

*... a much needed wellness tool*

# HEALTH BENEFITS OF FLOATATION THERAPY

- **Alleviates mental and physical stress**
- **Expands awareness & intensifies acuteness of all senses**
- **Speeds the healing process**
- **Decreases the production of cortisol and adrenaline**
- **Increases production of endorphins**
- **Relieves pain from arthritis**
- **Relieves pain from migraines**
- **Relieves pain from injuries**
- **Relieves back and muscle pain**
- **Boosts immune function**
- **Improves circulation and distribution of oxygen & nutrients**
- **Reduces blood pressure, pulse, heart rate & oxygen consumption**
- **Promotes total calm and peaceful relaxation**
- **Improves athletic performance**
- **Helps prevent sports injuries**
- **Eliminates fatigue and jet lag**
- **Heightens visualization**
- **Deepens meditation**
- **Diminishes depression, anxiety and fear**

## FLOAT THERAPY SYSTEMS

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# Floating and Pain Relief

## Pain Management

If you are suffering chronic back pain, headaches, or some other painful condition, floating can be a part of your pain management program. For one thing, pain is eased because buoyancy reduces pressure on the body and thus brings relief. Even more significant is the fact that floating triggers the production of endorphins, your body's natural painkillers. Thankfully, the production of endorphins will continue for awhile after the floating session.

Relax muscle tension due to stress or overworked muscles. People who had muscle tension for ages would be free from it after just four floating sessions. While you float the solution supports you completely so every muscle is allowed to relax. However, the tensed "problem areas" will not relax right away but slowly as the stress that produced the tension will leave your body. If the muscle tension is due to overwork, then relief will be much faster as the levels of lactic acid will be quickly reduced while floating.

**Induces Rapid Healing** Floating brings more oxygen, through increased circulation, to injured areas, allowing the body to heal in half the time. Regular Floating can stop the minor injuries from progressing to Major Problems. Floating aids in the reduction of injuries due to over training or muscular tension and imbalance and enhances the body's ability to recover from injuries and the normal stress of intensive exercise.

Additionally, it was scientifically proven that a single float can significantly decrease blood pressure, heart rate, oxygen consumption, blood lactate, and muscular tension and increase circulation to the extremities and the gastrointestinal system.

## Healing

**Enhanced Immune System.** Because of stress reduction, the production of stress-induced chemicals such as cortisol, adrenaline and ACTH is significantly reduced. Excessive number of these chemicals inhibit immune system and may wreck havoc on hormone system.

## Speeds Healing

Floating is used by athletes to speed healing and recovery of strained or overworked muscles and even broken bones.



# Sports and Fitness with Floating



## A New Dimension in Fitness and Sports Training

Carl Lewis, said to be the world's greatest athlete, used in-tank visualization techniques to prepare himself for his gold medal long jump at the 1988 Seoul Olympics; the Dallas Cowboys, winners of the 1993 Super bowl, have been using float tanks since 1981 to develop the physical and psychological skills of their players; the AIS (Australian Institute of Sport) has been using tanks to train their successful Olympic squads since 1983. In the words of Jeff Bond of the AIS: "The floatation tank represents a new dimension in sports training for the elite athlete".

Floating maximizes the benefits of fitness training and work-outs. High intensity exercise stimulates the muscles to grow, but the actual growth and strengthening takes place during relaxation - usually 30 to 40 hours after the stimulation occurs. The deep relaxation of the float tank improves circulation and accelerates the growth and regeneration of muscle tissue.

Strenuous physical exercise can cause a rapid build-up of lactic acid (a toxic by-product of anaerobic glycolysis) in the muscles; this is experienced as pain, fatigue and cramps which can last for days; it is also linked to the feelings of depression and anxiety known as "post-game let down", which can even affect recreational joggers. Floating is one method of reducing the effects of lactic acid and removing other waste materials from the body. This reduces the risk of over-training.

Many sports injuries are not contact injuries but are the result of inappropriate muscle tension. Floating has been shown to loosen the muscles and give athletes a greater degree of control over their autonomic nervous systems, reducing the risk of injury during training or competition. Even when injuries occur, floating speeds up recovery and the endorphin effect alleviates the pain.

