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Autumn/Winter 2022

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Young legs

Dennis Moore becomes a member of the marathon tribe

by Erin Quinn

DENNIS MOORE, 75, had just returned home to New Paltz from London, where he'd finished running five out of the six World Marathon Majors — a daunting athletic goal that includes not only qualifying for but competing in and completing the New York City, Boston, Chicago, Berlin and London marathons — each the standard 26.2 miles long. Not only did Moore, who works in website design, finish the London marathon, his 16th, but he placed tenth out of 45 men in his age group. He was the top American runner.

The Tokyo marathon remains. "I'm not into hardware," he said, "but they do put a beautiful ring of medals around your neck after you complete this."

How did Moore get into running? While he'd done some jogging off and on in his life, he said that he didn't "really start becoming serious about running until I was 67." That was around the time when Katherine Switzer, the first woman to complete the Boston Marathon and writer of the best-selling book "Marathon Woman," and her equally accomplished husband, Roger Robinson, a world-record holder, author and journalist as well, moved into the neighborhood. As Moore began to learn more about the two, he was compelled to run with them because that's where he could hear more of their vast array of amazing stories.

"I started running with them, and how could I not help but get inspired?" he said. "I told Roger that I'd really like to qualify for the Boston Marathon, and he tried to talk me out of it. He thought I was crazy."

Once Robinson realized how passionate about the activity Moore had become, he helped coach him. As any runner knows, qualifying for the Boston Marathon, on many a marathoner's bucket list, is no easy task. It took Moore competing in five marathons before he punched his ticket in Toronto with a time of four hours and 19 minutes to get to the starting line in Boston 2018.

"My tenacity was rewarded with one of the worst days of weather in Boston

Marathon history," he said with a smile. "It was brutal. 20 to 30 miles per hour headwinds, freezing rain, and by mile 23 I was really hurting." He not only survived the brutal Heartbreak Hill at Mile 20 but

managed to finish.

Moore said he pushed through to the finish despite the harsh conditions and the deep fatigue he was experiencing because he had already bought a Boston Marathon



Dennis Moore.

ERIN QUINN

jacket! "I couldn't wear the jacket without having completed it," he explained. He said running this Boston Marathon was "one of the most physically challenging things I've ever done."

There's this common bond

As he recovers from the London Marathon and prepares for his final World Marathon Major in Tokyo in March, Moore mused on what it was about the marathon experience that has drawn him in and propelled him to 17 finishes. "The running community is the most warm and welcoming culture I've ever participated in," he said. "There's this common bond, a connection that is forged through all those miles."

There is a tribal aspect of running, no matter if you're at the front of the pack or the back of the pack. You've all endured the same distance, the same course, the same highs and lows, just at different speeds. But there's also the day-in and day-out friendships of the kind Moore has fostered with Robinson and other local runners he logs the miles with on the Wallkill Valley rail trail (WVRT) or the Mohonk Preserve.

"My wife and I have become close friends with Katherine and Roger, and they have

been an unbelievable support to me," Moore explained. "They've travelled to many of my races to cheer me on and support me. Roger and I have traveled and competed in races together. He keeps breaking world records at 83. He's held the national marathon distance records twice. He has his name engraved in the sidewalk at the Boston Marathon. He's the real deal."

Moore and Robinson are not only accomplished runners, particularly at a mature age, but they are unbelievably fast! After Tokyo, Moore has his sights on doing the Fifth Avenue Mile, where he hopes to throw down a sub-seven-minute mile. "My weakness as a newer runner is endurance," said Moore. "I think I do have some speed. The shorter I run, the faster I go, so I'd like to focus on some shorter races that interest me. The Fifth Avenue Mile has always been one I'd like to do."

With all the running he's done the last seven years, Moore feels fortunate not to have sustained major injuries. "I have a theory," he said. "Since I didn't start running until much later than most people do, I don't have all of the strains and sprains and scar tissue they do. I have pretty young legs!"

Moore has also served as a volunteer in many of the local Shawangunk Runner trail races in the region.

The scuba adventures

He continues to pursue his lifelong love of scuba diving. "I call myself a serial obsessionist!" he exclaimed. He took a deep dive into sailing in his past and into flying, obtaining a private pilot's license. But scuba has been with him for decades, and the adventures never stop.

