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## PRACTICAL

MATTERS

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## Shower Power

Need to wake up in a hurry? Get back to sleep?

Ease soreness? Turn your stall into a mini-spa.

**T**HERE'S NO DENYING that sinking into a tub is one of life's great reliefs, but you shouldn't feel cheated if you only have time to jump into the shower. "With the right technique, a shower can soothe mind and body," says Tori Hudson, a naturopathic physician and a professor at the National College of Naturopathic Medicine in Portland, Oregon. These vertical water treatments will help you get over your bath envy.

**THE EARLY RISER** Like an eye-opening cup of coffee, a cool shower has the power to energize. "Cold water constricts blood vessels and forces your body to send more blood to your brain and limbs, making you alert and ready to move," says Karen Zaharatos, a massage therapist and an instructor who teaches classes for the Florida Board of Massage Therapy. Start with tepid water, then switch to cool. Finish with a quick blast

of cold water. Turn away from the water flow and allow it to rain on your spine. "This stimulates your central nervous system, instantly invigorating your body," says Zaharatos. While you're in there, you could reach for an exhilarating shower gel (like Origins Jump Start stimulating body wash).

**THE INSOMNIA SPECIAL** Hot water is the key to relaxation. "It opens up your airways so you breathe in a more relaxed fashion," says Hudson. Adjust the temperature to 101 to 106 degrees (steamy), then rotate under the stream, allowing the water to hit as many muscles as possible. (Calming body wash: Kiss My Face Early to Bed shower gel)

**THE PREMENSTRUAL PICK-ME-UP** Standing in a stream of hot water can ease cramping and melt tension. "Cramps are caused by uterine contractions," says Hudson. "Hot water relaxes the muscles." To alleviate discomfort, let the water pour down onto your lower abdomen for a good ten minutes. The temperature should be warm but not uncomfortable. (Stress-relieving gel: EOcitane lavender bath and shower gel)

—Andrea Dawn Clark

**THE AROMATIC SHOWER**  
Clockwise from top left: Côté Bastide Fleurs D'Oranger shower gel, Perle Mandarinetto shower gel, Bath & Body Works Imagine shower wash in Peace, Lothantique lavender shower gel, Elizabeth Arden green tea energizing shampoo