## Athletes and Performers

Performance training and other forms of super-learning are proven benefits of floatation tanks. Every muscle is allowed to rest and recover. By using the floatation tank in conjunction with visualization techniques, many athletes have found rapid improvement in their performance. Floating can duplicate the mental focus achieved through self-hypnosis and help with visualization. This "mental practice" affects your mind like physical practice. The next time you engage in physical activity, your mind will respond to the activity as you visualized it and help you achieve your goal. Healing, even from chronic pain, proceeds at an accelerated rate. Floating helps you bring worries or blocks to the forefront where you can focus on and confront them. Floating can enhance your performance and soothe your aches.

## Flotation For Recovery and Visualization

### *Muscle & Fitness*

In effect, the tank experience can duplicate the mental focus achieved through self-hypnosis or other forms of meditation. In this state, a person can employ the visualization techniques valued throughout bodybuilding. You can imagine your physique as you would realistically like it to look so you'll have a clear goal to work toward. Picture yourself handling heavy poundage's or mastering form in a particularly difficult isolation exercise. This subconscious input - mental practice - affects the mind the same as physical practice. The next time you try the poundage or movement, your mind signals nervous responses as you imagined them, helping you achieve your goal. In fact, sports-performance training and other forms of super learning are proven benefits of flotation tanks.



# Floating and Stress Relief



## Stress Reduction

A very effective stress reduction tool. Reduced sensory input (no light, no sound, no touch, no other people) combined with feeling of weightlessness and complete relaxation of every single muscle in your body allows the mind to drift into a peaceful and undisturbed state. People emerge from floating amazingly calm, grounded and happy. This state of being will linger for a week or longer.

"Floatation offers a relatively stress-free environment in which to escape temporarily from stressful external stimuli and free your system from its chronic state of arousal. This makes it a useful and life enhancing tool. But if that were all it did, floatation would be essentially a passive tool, and entering a tank would be little different from sitting quietly in a dark room. While the absence of stress is desirable in itself, it doesn't necessarily bring about the presence of its opposite, relaxation. Floatation goes far beyond the passive. Scientists have now proven that floating activates a physiological response that is parallel to, and as powerful as, the stressful one of fight or flight. This response mobilizes the body's resources to bring about an active, alert, positive, and beneficial state of relaxation."

"Through all sorts of tests, including EMG (which measure muscle tension), EEG, blood pressure, and measurements of certain biochemicals, scientists have determined that the float tank can bring about a state of extraordinarily deep relaxation-probably deeper than is possible by any other means yet available except for certain drugs. This state of relaxation is in itself beneficial to health, since it allows the body to maintain its internal system of checks and balances, its homeostasis. That is, the body has its own highly effective methods of maintaining itself at an optimal level of well-being, and if allowed to operate freely, it will generally do so flawlessly. But certain mental attitudes can throw this delicate mechanism out of whack. Stress causes harm by its disruption of our natural biochemistry. For example, researchers have recently discovered that, under stress, Type A personalities secrete forty times as much cortisol and three times as much adrenaline as Type B men. Cortisol has been proven to suppress the immune system. Tests have shown that floating decreases cortisol. Excess adrenaline, and related biochemical's such as noradrenalin and ACTH also cause our bodies to rev up in fight-or-flight response, and, ultimately, to wear out. Floating, through deep relaxation, lowers the levels of the harmful chemicals.

Deep relaxation is beneficial in another way. Because of what has been called the curare effect, and as explained by the Webber-Fechner Law, floating leads to increased sensory awareness; we simply feel our bodies better, more clearly, and as a result we are able to regulate them more effectively. As John V. Basmajian's experiments showed, we have the capacity to control the firing of a single motor neuron in the body, once we are made aware of that neuron.

Deep relaxation also leads to improved access to internal imagery. And awareness and control of mental imagery is the key to self regulation."

# Floating and Pregnancy



Pregnancy can be hard on your body as you try to adapt to hormonal changes and extra weight. Balancing your pregnancy with daily life; including your job and family, leaves little time to care for yourself.