"I've been to South Africa several times, where I've been fortunate enough to dive where there are tiger sharks. I love tiger

sharks. They're such fascinating, smart, sensitive creatures. They've swam right up to me, and are just curious and take a swim around me and then keep going."

In his deep-sea diving, he's been able to explore Japanese naval ships sunk in World War Two. He's taken a wild ride doing cenote (sinkhole) diving in Puerto Morelos in Mexico.

Right now, though, his major focus is to complete the World Major Marathon series in Tokyo. "I'm really excited," he said. "What's so great about running is that it helps me live in denial. I think I'm 35!"

No matter what age or what pace or what your interests in life are, Moore serves as a living reminder that passion and joy are timeless and ageless. They're always there for you to expand what you think you're capable of.

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Going to pot

A marijuana primer for inquiring New Yorkers

by Zac Shaw

AS OF OCTOBER 5, medical marijuana patients and caregivers could legally grow and get by on their own supply in New York State. For those whose suffering and symptoms are ameliorated by the plant, this news is a huge relief. However, these new regulations can be confusing. There are many nuances to navigating your first cultivation cycle. We're here to help.

Unfortunately, the state is fast earning a reputation for more heavily regulating marijuana than other jurisdictions do. Before you plant a seed, it's best to get caught up on the confusing bundle of red tape attached to New York's latest step towards full legalization.

First and foremost, recreational users are not yet allowed to cultivate their own plants. One must be officially recognized by the state as a qualifying patient or caregiver.

The good news here is in January of this year medical practitioners in New York were granted wide authority to prescribe



medical marijuana for any condition they believe can be treated effectively with the plant. Previously, medical marijuana cardholders were limited to a relatively short list of conditions.

Today, an increasing number of surveys and studies are pointing toward marijuana's efficacy in improving a wide range of physical and mental conditions.

For those who are licensed, there is a legal limit to the number and type of plants one can cultivate. Each patient or caregiver is allowed three immature and three mature plants. Immature plants are defined as those without flowering buds, mature plants as those with. The absolute maximum number of plants one is allowed to grow on one's property is twelve, allowing for two licensed people to cultivate in one place.

Limitations are different for caregivers, who can grow up to twelve plants for up to four people, but only six if being grown for a single patient.

Furthermore, plants that are harvested and dried are counted in the total number

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of allowed plants. Since no one in their right mind would harvest or dry immature plants, this technically means once an individual harvests their three mature plants for consumption they must ensure the immature plants don't mature before the harvested ones finish drying.

What constitutes possession?

As anyone who has grown weed will tell you, time-to-harvest can vary greatly, as can the length of the drying/curing process. The law is unclear on when "drying" turns into "possession."

Each individual is limited to five pounds of "personal home-cultivated cannabis" in their residence, as per earlier regulations.

If you are unfamiliar with marijuana weights and measurements, five pounds of weed is a lot of weed. One ounce of weed is enough to make about 80 cigarette-sized joints. Five pounds would allow for smoking 17 such joints per day.

Of course, the image of the pot smoker is woefully outdated, as tinctures, edibles, and other forms of non-smoking consumption have risen dramatically over the years. These options are especially popular with medical users.

Reasonable measures

The formulation of these substances from a cultivated plant is actually quite straightforward, with many online guides on how to make them. Be aware that New York's new regulations prohibit processing cannabis at home "by means of any liquid or gas other than alcohol that has a flashpoint below 100 degrees Fahrenheit." Also be aware that New York is one of 13 states that currently outlaws 190-proof alcohol (often known as Everclear), so you may have to get inventive when creating your extracts.

The cavalcade of regulations marches on. There is language in the new law dictating that "reasonable measures must be taken" to secure the plants from access to anyone under the age of 21. These measures include



(but are not limited to) making sure the cultivation area is enclosed, not plainly visible to the public, and locked, gated, or fenced in some way to deter outside access.

Interestingly, the law does include some stipulations for landlords, New York having learned from other states of the tension

between the state legalizing medical marijuana while still illegal under federal law. A number of medical marijuana patients in other states have been told by landlords they cannot consume or grow cannabis in their rental properties.

New York's law provides some language in



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their tenants' favor. Renters are protected from being refused a lease or being penalized for medical marijuana consumption, and cannot be denied the right to consume for medical purposes even if the landlord has a smoke-free policy. Landlords who would "lose a monetary or licensing related benefit under federal law or regulations" are exempt, however, and tenants can still be hit with charges for smoke-related property damage.

