

A New Kind of Wellness Therapy Is Coming to Somerville

And it's in a giant salt-laden bathtub.

By Melissa Malamut | Hub Health | October 9, 2014 1:05 pm



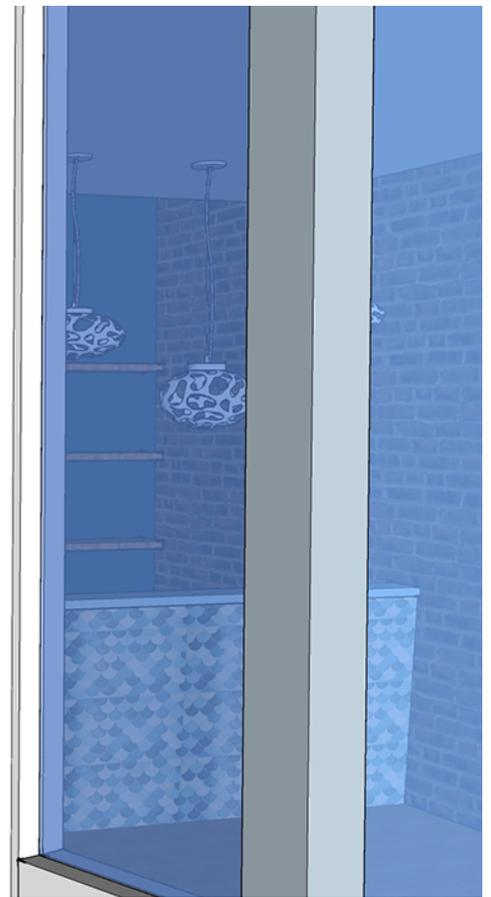
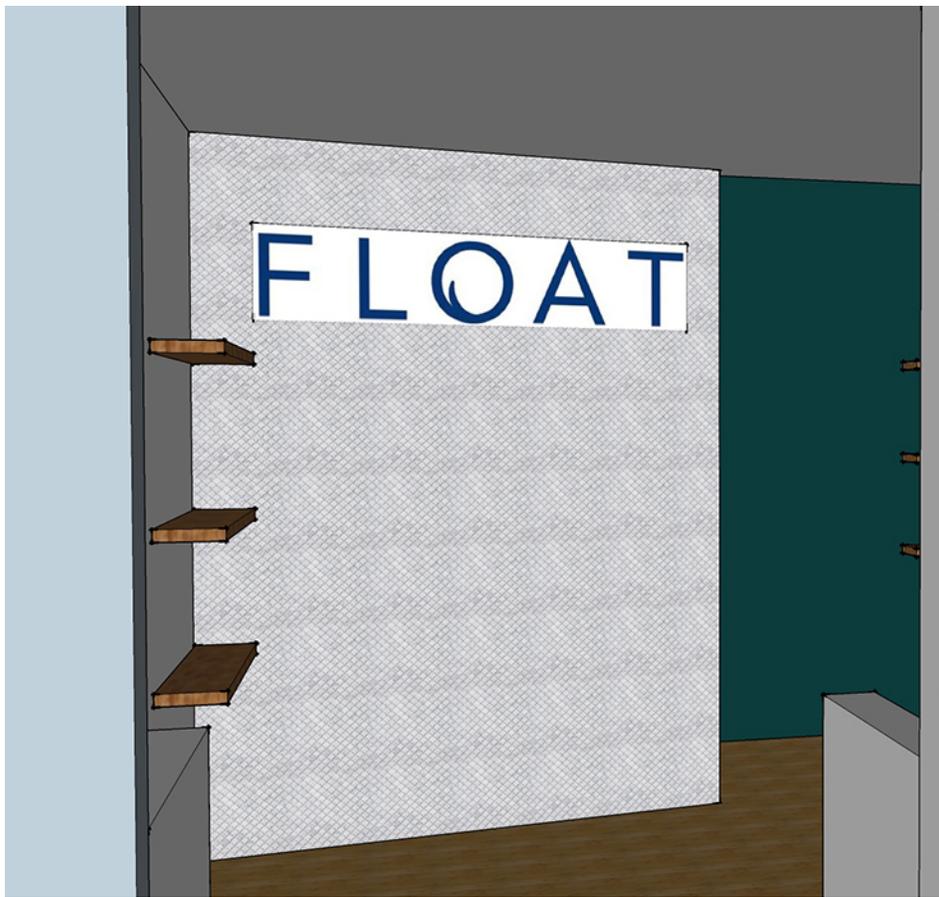
THE OUTSIDE OF THE NEW SPACE. PHOTO PROVIDED TO BOSTONMAGAZINE.COM