Revel in an hour entirely to yourself, resting in warm water with gentle music and nothing to think about but you and your baby.

Soothe your back in water that gives you complete support and the feeling of weightlessness.

Give yourself time to bond with your baby.

Pregnant women probably get more relief from the floatation spa than anyone else. Just lying on a bed can be extremely uncomfortable for a woman in the later stages of pregnancy due to the massive gravitational strain placed on the body. The float spa is a wonderful haven for pregnant women. We do, however, recommend that pregnant women avoid floating during the first trimester. If you have any concerns about the effects of floating on your pregnancy, we ask you to consult and get permission from your physician before you float.

Pregnant women find they can totally relax in the tank, relieved from the burden of carrying the baby, due to the gravity-free environment of the tank. Many report feelings of becoming better acquainted with the new individual growing within them. Floating is a pleasurable experience they can share with their baby.

"Most people are in search of a feeling of oneness. Oneness within ourselves, oneness with another person, oneness with our God, or the Universe. One of the most amazing examples of this oneness might be the bond we have in the womb with our mother. Sometimes the need for that fusion with Mother's strength is very powerful. The float spa is a striking and convincing analogue of the womb. This may be a very compelling answer to why the floatation spa is such a satisfying and confidence building experience, and why people who float often feel that their lives take on wholeness. If an hour or two of floating can provide us with an intense experience of oneness that is the essential pursuit of our lives, then we have an explanation for floaters frequent spontaneous reduction in fears, spontaneous reduction in smoking, drinking, and drug taking, and a noticeable influx of energy, creativity, and productivity into their lives." Paraphrased from Michael Hutchinson, "The Book of Floating"

## Comments from pregnant women about floating:

*Jessica, 2 weeks prior to delivering a 9 lb. baby* - "Like a porter putting down a 30 lb. suitcase, I could stop carrying for a moment. The burden of holding myself and this little inner body upright was gone, and I could afford the luxury of expanding our relationship."

*Bette, 8 months pregnant* - "I enjoyed the lightweight feeling and the stillness. My legs, which are heavy and retaining fluid, felt at one with the water. Floating is certainly a wonderful way to eliminate stress in pregnancy and to combat the heavy feelings found in the body due to pregnancy."

*Tina, 8 months pregnant* - "While in the tank, the most interesting part, was the constant movement I was getting from the baby. The baby must have been in complete ecstasy floating away with me. The other part that was most satisfying was the feeling of exhilaration afterwards."

# Medical Conditions That Can Be Benefited by Flotation Therapy

## **Cardio-Vascular Conditions**

Due to the substantial physiological changes that we have already discussed it is easy to understand the benefits that floatation can provide for cardiovascular conditions. The natural beta-blocker effect, acquired through the inactivation of the sympathetic nervous system, allows patients with high blood pressure to derive important benefits. The decrease of the blood pressure enables reduction of the dosage of pharmacological products in many cases and the suspension of drug therapy in other cases with mild hypertension.

It is also evident that floatation therapy will help patients with heart problems. This occurs through the decrease in ventricular overload due to the reduction of systemic blood pressure and of oxygen consumption.

## **Musculo-skeletal and Rheumatic Conditions**

The main benefits derived from floatation therapy in musculo-skeletal and rheumatic conditions are based on various factors. One of the most important ones is the elimination of the force of gravity that the body experiences inside the tank. This allows a relaxation and expansion of multiple interarticular spaces enabling a better blood flow that will improve the general conditions of affected joints. This applies for conditions like rheumatoid arthritis, traumatic injuries, and also chronic degenerative problems like Osseo-arthritis.

Chronic and acute pain of neck, shoulders and lower back generally experience substantial improvement through the release of accumulated muscle tension and increase of blood circulation to the affected areas. It helps conditions such as fibrosis's, tendinitis, bursitis, etc.

The second factor, which benefits substantially these musculo-skeletal conditions, is the already mentioned release of endorphins into the system. These decrease markedly the perception of pain and improve the frame of mind of such patients, helping to break the vicious circle of chronic pain/depression that we often see in these cases.