Those who wish to grow their own medical marijuana are encouraged to read the full text of the law to ensure they are in compliance.

Growing your own

Now that the regulations are out of the way, let's get to the fun part: Growing

your own.

A complete guide to growing your first plants is far outside the scope of this article, and besides, the Web is full of advice for your specific needs. A wealth of videos and articles are a Google search away.

In summary, marijuana is a relatively easy plant to grow (though it's certainly not a weed if you're using it for medical purposes). However, just as with any plant one harvests, there's a huge difference between growing and thriving. You'll need some knowledge, experience and equipment before you're yielding the kinds of buds you see in professional cultivation houses.

A first-time grower should ask themselves a few basic questions to get started down the path of researching how to cultivate their own buds.

Where do I get seeds? Marijuana seed banks are the most popular option. There are vast catalogs of species to order online. Your biggest hurdle will be choosing between the many options. You might also ask around — seeds are not illegal to possess in New York as they contain no THC. If you're looking to purchase from a medical pot dispensary, not all locations carry them, and it's usually easier to order online anyway.

Where do I grow? Cannabis plants like a lot of light, especially during the vegetative stage. By far the cheapest, easiest option is to grow plants outside in a secure area with all-day sunlight coverage. When growing outdoors, be sure to choose a seed that grows well in New York's climate.

Unfortunately, the outdoor growing

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season has just ended. The timing of the legalization of medical marijuana-growing in New York is unfortunate. Plants were being harvested just as the law was taking effect.

Luckily, if you're willing to make a modest investment in equipment and do a bit of research, growing indoors under artificial lights offers many advantages. A much greater variety of strains will flourish, your plants are more secure. You don't have to worry about weather, sunlight, or other factors that can mess up your harvest. Plus, you can grow year-round.

How long does it take from cultivation to consumption? Grow time will vary, but generally speaking it will be 16 to 24 weeks between planting a seed and enjoying your finished product. Germination should take less than a week, after which the plant is in a vegetative state for a month or two. Then the plants begin to flower, a process that takes eight to eleven weeks (varying by strain) and should result in roughly doubling their size.

Afterwards, plants are harvested and dried over several days, stems and leaves are trimmed (and saved to make extract), and then buds are jarred to 'cure' for one or more weeks to improve flavor and quality.

What do I need to grow? Besides seeds, you'll need the right nutrients to keep your

plants growing robustly. There are many options, from wholly organic to turbo-charged by science. A jeweler's loupe comes in handy for inspecting tiny trichomes on (minuscule spheres that change appearance as a plant becomes ready to harvest) on buds and leaves.

If you're growing indoors, there's no end to how high-tech you can get. In addition to grow lights, you'll want a fan to keep air circulating, and a hygrometer to measure humidity. Depending on the environment, you might also need a humidifier or dehumidifier.

All these tools come in handy during the drying process, which must be carefully monitored to avoid issues that could negatively affect the quality of your buds.

Dispensaries are coming

As medical patients and caregivers cheer this common-sense change in marijuana laws, recreational users will have to wait before they enjoy similar freedoms. Despite consumption and possession being decriminalized for all marijuana users, those without medical marijuana licenses will have to wait 18 months after the first recreational dispensary opens — something that's predicted (but not guaranteed) to happen before the end of 2022.

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Supporting the kids

County mental-health program focuses on middle schools

by Abigail Gierke

THE MENTAL-HEALTH NEEDS of school-aged children and adolescents have been increasing for the past decade. Kids have been experiencing stressors at home, at school, and in the community. Although advancements in technology have helped improve the lives of all of us, it's no surprise that certain aspects of these changes have had adverse effects for many. The pandemic only exacerbated a problem. In 2021, the U.S. Surgeon General issued an advisory on protecting youth mental health — highlighting the crisis across the country.

Ulster County has seen trends that track like the rest of the country. On June 21 of this year, the county legislature unanimously passed a resolution to allocate a portion of its federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and opioid settlement funds to support more mental-health resources in schools.

"There has been a significant uptick in the number of students and families who need mental-health, social and emotional support," said Charles Khoury, district superintendent for Ulster Boces.