Some people take yoga classes to relax, while others may prefer personal meditation or massage therapy to unwind. But soon, there will be a new kind of wellness therapy coming to Somerville. And it's so bizarre, yet so very right.

It's called Float. And the name of the business is pretty self explanatory, because that's exactly what you'll be doing. Floating. In a huge bathtub. Filled with a little bit of water and 800 pounds of Epsom salt.

Float, which is scheduled to open in Somerville in late-November, is the brainchild of Sara Garvin and Colin Roald, a married couple who are going into business together the first time. Garvin, a massage therapist, says that finding the right spot for the new business was quite the hassle because Massachusetts has very specific health regulations.

"We started talking about [opening the business] early last summer, so it's been in the works for a little more than a year now," Garvin says. "The first thing we had to do is make sure we had approval from the Board of Health. We applied for it last fall, fall 2013, and got a positive response from the board. Although Somerville was our first choice, we started looking for places there and didn't have a whole lot of luck. Cambridge said no, so then we kept looking and finally found an appropriate space that we can work with in Somerville. We are talking to contractors right now. Work should begin quickly and we hope to be partially open by Thanksgiving."



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Garvin says that floating is used as a wellness therapy for anxiety, stress, and pain therapy. The method has recently grown in popularity on the West Coast, and parts of Europe, Canada, and Australia. The Somerville “float center” will be the only one in Massachusetts. Perhaps that’s why the crowdfunding campaign recently launched by Garvin and Roald surpassed its original goal of \$8,000 in less than 12 hours. The duo just raised the desired amount to \$15,000.

This is how it works: Someone greets you when you walk in and you’re taken to your own private room with a float tank and a shower. You get in the float tank (think: oversized, partially enclosed bathtub) that’s big enough to stretch out in (the tanks are 8-feet by 4-feet). About 10 to 11 inches of water fills the tank, which is saturated with 800-pounds of Epsom salt. For reference, that’s denser than the Dead Sea. The water is warm, about skin temp, and the room is dark and quiet. Basically, it’s sensory deprivation at its finest.

“The overall effect is that all the sensation is taken away from you,” Garvin says. “Your brain breathes a sigh of relief.”

And, yes, you’re naked in the tub. But Garvin says that is more sanitary than wearing a bathing suit. (Although the truly shy can still wear one if they prefer.) The water is run through a pool filter, and turned over at least three times in between guests. The water is also treated with peroxide, but the salt is not replaced after each person. The tanks are also treated with a UV light to keep it clean.



THIS COULD BE YOU SOON.

So why would you want to float? Reviews from national magazines say that it helped people sleep better and feel more relaxed throughout the day, even in rush hour traffic. “It’s for relaxation and healing that you don’t have to learn how to do the activity or be guided through it,” Garvin says.

As of now, Garvin and Roald are planning on having four tanks at Float. Sessions are 90-minutes (\$70) or 60-minutes (\$60). Memberships and packages will be available.

515 Medford St., Somerville; 844-44-FLOAT; floatboston.com

Here’s a video explaining more:

Source URL: <http://www.bostonmagazine.com/health/blog/2014/10/09/float-somerville-wellness-therapy-floating/>

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