

Benefits of floating

Medical Conditions:

- *Cardio - Vascular 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.

- *Muscular-skeletal and rheumatic conditions*

The main benefits derived from Floatation therapy in muscular-skeletal and rheumatic conditions are primarily based on two factors.

The first is the elimination of the force of gravity that the body experiences inside the float tank. This allows a relaxation and expansion of multiple inter-articular 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 Osteo-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 fibromyalgia, tendonitis, bursitis, etc.

The second factor, which benefits substantially these muscular-skeletal conditions, is the release of endorphins into the system. Endorphins are natural painkillers that block the transmission of pain at the synaptic level.

These decrease markedly the perception of pain and improve the frame of mind of patients, helping to break the vicious circle of chronic pain/depression that we often see in these cases.

- Myofascial pain release
- Restless Leg Syndrome
- TMJ
- Arthritis
- Scoliosis
- Fibromyalgia

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Additional information on the Fibromyalgia Floatation Project can be seen [here](#).

Muscular-Skeletal and Rheumatic Conditions:

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Insomnia:

Stress relief is incredibly effective at helping people sleep at night, including people with Insomnia. In addition to this, many people have trouble falling asleep because their brain has trouble downshifting from their Alpha waves into the Theta Waves that act as a gateway to sleep.

By Floating, people's brainwaves are naturally dropping into this Theta State, meaning their body can easily make the transition into the Delta waves required for REM.

Autism:

People with Autism generally have a lot of trouble filtering the sensory information around them. The Floatation tank can make an especially chaotic environment relaxing.

Stress Relief:

This alone could be a packet of information unto itself. Stress is rampant throughout our culture, and the havoc this can have on the human body is well documented. Float tanks are possibly the most relaxing environment we can put our bodies into. Stress relief comes almost instantaneously from floating and simply gets stronger and lasts longer the more you float. Consistent floating may help alleviate all of the following:

- Hypertension
- Apoplexy or stroke
- Coronary heart disease
- Ulcers
- Migraine or tension headaches
- Asthma
- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Depression
- Burn out syndrome
- Fertility issues
- TMJ syndrome
- Trichotillomania

Research has shown more and more ailments to be closely related to stress.

Strengthened Immune System:

The abundance of resources freed up while floating allows our body to reallocate the energy towards building up our defenses, giving us a nice boost of immunity during and after a float.

Weight Loss:

The same method was applied in a problem that is even harder than smoking to solve or deal with: getting people to lose weight. Smoking is a relatively simple "all or nothing" behavior pattern, while overeating is very complex. The sensory deprivation session with weight-reduction messages is very effective. Subjects who underwent the therapy were able to lose an average over six kilograms over the following half a year, while those who were equally determined to lose weight, but only listened to messages, or only underwent the sensory deprivation, had lost virtually no weight after six months.

The most striking aspect of the study is that the people who combined the sensory deprivation with messages continued to lose weight steadily, month after month, and were still losing weight after six months when the study was completed. In fact, in the last four months of the six-month study period, the sensory deprivation group lost about two kilograms while the other groups gained some weight. In addition, amazingly, this continuous and extended weight loss was the result of only one session of REST.

In succeeding clinical studies, the technique was modified by personalizing the taped messages played to the subjects in the Floatation tank, and found that the results were even more impressive, with some of the subjects losing as much as 30 kilograms within two months.

Pain Relief and Injury Recovery:

In addition to the constant pain, physical injuries keep many people from working effectively. Float tanks can help get people back to work and save companies money in Worker's Compensation. Injuries have been shown to heal up to twice as fast while floating with gradually diminishing effects for several days after. This can bring sports players back onto the field faster, and is an ideal treatment to coincide with many forms of physical rehabilitation.

- Expediting healing in fractured bones and in sprained joints
 - Relief from back and neck pains
 - Spinal alignment
- Structural Alignment

Emotional Pain Relief:

The float tank is an ideal environment for working through traumatic or painful memories without the emotional charge they usually carry. The reduction of stress hormones prevents the body from triggering the same emotional stress cycles usually created when reliving painful memories, allowing us to reprogram our brains to dissociate these traumatic memories from the stressful neurochemicals they usually release.

Athletic Training:

Floating maximizes the benefits of fitness training, exercise, and workouts. Although exercise stimulates muscle growth, the growth occurs during relaxation, some 30-40 hours after exercise. The deep relaxation of floating improves blood circulation, and accelerates the growth and regeneration of muscle tissue.