The needs were unclear

County mental-health commissioner Tara McDonald expresses a similar sentiment. "In our county, we could use more clinical opportunities for kids. Our clinics tend to be full with wait lists. So that's challenging. But if we can support kids in other ways and more around the social determinants of health, then maybe they won't need that clinic appointment to talk about the social determinants of health."

Knowing that ARPA funding would come to both schools and the county, McDonald and her team started discussions with Ulster Boces and personnel from the nine school districts in the county. Their aim was to support students as they began to re-enter classrooms following virtual learning.

"We started conversations with school districts and leaders during the tail end of the isolation period of Covid in the 2020-2021 school year We wanted to really provide support to the districts as the kids would



PROVIDED

County mental-health commissioner Tara McDonald.

be coming back to school," said McDonald.

The needs were unclear. "I'll never forget that the schools were sort of like 'We don't know what we'll need. We haven't seen the

kids face-to-face for well over a year, and we just don't know what that will look like.' So our conversations started with 'What were students struggling with before the

pandemic?" McDonald said.

Those discussions led to the formation of a new county program, Mental Health in Schools, to focus on the junior-high and middle-school level.

McDonald said that the middle-grade focus was chosen due to the developmental trajectory of the age group. "Middle school is a difficult time," McDonald said. "Kids are in this transitional period leaving elementary school but going to high school, and in that middle time because of all the changes going on biologically and developmentally, it was really a place where the schools unanimously thought to put some focus."

According to the World Health Organization, adolescence takes place between ages 10 and 19. It is a time in a young person's life between childhood and adulthood when it is most important to create healthy habits to build upon a solid foundation.

"The more we can support kids now who are struggling and overwhelmed, that's one less kid that might seek out drugs or other negative behavior patterns to quell that overwhelming feeling," stressed McDonald.

The right partner

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pilot year. LaSalle, founded 168 years ago by the De LaSalle Christian Brothers, is a residential school for boys which offers preventive and therapeutic day services, education, and supportive services to youth in need.

LaSalle Schools has experience providing after-school services in Ulster County. “They already have a small understanding of the nature of our county and what it’s like to provide community-level care here,” said McDonald. She expressed confidence in LaSalle Schools as the right partner for the county. “The beautiful marriage between knowing how the education system works

through running their own school and being able to do the clinical work to translate into the community was it for me.”

LaSalle Schools and Ulster County are working on hiring mental-health teams for each school district. Each team will consist of a licensed/clinical social worker and a case manager who will, take on caseloads together. Each district will be paired with another district. Pairings are based on geography: Onteora/Saugerties, Rondout/Ellenville, New Paltz/Highland, and Wallkill/Marlboro. Kingston, the largest of the school districts, will have its own team and will take 20 cases at a time.

The referral route

A referral system in each district will serve as the starting point. Referrals to each team will come from the district through teachers or other support staff.

The Department of Mental Health and LaSalle Schools are working directly with the school districts to come up with unique criteria specific to each student population. “Each school is so unique, and we want to make sure we are as responsive to the needs of each district as possible,” said McDonald.

McDonald and her team acknowledge that the rural nature of the county presents challenges. The program is not a one-size-fits-all. “Right now, health insurance and Medicaid dictate where someone can go for mental-health services,” she said. “The beauty and opportunity of this program are that we can be really nimble. We don’t have to be as strict on referral criteria, and can shift depending on various needs.

“With the Mental Health in Schools program, the county has made a commitment to each district acknowledging that each district and school is different. We are saying ‘Tell us how you believe we can best fit the need of the student.’”

According to an Ulster County press release from June 22, “Teams will provide face-to-face sessions with the youth, family support sessions with the youth and their parent/caregiver, ongoing communication with school staff, linkage to community resources, and coordination with other providers including but not limited to

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mental health, juvenile justice, social services, primary care, etc. The program will be voluntary, free of charge, and youth and parents/caregivers must provide consent to participate."

When to seek help

If you live with a child or adolescent and are concerned for their well-being, the Ulster County Department of Mental Health has provided red flags/warning signs that a young person may be in trouble:

- A victim of bullying (both at school or home)
- Few or no friends, isolating behavior
- Notable change in behavior (more withdrawn, angry, etc.)
- Making statements or jokes about a mass shooting or targeted homicidal statements or jokes
- Interest in weapons and firearms
- Hopeless thoughts, not future-oriented
- Suicidal behavior
- Self-injurious behavior
- Substance use

To learn more about Mental Health in Schools contact the Ulster County Department of Mental Health at 340-4110 or dnh@co.ulster.ny.us. Students and parents are encouraged to ask their district's director of pupil personnel services about the program.

