

## Sauna Boom in Japan ?

The population trends of sauna bather and the recognition of hot and cool bathing in 2017-21. How did the covid-19 pandemic give an impact on the Japanese sauna bathers in 2020 ?

### Purpose of the survey

To contribute to the development of saunas and hot / cold bathing in Japan by understanding the reality of saunas and how the change over time in order to spread and expand awareness of hot and cold baths.

### Methods

Every year, an online survey of 10,000 people is conducted. This is the fifth time the survey including 5015 males and 4985 females aged 18-69. This report shows statistical information of sauna bathers based on the accumulated survey data. The population is estimated by retrospective population-weighted tabulation published from the Statistical Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

### Summary and Findings

- The total number of sauna bathers has remained almost unchanged for the past five years
- The number of light/medium users decreased, while the one of heavy users slightly increased in this survey
- The percentage of awareness and practice of hot and cold bathing continues to increase
- A correlation between the frequency of sauna use and the rate of practice of hot/cold bathing.
- About 60% of respondents said that the covid-19 pandemic has "reduced the number of times I go to the sauna."

### I. Population Trends of sauna bather in the past 5 years.

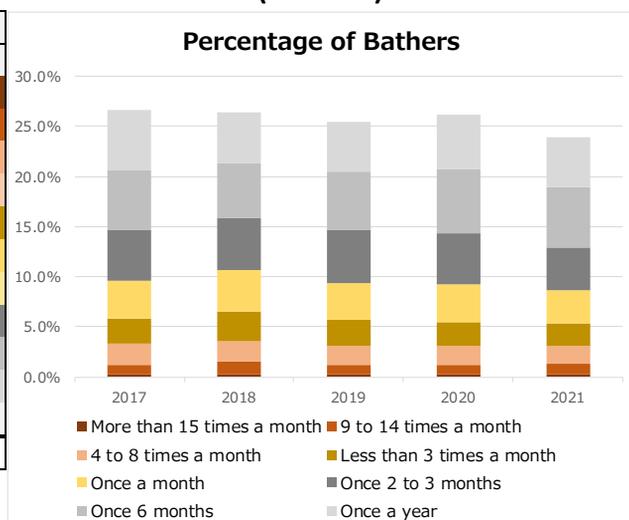
Since the start of the survey in 2017, we have conducted surveys and estimates with classifying sauna bathers as followings: Light user: those who take a sauna at least once a year; Medium user: those who take a sauna at least once a month; Heavy user: those who take a sauna at least four times a month. Since the environment surrounding saunas has changed over the past five years, we took the opportunity of this release to calculate more detailed estimates.

This time in 2021, the number/percentage of users was 25.83 million/23.9%, the lowest since the survey began. Despite some media reports that suggest a boom in saunas and hot and cold baths, the estimated population and percentage of sauna bathers do not show such a result. There was a slight decline from 2017 (28.79 million/26.6%) to 2019 (27.47 million/25.4%), with a recovery in 2020 (28.24 million/26.1%).

Both the light and the medium users record the lowest since the survey started. On the other hand, the heavy users were increased and founded as their deep-rooted love of the saunas. The specific information is as follows: Light users, who use saunas at least once a year but less than once a month, accounted for 16.52 million / 15.3%. Medium users, who use between once and four times a month, accounted for 5.23 million / 5.5%. Heavy users who use saunas four or more times a month, was 3.39 million/3.1%, and only this group has increased slightly since 2019.

Figure 1-1 : Estimated population of sauna bathers (2017-21)

Percentage of bathers		Year of Survey release				
Large class	Detailed class	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Heavy	More than 15 times a month	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
	9 to 14 times a month	0.9%	1.2%	1.0%	0.9%	1.0%
	4 to 8 times a month	2.1%	2.1%	2.0%	1.9%	1.8%
	<b>Heavy Subtotal</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>
Medium	Less than 3 times a month	2.4%	3.0%	2.5%	2.3%	2.2%
	Once a month	3.8%	4.2%	3.7%	3.9%	3.2%
	<b>Medium Subtotal</b>	<b>6.2%</b>	<b>7.1%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>
Light	Once 2 to 3 months	5.2%	5.2%	5.2%	5.0%	4.3%
	Once 6 months	5.8%	5.4%	5.8%	6.4%	5.9%
	Once a year	6.1%	5.1%	4.9%	5.5%	5.0%
	<b>Light Subtotal</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>15.7%</b>	<b>16.0%</b>	<b>16.9%</b>	<b>15.3%</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>26.6%</b>	<b>26.4%</b>	<b>25.4%</b>	<b>26.1%</b>	<b>23.9%</b>



Note: The population is estimated by retrospective population-weighted tabulation published from the Statistical Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and

## II. Recognition of the hot and cold bathing in the past 5 years.

In terms of awareness of hot/cold bathing (the bathing behavior with hot air/steam, cold water, outdoor air as one cycle), "know and practice" has continued to increase (27.3% in 2021), while "don't know" has decreased since the survey began (31.1% in 2021).

