

## UAE HEALTH

### How just one hour of floating is equal to four hours of sleep

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Floatation involves floating in a mix of body-temperature water and super-saturated Epsom salts. (Supplied photo)



## Dubai residents turning to alternative therapies to de-stress

Have you had a bad night's sleep, or a more than stressful morning at work?

Instead of grabbing another cup of coffee to top up the fuel levels on your lunch break, why not jump into a small pool of salt water to de-stress, unwind and revitalise your body for an afternoon back in the office?

This may sound absurd, but Dubai has just got its very own oasis of calm and tranquility right in the heart of the city - and according to its manager, just one hour there is equivalent to getting four hours of deep sleep.

Still a relatively new concept in the Mena region, the city's businesspeople are turning to Floatation therapy for a lunchtime quick fix.

Floatation tanks and pods act as stress relievers and natural body relaxants which can help stressed out businesspeople, parents or sports enthusiasts.

In a region where non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and obesity account for 75 per cent of its mortality rate, more than ever, people are on a drive to become more proactive about their health.

Health wellness is driving their desire to prevent illness and prolong life.

Alarmingly, only 19 per cent of the UAE population exercise enough according to the Dubai Health Authority (DHA), but at Point Zero Floatation Centre in Dubai, clients get the chance to makeover both their physical and mental health through a number of unique therapies.

Speaking to Khaleej Times about the benefits of non-medicated therapies such as floatation, the centre's manager, Carla Marl Schellink, said alternative concepts for better health are growing in popularity in the UAE.

"We have a gentleman who visits us regularly. He is a corporate manager for a big firm here and has a lot of stress at work. Rather than seek advice from a therapist, he comes here to relax."

Floatation gives this particular client the relaxation he craves, Schellink said.

Floatation (also known as Restricted Environmental Stimulation Therapy or REST) involves floating in a mix of body-temperature water and super-saturated Epsom salts. The high concentration of salts brings about a sense of 'weightlessness', allowing the body to slip into a deep state of relaxation.

Using an additional mix of external stimulators such as light and sound, it offers a more personable experience compared to the traditional methods of therapy which usually involve discussion sessions.

"Just one hour of floating is the equivalent of getting four hours of deep sleep," Schellink said.

Because of the deep state of relaxation, the treatment allows your body to naturally regenerate itself. "Don't get me wrong, this isn't the answer to all life's problems but it is a great stress reliever and energy booster. In such a fast paced city like Dubai, it is important people remember that success is great but keeping on top of your health is even greater."

As well as floatation tanks and pods, the centre houses a spa bike which is a less aggressive approach to the usual gym bike.

Combining hydro massage with cycling, the spa bike releases lactic acid buildup in muscles, in turn reducing muscle fatigue and soreness.

At a time where wellness tourism is growing in popularity in the UAE, it's not just medical tourists who should be benefitting from the growing market here.

Speaking on the sidelines of the 10th World Health Tourism Congress (WHTC) in Dubai last month, head of Medical Tourism Office at Dubai Health Authority (DHA), Linda Abdullah Ali, said private sector clinics across Dubai are encompassing the concept of alternative remedies and therapies within their practice.