If you are a licensed mental-health clinician and are looking for a great opportunity to work in the school system consider applying! Lasalle Jobs, Employment in Kingston, NY | Indeed.com



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Outdoor activities for teens

Get away from life in a cocoon, my fellow young folks

by Theo Sassano

WHEN THE COVID 19 pandemic hit two and a half years ago, many recreational lives took a turn for the worse, especially for teenagers like me, who were obliged to learn from the compounds of our homes. We had been able to get only limited exposure to the outside world.

Spending more time outdoors is imperative to maintaining a healthy lifestyle, we have been told, especially at such a crucial age as mine. While most aspects of daily life have now returned to normalcy, many of us have found it challenging to introduce open-air activities back into our routines. We teens need to find a place to begin. To that end, here are various ways in which teens can properly unplug throughout the year.

I have been playing tennis for the better half of my young life, I can attest that it is a great year-round sport for those looking to become more active. Teens who seek a break from the competitiveness that can come with team sports might find casual



PHOTOS BY THEO SASSANO

Top, Greig Farm in Red Hook; above, Kiwanis Ice Arena in Saugerties.

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tennis the perfect solution.

Regardless of one's skill level, tennis is invigorating by nature and a substantial source for exercise. While there is a learning curve, the sport is easy for a beginner to pick up and enjoy with minimal practice. It is readily accessible, with an abundance of courts spread out across the Hudson Valley.

I would recommend the Red Hook recreation center to those near the area. Its tennis courts are free of charge usually vacant. The center also has pickleball courts, a sport similar to tennis that has seen a surge in popularity due to its simplicity.

Other spots with tennis courts include the Saugerties High School tennis courts, Forsyth Park in Kingston, and Andy Lee Field in Woodstock. For all the benefits that tennis offers, teens who give the sport a try may come to see it as an excuse to get out more while having genuine fun.

With technology becoming more embedded into our daily lives, it can be easy to underestimate the importance of having regular physical activity and time in the sun.


In the fall and spring, during which temperatures are mild and sights are grand, simpler activities can be easily enjoyed. Nature often goes unappreciated, and it is important to stimulate the senses by embracing it. Taking a nice hike through the countryside can be an enriching experience. Other casual activities including fruit and pumpkin picking, trail walks, and picnicking can be valuable bonding experiences.

Visiting farms is a sometimes overlooked activity in the Hudson Valley, where there are numerous wonderful places to choose from. Saunderskill Farm in Accord, Greig Farm in Red Hook, and Twin Star Orchards in New Paltz, to name a few of so many, provide affordable options for these expeditions. They are well worth visiting.

Another notable, more invigorating venture is ziplining, which offers breathtaking

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Top, Saunderskill Farm in Accord; left, Red Hook Recreation Park; right, snowboarding.



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views and thrilling highs; one popular location that offers ziplining tours is Hunter Mountain in Greene County. These activities are merely examples among limitless possibilities, as the vibrant nature of the fall and springtime allows for a pleasant time in any case.

Winter may tempt teenagers to spend the majority of their waking hours sitting by the fireplace, hot cocoa in hand,

browsing through social media. While the chilly weather can be discouraging when it comes to going outside, there are numerous winter activities in upstate New York perfect for preventing cabin fever.

Although various common winter habits like sledding and ice skating are enjoyed by many, other activities can be intimidating to those who are yet to try them. Skiing and snowboarding, for example, may not seem worth the effort to some, but can be learned with ease and never fail to pass the time.

The state's luscious mountains provide for several high-quality ski resorts, like Belleayre, Hunter Mountain and Windham. They feature a variety of slopes to accommodate all levels of proficiency as well as skiing and snowboarding lessons for those just starting out. These exhilarating sports are best experienced with others. They help make staying indoors during a winter day become an infrequent occurrence.

With technology becoming more embedded into our daily lives, it can be easy to underestimate the importance of having regular physical activity and time in the sun. Taking measures to increase one's efforts can have significant benefits on both physical and mental health, including on stress levels and self-esteem.