Figure 2-1 : Changes in awareness and practice of hot/cold bathing (2017-21)

Awareness and practice of hot and cold bathing	Year of Survey release				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
know and practice	13.4%	17.8%	18.4%	19.0%	27.3%
know but don't practice	36.5%	32.0%	31.9%	44.1%	41.7%
don't know	50.1%	50.2%	49.7%	36.9%	31.1%

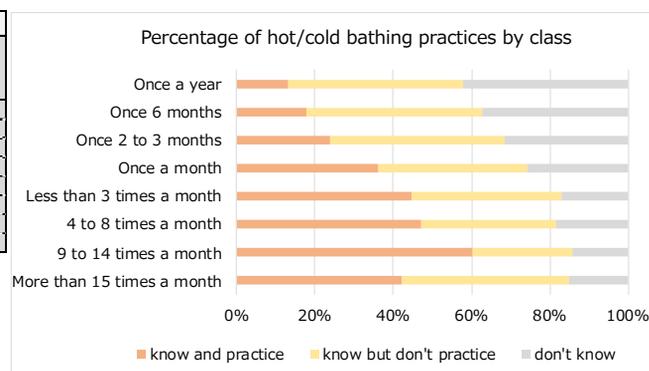
Note: The table shows the percentage of each option in respondents who use the sauna at least once a year. These results are estimated by the retrospective population-weighted.



Figure 2-2 : Percentage of hot and cold bathing practices by sauna bather class

Sauna bather class	Awareness and practice of hot and cold		
	know and practice	know but don't practice	don't know
More than 15 times a month	0.5%	0.5%	0.2%
9 to 14 times a month	2.5%	1.1%	0.6%
4 to 8 times a month	3.6%	2.7%	1.4%
Less than 3 times a month	4.2%	3.6%	1.6%
Once a month	4.9%	5.2%	3.5%
Once 2 to 3 months	4.3%	8.1%	5.7%
Once 6 months	4.4%	11.2%	9.2%
Once a year	2.8%	9.4%	8.8%

Note: The table shows the percentage of each option in respondents who use the sauna at least once a year. These results are estimated by the retrospective population-weighted.



## III. How did the pandemic give an impact on the Japanese sauna bathers in 2020?

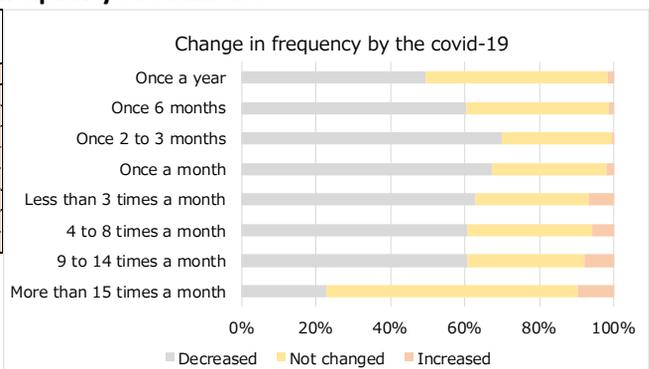
I. Population Trends of sauna bather in the past 5 years showed a decrease in the number of sauna bathers from 2020 to 2021. When surveyed about the covid-19 pandemic, which is the possible reason for the decrease, 60.6% of respondents said that they went to the sauna less often.

When the results were tabulated by frequency of sauna use, about 60% of respondents in almost all frequency groups answered that they "decreased the chance of going to the sauna". On the other hand, results of the group with the highest frequency of visiting saunas shows that some people answered, "I go to the sauna more often". (The statistical information for the users who go to the sauna 15 times a month needs for reference since the sample size for those is smaller than that of the other groups.)

Figure 3-1 : Change in frequency due to the covid-19 by the frequency of sauna use

Sauna bather class	The covid-19 pandemic made the frequency of the sauna:		
	Decreased	Not changed	Increased
More than 15 times a month	0.29%	0.86%	0.12%
9 to 14 times a month	2.52%	1.31%	0.32%
4 to 8 times a month	4.67%	2.60%	0.44%
Less than 3 times a month	5.88%	2.86%	0.62%
Once a month	9.16%	4.17%	0.26%
Once 2 to 3 months	12.71%	5.39%	0.08%
Once 6 months	14.98%	9.48%	0.33%
Once a year	10.40%	10.22%	0.35%

Note: The table shows the percentage of each option in respondents who use the sauna at least once a year. These results are estimated by the retrospective population-weighted.



## <Outline of the organization>

Japan Sauna & Hot and Cold Bathing Research Institute (commonly known as Japan Sauna Institute) is a general incorporated association that conducts specialized research and studies on everything related to "sauna (hot air bath/steam bath), cold water bath, outdoor air bath", to contribute to the health and peace of people around the world by demonstrating, evolving, and promoting irreplaceable value.



Organization:	Japan Sauna & Hot and Cold Bathing Research Institute
Abbreviated name:	Japan Sauna Institute
Establishment date:	October 15, 2015
Representative Director:	Reiji Tachibana
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