In 1981, the Dallas Cowboys, regular Super bowl winners, became one of top-line sport's first advocates of floatation REST as a technique for developing the physical and psychological skills of their players. As sports psychology assumed an ever-growing role, along with a realization of the importance of relaxation training, many other eminent USA sportspeople - including the legendary Carl Lewis - started to incorporate floatation into their training regime.

For its relatively small size, Australia does disproportionately well at Olympic-level competitions. The training techniques of the AIS (Australian Institute of Sport) are regarded as amongst the finest in the world. Since 1983 the AIS has been consistent proponents of floatation REST and has done an immense amount of research and case studies that demonstrate its efficacy. Jeff Bond (sports psychologist, AIS) goes so far as to describe the floatation tank as "a new dimension in sports training for the elite athlete".

World-class athletes are highly motivated individuals. In the run-up to an important competition, an athlete may train for over 40 hours a week. Rigorous physical and mental training puts an enormous amount of stress on the athlete's body and mind. There is a strong tendency for athletes to over-train and this can have as disastrous an effect on performance as under-training.

Strenuous physical training creates a build-up of lactic acid in the muscles. Lactic acid is a toxic by-product of glucose metabolism. It begins to accumulate in the muscles within one minute of peak or anaerobic effort, and can remain in muscle tissue for three days.

An athlete training every day will accumulate increasingly large amounts of lactic acid, experienced by the body as increasing fatigue and chronic muscular tension or pain. Recent studies have directly linked lactic acid to high levels of anxiety and emotional arousal. By its rapid evacuation of lactic acid from the body, floatation enables the athlete to train without strain. The floatation tank offers the athlete an unprecedented degree of control over mood state, helping him or her achieve and sustain an optimal level of arousal during competition.

In a study by Dr Peter Suedfeld (University of British Columbia, Vancouver), recreational basketball players - tested one day before and one day after a single session of floatation plus visualization - showed an astonishing mean improvement of 37% in free-throw success compared to control groups. Suedfeld followed this up with a study of recreational darts players' ability to throw "bull's-eyes". The subjects - tested immediately before and immediately after a single session of floatation plus visualization - showed an impressive 13% improvement in accuracy compared to control groups. Interestingly, another of the test groups in Suedfeld's dart-throwing study - one assigned to floatation without any visualization exercise - showed an 11% improvement.

REST researchers have documented the effect of floatation in improving motor skills across a wide range of activities: basketball throws, rifle shooting, bowling, tennis, gymnastics, dart-throwing, and even performance in a flight simulator.

Pregnancy:

Parents and Mothers-to-be often hold in tension from changes happening in their lives and bodies. Floatation is a wonderful respite and great for a quick rejuvenation that is more integrated than sleep provides. Pregnant mothers are also often tense due to experiencing many bodily changes. As the baby grows and begins pressing on the mother's body, a place to relieve the pain might become necessary. It is also important for first time mothers to take the time to become familiar with their bodies.

During labour, the mothers who are "in touch" with their bodies experience far lesser pain than those who are introduced at the point of labour. While floating one has greater inner-vision.

One has the ability to bring awareness to parts of the body never before discovered. In doing this, nerves are sensitized and feeling comes which is the doorway for muscular control. As the woman lay their floating, her insight will allow a greater connection to the baby. Mothers tell of babies becoming more active while in this communion.

Check out the article about Pregnancy on the Projector magazine (Red River College) [here](#)

Floating free from habits & Addictions:

Recent discoveries, especially in neurochemistry, indicate that addiction is not restricted to what are usually thought of as “addictive drugs”. Addiction is simply a compulsion to continue doing something - whether taking a particular substance or indulging in certain behavior - combined with the occurrence of stressful withdrawal symptoms if the ingestion of the substance or the behavior pattern is suddenly ended.

Scientists have made great advances lately in identifying the mechanism of addiction. Biochemists have found, for example, that addiction is a result of changes in the body’s ability to experience pleasure, its reward system - changes in the number and activity of the opiate receptors of the nerve cells, and in the levels of the body’s internally produced opiates, the endorphins.

It is also known that the symptoms of withdrawal are associated with sudden oversupplies of the neurochemical norepinephrine in the limbic system, and that drugs that block the action of norepinephrine alleviate the symptoms of withdrawal. Such discoveries give scientists hope that they will soon develop chemical ways of overcoming addiction.

Taking a different angle of approach, behavioral and cognitive therapists and researchers have recently developed highly effective methods of attacking addictive mental processes and behavior, and it now seems clear that all who have a serious commitment to overcoming their addiction can do so, provided they follow some of the techniques for behavioral control.