Finding motivation in what is often a difficult stage of one's life, however, may serve as a barrier to unlocking all these benefits. Nonetheless, with proper goals and ideas in mind, the potential to adjust one's lifestyle is present in all teens. It only takes a healthy mindset to get started.

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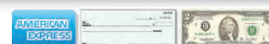
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How I flunked Flotation 101

How to know whether isolation tanks are or aren't for you

by Frances Marion Platt

PRACTICALLY EVERYONE I know who has tried floating in a sensory deprivation tank has become an enthusiastic convert. The brain state induced by flotation, known as R.E.S.T. (reduced environmental stimulation therapy), is characterized by increased theta wave activity. It's a state of deep relaxation that, for most, releases anxieties and muscle tension, and even enhances creativity and strategic thinking.

The flotation/isolation tank was invented

in 1954 by John C. Lilly, a brilliant physician and neuropsychologist who later went on to fame experimenting with LSD

.....
"Isolation therapy hadn't failed me. I had failed it."

with Timothy Leary and then researching human-dolphin communication. Lilly wanted to study the effects of near-total

sensory deprivation on human consciousness, and in the process stumbled on a therapeutic modality that millions have subsequently found helpful for pain relief, alleviating stress, anxiety and insomnia, as well as stimulating creative thinking.

Elite athletes often use flotation sessions in preparation for big games or races. Artists come out of the tank brimming with inspiration.

Mostly, though, the therapy is favored by people with chronic musculoskeletal pain issues, many of whom find that the

sense of weightlessness they encounter in the tank is the only thing that affords deep relief. Pregnant women are often

big fans – especially once they've reached the point where sleep becomes a problem because there's simply no sleeping position

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that's comfortable.

It's not unusual to fall asleep during a tank session, and regular users report that such sleep is profoundly restful. You don't have to worry at all about rolling over and drowning: Even without the optional floatie headrest, your head and body are so buoyant in the Epsom-salts-saturated water that you're bobbing half out of it.

In my own experience, it took a few minutes for my exposed upper half to feel cozy enough as the "perfect-temperature" saline solution warmed the air above it. That's why these tanks are built inside a cocoon of thick insulation. You're supposed to lose any sensation of discomfort very quickly.

Unfortunately for me, that was the point where things started to get weird.

By any superficial measure, I should've been the perfect candidate to enjoy flotation therapy. I adore hot baths, especially by candlelight. When I built my own house years ago, I made sure to clean up, repaint and install an old-fashioned clawfoot tub that was deep enough for a full-body soak.

Astrologically I'm a water sign, and I've always been drawn to water for relaxation. It's always a special treat to stay in a hotel that has a Jacuzzi, and the wildest New Year's Eve party I ever attended took place at a house with an outdoor hot tub. (You haven't really lived until you've lounged in

steaming water with your hair a crunchy crown of icicles.)

Water was my friend. I grew up near Long Island beaches and spent childhood summers in a beat-up Airstream trailer parked beside Napeague Bay. Skinny-dipping in Shawangunk waterfalls was one of the great joys of my university years in New Paltz. I never stopped being drawn to swimming, even after that little incident at Far Rockaway at age five when I stepped over an abrupt dropoff and a family friend had to drag me out of the surf.

Oops. Yeah, there was that near-drowning experience at an impressionable age. And a year later, I got as sick as I've ever been, with a case of pleurisy. That's an infection of the lining of the lungs, one of whose symptoms is a persistent sensation of drowning. Maybe there's more history here that I should've considered before assuming that flotation was for me.

I never stopped swimming, but I couldn't cut it on my school swim team because I couldn't do the front crawl. I couldn't properly synchronize breathing in with where my nostrils were. Still can't.

~~~~~  
**"By any superficial measure, I should've been the perfect candidate to enjoy flotation therapy."**  
 ~~~~~

The same issue of being "a nose-breather" made me quickly wash out of a scuba course as an adult. I'm fine snorkeling, so long as my nose is blocked by the mask, but I can't dive with just the snorkel. The water goes up my nose when I breathe in through my mouth, and I get panicky. Panicky is the opposite of how a float is supposed to make you feel.

