

FLOATATION THERAPY-HOW TO FLOAT (PART 1)

How to Float – Mindfulness

The mental aspect of floating is perhaps the part most overlooked from the quick orientation most floatation centers give [first timers](#). While disappointing, it's understandable – showing a person how to achieve a mindfulness mindset that's already skeptical of a new, unique experience that takes place inside a futuristic “egg-spaceship-pod” could be a little off-putting. But if you really want to get the most out of your sensory deprivation experience, then mindfulness is the key.

Mindfulness Meditation is a meditative technique that focuses on observing life around you, as it happens, and doing so without preconceptions or judgments. Mindful, after all, means “inclined to be aware”. Simply put, you observe and note, but don't go beyond that. Normally, our brains are the efficient super-highways of observation, reflection, and action – as an example, you observe it is raining outside, you think through that things will be wet, you act by putting on rain boots and bringing an umbrella. In the mindfulness exercise, it's more along the lines of observing that it is raining outside, notice your thought process as a result, and then allowing that observation to ‘float on’ out of the forefront of your consciousness. This allows for a relaxed, freeing mindset, aiding in the type of mental relaxation that makes for an amazing floating experience.

How to Float with Mindfulness

First, go through the normal routine for floatation prep. Take a quick rinse-down shower, stretch yourself out a bit, and center yourself within the tank so you are floating comfortably away from the walls with no bodily movement so you don't spend the first 10 minutes playing the human pin ball inside the tank. As your body begins to calm down, lay back and relax. In order to get your muscles as relaxed as possible, go ahead and tense up all of the muscles in your body and hold that tensed position for a few seconds. Then slowly release. Do this until you feel your muscles go loose and limp.

At this point you are ready to begin the Mindful Meditative process while floating. Focus your thoughts on your breath, pay attention to how it goes in and out. Normal breathing, no need to do anything drastic, just become aware of your body and how it is acting. As you become more and more aware of your breath, transition from observing your breath, to observing the split second when your inhalation stops and your exhale begins, and vice versa. Focus more and more on that moment. Why focus on your breath?

The reason that you concentrate on your breath is because it is something real; it is reality. You will notice as you sit there for an extended period of time thoughts will enter your brain like crazy. The idea is not to “block” or “stop” your thoughts from happening. That will lead to frustration. Instead, concentrate on the reality of your situation and allow your thoughts to enter and exit your mind as your breath enters and exits your nostrils. – Lifehack.org's “[The Mindfulness Meditation Mini-Guide](#)“

As you float, you may become relaxed enough to close your eyes or you may wish to keep them open. Whichever is most comfortable is what you should do. When your float is over, slowly focus more on external things and come back to join the world around you – simple as that.

How to Float – Mindfulness Issues

Some people find that thoughts constantly enter their mind, taking them away from focusing on their breathing. And that's fine! Don't beat yourself up for having thoughts. Instead, treat them mindfully. When a random, crazy thought enters your head, just observe the fact that this thought has occurred. Now instead of reflecting on what it means, what's going on – the who, what, where, why, when questions that you'd normally have when considering something – don't. Observe the thought and let it drift out of the forefront of your consciousness the same way it drifted in. Turn your attention back to your breathing, and resume your meditation.

Another issue people encounter is as simple as having expectations beforehand. Many people hear of floating or getting in a sensory deprivation tank and hear about how their friends fell into a deep sleep, had all their aches and pains taken away, had some sort of crazy hallucination experience, or how physically comfortable it was. If you have these expectations, not feeling or experiencing them exactly how they heard other people experiencing them can oftentimes throw that experience off resulting in a float that doesn't live up to the preconceived standards. Don't focus on what someone else experienced – that's their reality. You want to experience your own reality – instead, see what mindfulness and floatation therapy bring to you. Keep in mind, the more you practice mindfulness while floating, and in your daily life, the wider range of experiences you will have. By practicing this mindfulness in times of stress out in the real world, you'll notice stress levels will begin to fall just like they do in the sensory deprivation tank; your body and mind learning from your experience in the tank and beneficially applying it in your everyday life!

FLOATATION THERAPY-HOW TO FLOAT (PART 2)

Health Benefits of Floatation Therapy

There are any number of conditions that people use Floatation Therapy for in order to lead happier, healthier, less painful lives. Many people suffering from [Lupus](#), Fibromyalgia, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Psoriasis, and other conditions that effect joints, skins, and muscles are no strangers to the inside of a sensory deprivation tank. In fact, the argument could probably be made that those that float with a purpose, like managing a chronic condition's pain symptoms, are more apt to take to the physical aspect of floatation therapy more readily, with that added motivation under their belts.

So, perhaps this guide is more directed at those who are just a little sore, just a little tired, just a little too-stressed to slow down enough to get the physical and mental benefits of a float tank.

