering from inflammation or maybe, you don't have the space for a certain cabin sauna, we can help guide you to make the best informed decision, so that you can improve your health and and hit those goals, especially as it relates to longevity.

You know, I know one thing that people are concerned about with songs, too, is, you know, what are the construction methods that decrease, you know, off gassing of glues and toxins and things like that, or what's the EMF burden that anybody might be, you know, receiving if they're inside a sauna like this.

Sunlight Inc. Safety, EMF, and Closing

I'm sure that's those are things that you've thought about. Yeah. Of course. So we're, Sunlight in is celebrating its 25th year, in business and all all along the way, we've been working to improve the safety, learning what words to use, what words not to use.

But emfs. That's a more recent topic. I mean, the last ten years or so and we've done all that we can to mitigate that, whether that's different coatings for the wires, changing where the wires are placed, or to keep it at an ultra low level so that you can feel safe in your sauna.

Same with the the glues. There's, we use magnetic assembly for most of the, the walls so that there's no glues or fillers or, even just the wrong type of oil on these materials because off gassing, as you said, we're in here to detoxify, not to touch oxytocin.

Right. Yeah. Yeah. No. That's great. So if you're if you're getting a sunlight and sauna, you can, you can sort of bank on the fact that it's been well thought out and that's, should give you some, some security as well.

So really great to chat with you, Vic. I really appreciate you being, on the show. And, I'll look forward to, catching up with you down the road here.

Yes, absolutely. It was a pleasure. And, if again, visit the website, reach out. We're always here to help. Beautiful.