

Floating effective for stress and pain

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Relaxation in large, sound- and light-proof tanks with high-salt water-floating is an effective way to alleviate long-term stress-related pain. This has been shown by Sven-Åke Bood, who recently completed his doctorate in psychology, with a dissertation from Karlstad University in Sweden.

The dissertation confirms what earlier studies have indicated: sleep was improved, patients felt more optimistic, and the content of the vitalizing hormone prolactin increased. Anxiety, stress, depression, and perception of pain declined. Those who took part in the research project all had some form of stress-related pain, and after only twelve treatments in the floating tank, their condition improved.

“Through relaxing in floating tanks, people with long-term fibromyalgia, for instance, or depression and anxiety felt substantially better after only twelve treatments. Relaxing in a weightless state in the silent, warm floating tank activates the body’s own system for recuperation and healing. The stress hormone decreases, as does blood pressure. The findings confirm and reinforce our earlier studies on the effects of relaxing in a floating tank,” says Sven-Åke Bood.

Many people experience improvement

His dissertation comprises four studies that all involve the treatment of pain and stress-related disorders with the aid of a floating tank. A control group that was not treated in a floating tank experienced no improvement in their health. After a period of treatment lasting a total of

seven weeks, 22 percent of the participants in the floating group were entirely free of pain, and 56 experienced a clear improvement. Nineteen percent felt no change and 3 percent felt worse. And the effect persists after the treatment is completed. The research project has been under way for four years and has included 140 individuals, all with some form of diagnosis involving stress-related long-term pain.

Several types of pain can be affected

“The treatment method can be used for several groups, such as people with whiplash injuries, fibromyalgia, depression, and long-term stress-related pain. We can also see that a combination of treatment in a floating tank and traditional therapy can be effective. We are now moving on in our research and will be monitoring blood circulation in the capillaries, the oxygen uptake of the blood, and how the body’s reflexes are affected,” says Sven-Åke Bood.

Source: Swedish Research Council

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