## **Psychological and Emotional Conditions**

The most common psychological and emotional conditions that can experience benefit from floatation therapy are neurosis/anxiety, depression, confusional syndromes, panic attacks and associated problems like lack of concentration, motivation and memory retention.

Most learning disabilities related to stress disorders might benefit from the deep relaxation provided by floating.

The main reason why floatation therapy helps these conditions is due to the fact that the logical/rational mind is allowed to relax and is by-passed enabling the right brain activity of creativity and intuition to emerge to more conscious levels of understanding. This reinforces not only motivation and drive but clarifies deeper understandings related to genuine interests, vocation and sense of purpose in life.

## **Addictive Conditions**

The addiction conditions that are benefited by floatation therapy are alcoholism, smoking, caffeine and drug addiction. The main benefits are acquired in two ways. Firstly by deep relaxation, release of anxiety and a better frame of mind. Secondly because people that are alcoholics or drug addicts enter this habit to obtain an inner state of psychological/emotional pain relief and an artificial state of wellbeing. This pain relief and wellbeing can be produced naturally through the experience of floating.

In addition to the previous considerations patients may also experience a transformational psychological outlook of life. This occurs as they connect more with their genuine interests and sense of direction in life.

## **Chronic Pain Conditions**

We have already described many of the musculo-skeletal and rheumatic conditions that generate chronic pain and that are benefited by floatation therapy. Many other conditions associated with chronic pain, for example cancer, can also benefit by the same mechanism, that is the release of endorphins that are natural painkillers that block the transmission of pain at the synaptic level.

### **Immuno-Depression Conditions**

Modern research has established clearly the interrelationship between high levels of distress and a depression of the immune system. Also conditions like pain and depression impair the immunological functions. Floatation therapy is very useful in these cases since the deep relaxation attained by patients releases negative stress, helps chronic pain and depression giving a natural boost to the immunological system both at the cellular and humoral level.

There is a new branch in medicine called Psycho-neuro-immunology that uses physical and mental relaxation techniques such as progressive muscular relaxation, biofeedback, autogenic training, combined with medical hypnosis, meditation and guided imagery. These techniques enable individuals to learn how to increase the efficiency of their immunological system.

This approach has applications in many medical disorders since it enables positive psycho-physiological changes to occur. In recent years it has been used more and more in multiple oncological problems in adults and children.

### **Digestive Tract Conditions**

There are some digestive tract conditions that are associated with high levels of stress that will be benefited by floatation therapy such as the case of well known psycho-somatic disorders like Duodenal Peptic Ulcer and Irritable Bowel Syndrome. Both are associated with high levels of neurosis/anxiety and psycho-emotional conflict.

# Mind and Body During Floating

## Floating mind

Free from all external stimulation, your body can achieve a state of relaxation which is deeper, purer and more beneficial than sleep. With no body to look after, your mind can attend to other business.

Although your body enters a level of physical relaxation which is even deeper than sleep, in the floatation spa your mind will become very alert, though just above the threshold of sleep. Large areas of the brain are suddenly liberated from their normal workload of processing signals from the nervous system and sense organs. There is a sharp drop in the level of electrical activity of the brain (measured on an EEG) from the usual 20-25 Hz down to 4-8 Hz.; EEG readings show a slow, rhythmic wave pattern known as the theta state.

The floatation spa is a twilight zone of creative, inspirational thought processes, where your learning abilities are at their highest and powers of visualization and auto-suggestion are greatly enhanced. Measurements of the brain waves produced by Zen masters in deep meditation show large amounts of theta activity across the cortex. For most people, however, the theta state is almost impossible to enter without falling asleep. In the tank you effortlessly enter this elusive state of mind.

EEG measurements on floaters show that the level of activity in the two hemispheres of the brain also becomes more balanced and synchronized. This can produce a subtle shift in awareness away from the normally dominant "left-brain" thought patterns (logical, linear, analytical, and detailed) towards the more intuitive, synthetic and large-scale thought modes of the "right-brain". The floatation spa does not inhibit the left hemisphere, but simply changes its role from one of dominance to one of partnership with the other hemisphere, enabling floaters to use all their mental powers. Think about the last time you had a great idea. Was it the result of putting your self in a stress induced frenzy or were you totally relaxed ...and it just came to you.