First, acknowledge to yourself that you are looking at floating as a possible way to improve some area of your life. That area might be sore knees from running around and playing tennis. It might be a constant pain in your back from the rods you've had to put in from that horrible car accident. It might be that you have the weight of the world pressing down on you and you haven't been able to close your eyes at night for worrying about what tomorrow may bring. Whatever your reason is, it has been serious enough where you're looking for alternatives – because whatever else you've been doing just hasn't cut it. By acknowledging that you are going into this with a purpose, it'll help get your mind off the inherent newness and apprehension about trying something new and not, relatively-speaking, main stream. With this acknowledgment in mind, you are ready to go to the float center.

Inside the Floatation Center

So you've gritted your teeth and took the dive, or curiosity and the stuff you're dealing with has caused you to act, and you're now at the floatation center.

Relax – How to Float

Comfort is important in this process. If you're in a place you don't enjoy, don't feel welcome in, or doesn't feel up to the personal standards you hold for a business, go talk to the people at the front desk. By and large, the people in the floatation industry are some of the nicest and caring you can imagine. They took huge risks to open a business that's dedicated to improving peoples' lives. Because this industry is so new, they spend 80% of their time educating people new to floatation therapy and the concept of a sensory deprivation tank. They have floated hundreds of times themselves and seen more first-time floaters than anyone else. Whatever is troubling you, engage them in a conversation about it. I guarantee you that they will put you at ease and will be more than willing to answer any and all questions about floatation therapy and the experience you are about to have. Most importantly: keep asking questions! The more you learn, the more information you have, the more you will be able to push wondering thoughts away and concentrate on what you feel during your float.'

Inside the Sensory Deprivation Tank

Once you are in the float room, if there's a shower there, go ahead and jump in real quick. Just soak yourself down in some hot water and focus on relaxing. Take deep breaths, and just like in our previous post, go ahead and focus on your breathing. Long smooth breaths slow your heart rate, lower cortisol levels, and provide more oxygen to your bloodstream.

After you are comfortable and warm, get out and get your ear plugs in. If you'd feel more comfortable, you can bring your own pair from home, though many float businesses provide you with a pair. It is important to use a pair that is comfortable and provides a watertight seal without causing undue strain or stress on your ear or ear canal. Nothing can cause a float to go badly than the constant feeling of discomfort in your ears. Silicone, moldable, or even foam earplugs should be just fine for use in the float tank. Some of you may forgo earplugs altogether, which may not be the worst thing in the world, but you run the risk of getting Epsom Salt particulate in your ears after the water dries post-float. Buildup of it could cause lasting discomfort if not properly cleared and irrigated.

Getting in to the tank, first lower yourself gently into the water. Depending on the depth of the sensory deprivation apparatus you are using, you should either kneel, squat, or sit gently on the bottom of the tank. At this point, the pressure of your body focused on a smaller area (your feet or knees) will make it so that you do not float, allowing you to get in a more comfortable position.

When ready, sit down with your feet floating in front of you, and slowly lay back. As you lay back, your body's buoyancy in relation to the Epsom Salt content in the water will cause you will float effortlessly at the surface of the water.

Relax! – How to Float

At this point, it's important to develop a routine to make getting into the 'zone' easier with every float. [WiF](#) recommends the following: first, reach your arms above your head and stretch your body lengthwise to the degree that is comfortable to you. Without the pressure of your own body's weight to contend with, you'll notice that your muscles and joints will allow you to stretch farther in some areas than you previously thought possible. Focus on stretch your entire body out, feel your back muscles loosen and slacken, while your fingers reach to the furthest point away from your toes. After this, bend your body at the waist, and alternately stretch your sides to the degree that you are comfortable. Now, widen your legs to stretch them as well.

When you feel adequately stretched out, it's time to focus on calming your body down. The ideal is to have all the muscles in your body go as loose and limp as possible. To do this, try a common technique in some forms of yoga: progressive muscle relaxation. [Progressive Muscle Relaxation](#) is a process by which a person tenses muscle groups in areas of the body, holds that muscle tension for a short amount of time, and then releases. As a result, combined with the correct breathing techniques, bodily relaxation follows. Start by closing your eyes and focusing on your toes. Curl your toes inwards and hold them tense while counting to 5. When you reach five, slowly uncurl your toes. After you've relaxed your toes, now go the opposite way by extending them and tensing your muscles. After counting to five, allow them to go limp.

You can repeat this pattern as you see fit, with each muscle group as you go up your body. First, tense the muscle group, count to 5, then release. Do this as needed until you feel your body grow heavy and your muscles finally slacken.

At this point, go back to the lessons you learned in part 1 of this series – the mental aspect of floating. Between these two posts and relaxation strategies, you should be well on your way to having an amazing sensory deprivation tank experience!