

on your feet



That floating feeling

Imagine you are floating on your back in a warm pool. The aches and stresses of the day are drifting away as you experience weightlessness and enjoy the complete peace of your surroundings. **Kate Craig** puts her feet up and goes to great trouble to investigate a new phenomenon in relaxation.

No, this is not just another relaxation technique designed to send you off to sleep soundly, or the distant memory of your last European poolside holiday. Regular floating sessions in custom-built floatation tanks are the latest stress-busting craze to hit Britain, and they could be the perfect antidote to a busy day in the surgery.

Floatation centres are popping up throughout the UK, with one-hour floats priced from around £35-45 for one session or £70 for a block of three sessions.

It is claimed that the benefits of floating include intense relaxation, the relief of back ache and injuries, the release of endorphins (our body's natural form of pain relief that leaves us feeling happy) and even an improvement of the condition of the skin, as the pools

contain high salt levels, leaving skin smooth and silky.

Mario Venturi of London's Floatworks says floating would be particularly beneficial to dental care professionals who spend many hours a day on their feet or in difficult postures, helping the prevention and treatment of back and neck strain.

"Floating helps recovery from injuries more quickly," explains Mario.

The idea might seem a little unusual at first, not to mention potentially claustrophobic, but the latest tanks are more like floatation rooms with some being big enough to stand up inside. "You are in complete control in the tank – you can leave the lights on and leave the door open if you want to," says Mario.

Although the concept may appear new, floating as a relaxation technique has in fact existed for many years. "It's been around since

the fifties or sixties, but people have become more aware of it in recent years," explains Mario.

There's no need for you to be able to swim to enjoy the benefits of floatation tanks. Floating doesn't require any swimming skills, as you'll find your body floats like a cork and you'll experience complete weightlessness regardless of your size or body shape.

So next time your shoulders feel tense after a tough week at work, consider putting your feet up – not simply on the sofa, but outstretched in a warm solution of Epsom salts, with soft music playing in the background.

www.floataway.co.uk/wherecanifloat.html

www.floatationtankassociation.net

www.intotheblue.co.uk