As the brain deeply relaxes into a *theta* state, endorphins are released into the bloodstream, reducing pain and fatigue. The increased endorphin levels also promote a general sense of well-being as you reduce levels of stress and tension. The blood levels of stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortical are reduced by various body messages, receptor site activity, and organ processes. Combined, these positive effects help reduce the risks of high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease. Stress-related health problems as migraine headache, hypertension, and insomnia are similarly reduced.

## Floating body

The sudden de-stimulation of large areas of the nervous system triggers a spontaneous chain reaction throughout the body known as the parasympathetic response. Muscle tension, blood pressure, heart rate and oxygen consumption all drop dramatically. The whole chemistry of the body changes.

Blood vessels including capillaries dilate, improving cardio-vascular efficiency and increasing the supply of oxygen and nutrients to every single cell in your body. This is called the vasodilatory effect

Stress related chemicals such as adrenaline, cortical, ACTH and lactate are removed from the bloodstream because they are replaced by beneficial endorphins. High levels of cortical and ACTH are known to weaken the body's immune system and create feelings of depression.

The endorphin - only discovered by NIMH researchers in 1976 - is literally the essence of pleasure. *The body's endorphin level is what makes some people naturally happy and others less so. Sometimes called "the body's natural opiate"*, Endorphins are released in your bloodstream while you float. This creates intense feelings of well-being, alleviating fatigue and chronic pain, as well as improving many of the higher brain functions such as memory and learning. *Happiness is not an illusion - it is an endorphin.*

These biochemical changes occur naturally and spontaneously as by-products of deep sensory relaxation. No training or techniques are required. Just lie back and let it happen. Many people describe their experience in the floatation spa to mediation on steroids.



# Beauty and Floating

Eliminating stress and its effect on your body makes you feel and look more attractive and energetic. Tension plays a major part in affecting the appearance of your skin. Inner peacefulness achieved while floating releases tension from the expression of the face and body. A sense of physical, emotional and spiritual well-being will make you radiate positive energy and maintain confidence.

Additionally, floating in Epsom salt makes the skin softer, smoother and is known to draw out toxins (such as lactic acid) away from the body.

## **What effect does the Epsom salt-water solution have on my skin and hair?**

The Epsom salt solution has many beneficial properties to the skin. Because the water contains high salt levels it doesn't rob your skin of salt, (which is what causes wrinkling). Rather, it leaves your skin soft and silky. The "pruning" of fingers that you get from bathing for a long time does NOT happen when you float. We have listened to some opinions that say Epsom salt is very good for strengthening the hair. You thoroughly rinse the salt from your hair and body when you leave the tank. We have not found any way to keep hair dry while floating. Epsom salt is commonly used by physical therapists for injury recovery.

## **SELF-MOTIVATION / WEIGHT LOSS**

The float spa is an effective tool in a weight reduction program, as well as for the treatment of addictive behaviors. Recent studies have found a conclusive link between the stress hormone cortisol and weight gain. Just doing a Google search on cortisol and weight management will bring up a wealth of information on this subject. Floatation therapy was long ago shown to reduce cortisol, making it a natural complement to a sensible weight loss program.

In addition, scientists think that floatation is effective in weight loss programs and for treatment of addictive behaviors because of its positive influence on the production of endorphins. These natural opiates of the body decrease the stressful withdrawal symptoms of addiction and replace the need for addictive substances with the pleasurable feelings produced while floating. Similar results have been achieved in weight loss programs developed for the float tank.

There are two elements necessary for motivating oneself to accomplish specific goals and be free of non-adaptive or stressful behavior. These two elements are relaxation and focused attention. The float spa is an effective tool for positive self-motivation because it provides the following;

- Eliminates all external stimuli so you can concentrate on yourself

- Produces a very deep relaxation so you can be open to suggestion and open to positive thoughts and attitudes

- Produces chemical changes in your body which favor clarity of thought, improved memory and problem-solving

Combined with complementary modalities, the float tank is an effective tool for self-improvement.