Generally, the worlds of the behavioral/cognitive therapists and the neurochemists are far apart, one group trying to change the imperfect actions and ideas of imperfect people in an imperfect world, the other exploring, mapping, and “correcting” microscopic electrochemical processes in the nervous system.

With two completely different worldviews, these groups rarely agree on much. So it is significant that both behavioral/cognitive psychologists and the neurochemists now agree that Floatation tank is a powerful tool for overcoming addictions, both by changing addictive behavior and personality characteristics, and by bringing about rapid and striking changes in the human biochemistry.

In the period immediately after quitting a habit, the tank alleviates the pains of withdrawal and enables the user to feel some pleasure.

Floating also reduces the level of such anxiety-related biochemical as norepinephrine, which is released in great quantities during withdrawal.

A session in the tank alleviates some of the depression and anxiety usually associated with “crashing” or cutting off consumption of the drug after a period of use.

Even long after we have quit an addictive behavioral pattern, there are circumstances that will cause us to want to return to the addiction: stress, anxiety, depression, a certain individual, whatever. When we realize there is a chance that we return to our addictive behavior, we can simply take a float, stimulate our pleasure pathways, and avert the return to the habit.

Alcohol Reduction:

Similarly successful results have been obtained in using the tank to help heavy drinkers reduce their alcohol intake, or stop drinking altogether. For several years, Hospitals have used the Floatation tank as an integral part of their hospital-based stress management program. In a statistical analysis of eighty-seven outpatients gathered over a one-year period in the early 80s. The hospital noted that those who used the tank had a 50 percent reduction in smoking and 45 percent reduction in alcohol consumption. These statistics are striking, since the program was directed at general stress reduction and not specifically toward modifying a single behavior such as smoking or drinking.

The Floatation tank can be used as a self-assessment tool to devise programs:

- For the first time you can even work on coming up with solutions.
- What you want to say to yourself in the tank, which is in its self very therapeutic.
- Then each session that follows becomes a kind of booster session, adding power to the suggestions you have already incorporated into your life.

This way the behavior modification programs can have their greatest effect, and it is not necessary to devote a large part of the time allotted for taped messages during the float session.

Painkillers:

The BBC reports that 14,800 deaths a year, related to prescription drug abuse, more than Heroin and Cocaine combined. This number is rapidly growing. Float tanks have been an incredible tool for assisting in the process of breaking a pain killer addiction.

Smoking Cessation:

In a series of carefully controlled studies of the effects of Restricted Environmental Stimulation Therapy (REST) in the cessation of smoking, it was found that the effect of sensory deprivation is powerful and unprecedented.

According to a study of smoking and sensory deprivation, people who had undergone earlier sensory deprivation smoked almost 40 percent less than those who had received similar anti-smoking treatment but without REST.

Narcotics:

Drug rehabilitation centres would benefit greatly from the use of float tanks. Sensory deprivation is an effective means of helping with any substance abuse treatment, and integrating the tanks with drug rehab centres is another huge untapped market.

Visualization:

Even without a float tank, visualization can actually build muscle memory at about 70% the efficiency of actually physically practicing a skill. Mirror neurons are our brains vital learning mechanisms. Being in the tank provides the ideal environment to take advantage of visualization techniques.

Many modern researchers see the floatation tank as the optimal environment for enhancing an individual's powers of visualization and self-management. By combining deep physical relaxation with a highly receptive, visually vivid theta brain-state, the floatation tank facilitates an individual's ability to generate and manipulate visual imagery, and use imagery to maximum effect.

In the field of sports psychology, the use of in-tank visualization and mental rehearsal of complex sports moves has been proven to dramatically improve athletes' confidence and motor skills - more effectively than conventional practice on the track or field.

Research by Dr Edmond Jacobson (the developer of Progressive Relaxation therapy) established a link between mental images and neuromuscular responses. While in a state of relaxation, he asked people to visualize themselves running. He discovered that this created minute "phantom" muscular contractions of exactly the same type, as the subjects would have produced if they had actually been running.

It is now generally accepted that the most potent psychological technique for building up athletes' motor skills and confidence simultaneously is visualization - mental rehearsal of perfect sports moves.

Super learning:

The float tank is the prime environment for absorbing information. Free from distractions our minds are ready to devote themselves to learning and retaining knowledge. The float tank allows you to take full advantage of language acquisition and memorization.

Enhanced creativity:

There is both anecdotal and experimental evidence to support the enhanced creativity that the float tanks provide. Lab studies showing increased skill at Jazz improvisation, and other creatively taxing activities. Both technical skills, and overall depth and quality of creations rose in conjunction with floating.

