

Therapeutic Float Tanks: A New Way to 'Relax Like You're in Outer Space' – in Somerville

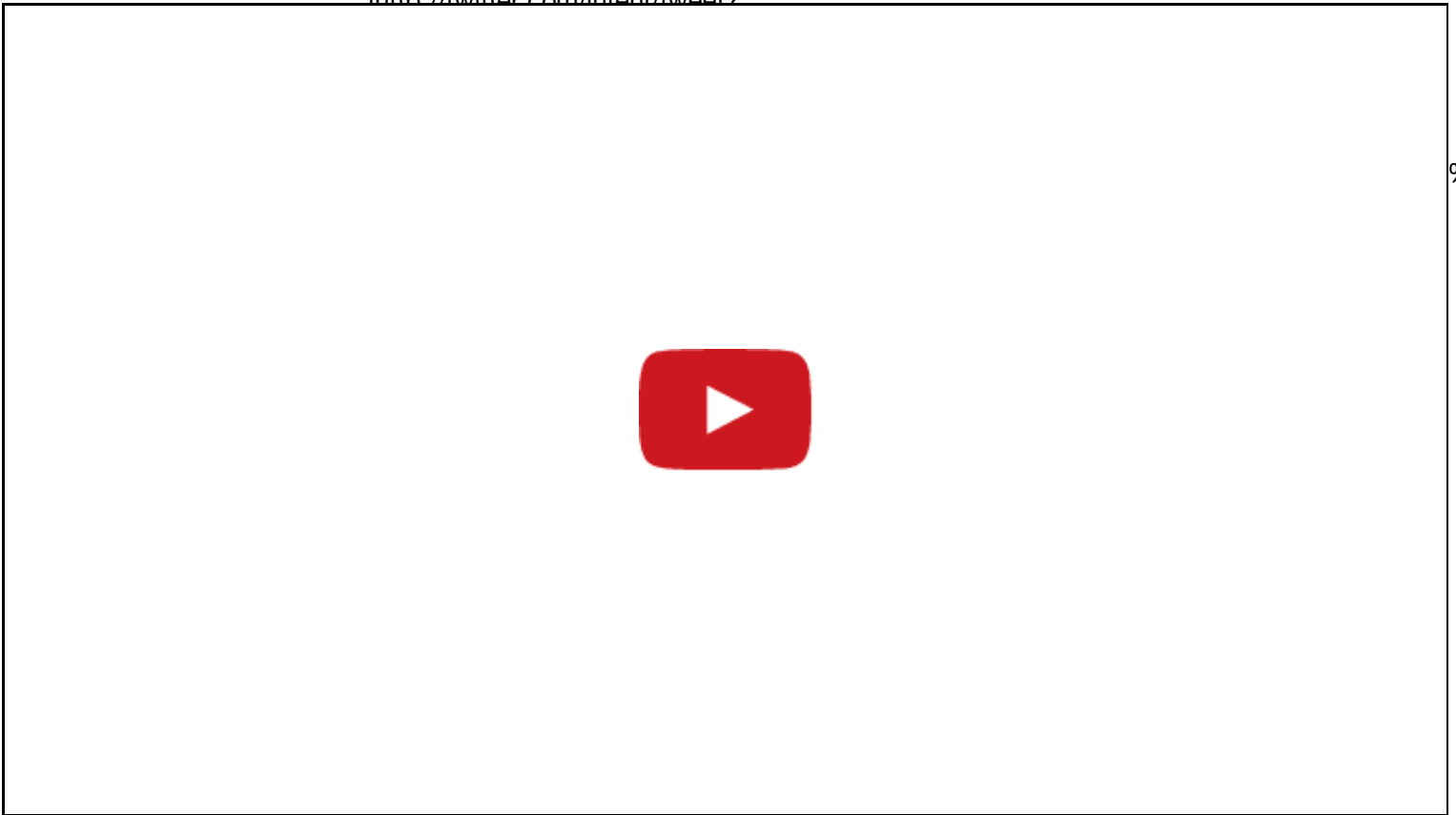
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Floating on a little pool of water filled with hundreds of pounds of epsom salt, enclosed in a "dark and silent" chamber, cutoff from the outside world is an innovative stress-reliever; spending an hour-and-a-half inside a float tank "is like relaxing in outer space."

This is called floatation therapy. And the founders of FLOAT Boston (<https://float.tilt.com/help-us-build-float>) are trying to build a facility – a "float center" – in Somerville's Magoun Square, fill it with float tanks and open it up to the public. To accomplish this, Float Boston needs to raise \$15,000. And as of this writing, 103 donors have already pitched in \$10,300.

The Tilt crowd-funding campaign expires 31 days from now.

"Donations" are actually, in effect, reservations for time inside one of these so-called float tanks."Reserve the time now for your own private experience, and your pre-order will give us the funds we need to finish building FLOAT," the founders state on the campaign site. "Be a pre-supporting hero!"

Float tanks look like surgical tables one might find on the set of a Ridley Scott film. They're also therapeutic tools, used to treat "stress, anxiety, and many kinds of aches and pains," according to Float Boston. And they're becoming increasingly popular on the West Coast, in Europe, Canada and Australia.

Float Boston would be the only float center in Massachusetts, and it could open as soon as December – if enough funding is raised for for construction, that is.

The general public will be allowed to reserve an hour's worth of time inside one of the center's float tanks, which contain shallow pools of water filled with 800 pounds of epsom salt – enough to make each pool as dense as the Dead Sea. Step inside one of these, float on your back for an hour; then step out, feeling like *Slate* contributor Seth Stevenson did (http://www.slate.com/articles/life/anything_once/2013/05/sensory_deprivation_flotation_tanks_

“I emerged in a profound daze. I spoke slowly and quietly, like a smooth-jazz DJ, to the person at the spa desk who inquired how my session had gone. I felt more rested than if I’d slept for 16 hours on a pile of tranquilized chinchillas.”

Whoa, now.



FLOAT Boston (<http://www.floatboston.com/about-us/>) was co-founded by Sara Garvin and Colin Roald (above). For the last three years Garvin, a licensed massage therapist, has been the owner of Somerville Therapeutic Massage. Roald is a software developer and project manager.

The couple has sunk their "life savings" into the project. There's a full architectural plan for the Somerville float center, and bids are in from three contractors. A building permit application is still pending. Donations of \$10, \$35, \$55, \$105, \$150, \$450 and \$1,500 – each providing unique perk-packages to donors – will be accepted.

To keep up to date on the project's status, you can follow them on Twitter (@floatboston) or on Facebook (<http://www.floatboston.com/>)



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