Fluid and my lungs have long had an adversarial relationship. It's only a matter of luck that I've never had pneumonia. The battery of breathing tests I had after being diagnosed at age 40 with sarcoidosis in the lymph nodes that cluster around the bronchi disclosed that my lung capacity and my ability to use oxygen efficiently aren't great – perhaps the legacy of that childhood bout with pleurisy. Even in my prime hiking years, I got winded easily.

But in an isolation tank, there's no point at which your nostrils need to meet the water, so fear of drowning shouldn't have been a real issue. Nor do I have any history of claustrophobia; I enjoy spelunking and crevicing.

The main red flag that I shouldn't have ignored was the fact that I'm absolutely miserable in hot, humid weather. I can't

spend more than about ten minutes in a steam room before getting an anxiety attack. In summer I just want to curl up and die. So, at the point when the tank got toasty-warm and I was supposed to be vegging out and letting my mind wander, instead I became aware of the icky

sensation of sweat running down my face.

Soon I began to feel like I was suffocating as I breathed in the steam. For me, it wasn't like a nice hot bath in a room with good air circulation. It was stifling.

I found my "relaxing" soak interrupted by my frequently having to sit up and push the door open, eventually jamming a washcloth into the hinge to keep it propped in a half-open position. Even then, to my shame, I couldn't wait for it to be over.

Isolation therapy hadn't failed me. I had failed it. I'm an unrepentant Flotation 101 dropout. This could conceivably happen to you as well, if you passionately hate summers even in the Northeast and dream of retiring someplace closer to the Arctic Circle.

Fortunately, that doesn't describe most people. More likely you'll come out of the tank with a blissed-out look on your face and your body utterly relaxed.

You won't know for sure until you give flotation a try.

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Home remedies

Advice from a lover of miraculous herbal cures

by Sparrow

MOST PEOPLE ARE aware of the healing powers of herbs. But did you know that certain plants can heal your house as well?

If your toilet isn't working properly, drop three or four hibiscus leaves into the bowl. Do not flush! The hibiscus will calm the toilet, and the problem will soon be resolved.

If your sofa is broken, place a quarter of an ounce of boneset under the cushions. This will prevent back problems.

Is your washing machine slowing down? Try "feeding" it a half cup of elderflower tea. (For a tetchy dishwasher, add half a tablespoon powdered white pepper to the tea.)

If one of your paintings is hanging crooked, drop a few echinacea leaves atop the frame. Within two days, the painting will straighten.

A broken drawer should respond to an infusion of chamomile.

A radio that broadcasts mostly static may

be cured with a potpourri of rosemary and dandelion root. (This is also helpful with recalcitrant TV sets.)

Apply a maceration of stinging nettles to torn curtains.

If a door doesn't close properly, rub it with willow bark.

A threadbare rug can be renewed with a few drops of coltsfoot tincture.

Before you throw away a broken computer, cover it with chicory flowers for a day, and see what happens.

A cracked hatrack can be rehabilitated with ginseng balm.

Troubles with your blender? Serve it a tepid blend of goldenseal and orange peel.

An aging refrigerator is sometimes no longer sufficiently cold. Half a ginger root, finely sliced and placed in the lower lefthand corner of the refrigerator should solve the problem.

Even musical instruments respond to herbal influence. If your piano is out of tune, set a decoction of yohimbe in a bowl on top of the lid. Soon the piano will tune itself.

A dull knife will often grow sharper with two drops of bayberry bark extract.

A clogged sink will usually flow freely after imbibing piping hot spearmint tea.

A broken plate can be mended with a thick blend of water and bedstraw (but if there are more than three pieces, this remedy won't succeed).

Is your oven too hot or too cold? Poor in a cup and a third of fermented mullein broth.

A busted toaster often will be restored to health by two cardamom seeds.

Too much noise from your neighbors? Make linden tea, and paint the liquid on the wall nearest the disturbance. Almost immediately, you'll notice the difference.

A broken chair can often be repaired with a poultice of comfrey leaves.

Is your furnace acting up? Two teaspoons of cinnamon should do the trick.

Does your roof have a leak? Place a *ficus elastica*, commonly known as a rubber plant, under that section of the roof. When the plant grows up to the ceiling, it will seal the hole.

But don't just take my word for it! Try your own herbal experiments in your own household. And feel free to write me c/o *Hudson Valley One* with your discoveries.



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