Hemispheric Brain-wave Synchronicity:

EEG readings taken in relation to sensory deprivation show an increased synchronicity of brainwave frequencies across our left and right hemispheres. This indicates a level of mental efficiency, health, and clarity. Both research and anecdotal evidence has shown enhanced problem solving and cognitive ability.

Enhanced Learning:

Although your body enters a level of physical relaxation that is even deeper than sleep, in the float room your mind remains awake and dreamily alert, 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.

This is where your learning abilities are at their highest and powers of visualization and autosuggestion are greatly enhanced. Measurements of the brain waves produced by experienced Zen meditators in deep satori 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 float room, you enter this elusive state effortlessly and enjoyably, and stay in it for most of the float session.

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 tank 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.

In a study at Texas A&M University in 1982, Dr Thomas Taylor selected 40 well-matched subjects from 450 student volunteers and split them into two groups. Both groups underwent a series of 70-minute learning sessions using audiotapes. One group (the control group) listened to the tapes while sitting on sofas in quiet darkened rooms.

The other group listened while floating in floatation tanks.

Taylor tested both groups on three levels of learning performance:

- Basic memorization level
- Application level (the ability to understand a concept and use it)
- Synthesis thinking (the ability to put together several concepts and come up a new idea or an original solution to a problem).

A statistical analysis of the results showed that on the first level, floaters did better than the control group. On the second level, the gap between floaters and non-floaters widened. On the third level, the superiority of the floating group was greatest of all.

Taylor also recorded the brainwave activity of both groups while learning. He recorded several "Eureka events" - flashes of sudden insight or creative problem solving. He noted that these tended to occur in the deep theta state.

Overall Well Being:

As subjective as this sounds, there is actually a psychological evaluation that attempts to quantify people's general well being, which float tanks have been shown to dramatically improve

Gravity Reduction Benefits:

We use large portion of our mental and physical resources counteracting the force of gravity, the relief of this effort leaves our body with a surplus of energy and processing power at its disposal.

Skin and Hair Health:

Despite most people's immediate impression that soaking in a tub with that much Epsom salt would dehydrate or pickle you, Epsom salt is wonderful for skin and hair. In fact, Epsom salt's main use in the world right now is cosmetic.

Relaxation:

The term "relaxation" is vague and subjective. It can be used to describe any activity that brings temporary release from the pressures of life - watching TV, pursuing a hobby, drinking a 6-pack of beer, surfing the net, soaking in a bath, dancing till dawn...

Is there such a thing as true relaxation from a scientific perspective? Eminent stress researcher Herbert Benson MD of Harvard Medical College showed that meditation and yoga cause measurable changes to heart rate, blood pressure, muscle tension, hormone balance, and brainwave activity. At the time, it came as something of a surprise to learn that an individual could exert control over these normally unconscious processes that are regulated by the autonomic (involuntary) nervous system.

However, a major limitation to the efficacy of yoga and meditation was that these techniques required training, practice, and persistence. Benefits were not immediate. Relaxation required some hard work!

Benson's studies did not include floatation REST because it was largely unknown at that time. Since the early 1980s, however, research has demonstrated that floatation REST elicits a significantly more powerful relaxation response than any other technique known to science, and does this automatically, passively, and without the need for training or practice.

The brain is a network of cells that constantly exchange electrochemical messages with one another. Brainwaves are the electrical activity generated when hundreds of cells "fire" at the same time in the same part of the brain.

The human brain has four distinct brainwave patterns, which are associated with four distinct states of consciousness

Electrical activity in the cortex of the brain can be recorded with an EEG (electroencephalograph) and is measured in Hertz (frequency or cycles per second).

The beta state (13 Hz and above): Low amplitude, high frequency brain activity associated with normal waking consciousness and externally directed, and linear-thinking mental activity.

The alpha state (8 - 12 Hz): Higher amplitude, lower frequency brain activity associated with mild relaxation, daydreaming, reverie and light meditation. The alpha state is relatively easy to access.

The theta state (4 - 8 Hz): Very high amplitude, very low frequency brain activity just above the threshold of consciousness, associated with deep mental processes, creativity, inspiration, and illumination.

Theta is a highly elusive state. Although we fleetingly pass through the theta state as we fall asleep at night and again as we wake up in the mornings, it is practically impossible to enter this state at will and remain in it without falling asleep.

One of the unique features of floatation REST is that after 10 to 20 minutes of floating, theta becomes the predominant level of brain activity, and remains so for the duration of the float session.

The Delta state (0.5 - 4 Hz): This state of minimal brain activity is associated with deep dreamless sleep.

The brain-state associated with floating - where the whole brain is balanced, synchronized, and resonating at the theta level - is something unique.