



CASS MEGRAW

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I OFTEN complain that there aren't enough hours in my day. It seems that other people get more done than I do. They read more books and turn up to work with perfect hair after having caught up with a friend for breakfast, when I feel like I have rolled out of bed and hit the floor running, forgetting practically everything I need. So naturally, being in this almost constantly frazzled state, I need a little more than a glass of wine and an early night to help me relax.

I recently spent some time in a flotation tank. Basically, it's a 2m tank filled with 25cm of water that has been mixed with about half a tonne of epsom salts to help the occupant float. The water is heated to body temperature and once the shutter door to the tank is closed, it is pitch black.

The sensory deprivation and weightlessness of the experience forces your brain to shut off and you are left in a state of pure relaxation. Obviously, for people who are claustrophobic, it is not the best idea (although it is quite a large space), but otherwise, it is a great treatment for stress and anxiety, as well as arthritis and muscular conditions.

Carol Stuart has run a **Massage and Float Centre** since 1993 and has seen her fair share of nerves from first-time users.

“Some clients have been given a float session as a gift and enter apprehensive, often with fears of claustrophobia, but after they have experienced the float session, they have found they feel very relaxed, ” Ms Stuart said.

“Floating induces relaxation and one simply cannot be relaxed and fearful at the same time.”

Developed in **1954** by **John C. Lilly** to test the effects of sensory deprivation on the brain, flotation tanks are also used by **NASA** to help with the development and training of astronauts.

Some of the benefits of using a floatation tank include:

- ☐ Intense relaxation eases arthritis
- ☐ Releases endorphins (the body's natural pain killer)
- ☐ Improves skin condition
- ☐ Detoxifies the system
- ☐ Total relaxation in pregnancy for the full nine months
- ☐ Increases creativity and imagination
- ☐ Increases circulation and energy levels
- ☐ Balances left and right brain
- ☐ Improves concentration
- ☐ Regulates sleeping patterns and
- ☐ Relieves stress and anxiety.