



## Temperature Extremes and Polio Survivors

By Dr. Richard L. Bruno, HD, PhD  
Director, International Centre for Polio Education  
[www.postpolioinfo.com](http://www.postpolioinfo.com)

You know, any extreme in temperature isn't good for polio survivors. From our 1985 National Survey, 33% of polio survivors report fatigue with heat! And I'm not sure 133 degrees for 20 minutes is good for anyone.

The brain's thermostat (the hypothalamus) is broken by the poliovirus on the up side as well as the down. You have two quick ways to dump body heat (vasodilation then sweating) and to conserve body heat (vasoconstriction then shivering). Dumping heat is much more effective than trying to stop becoming frozen.

So, consider a desert dry 80 degrees F outside as a "normal" temperature. Polio survivors will be much more comfortable without sweating (and maybe without much vasodilatation) at 100 dry degrees than at 60 (the temperature of most restaurants all year long, it seems.) So 20 degrees colder is more difficult for polio survivors to deal with than 20 degrees warmer.

Still, as a treatment, a 133 degree sauna isn't going to help your shoulder especially when you get out, your blood pressure drops, so do you and break a hip. Ultrasound, LOCAL heat and deep tissue massage for shoulder muscle spasm -- and a little valium --are better than sitting in a convection oven.

