

FEATURE

Emma James Physiotherapy

Get your bod in the pod and start

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Floatation therapy might sound like some à la mode health trend you'd only find across the pond in Los Angeles – but now you can give it a go right here in Dacorum.

The hi-tech I-sopod tank, which holds 1,000 litres of Epsom Salts solution, is nestled in a quiet room in a quirky old schoolhouse building in Hemel's Old Town – home to Emma James Physiotherapy.

And when you get in, managing director Emma says it's much like taking a dip in the Dead Sea.

Senior physiotherapist Emma, who first set up the private practice 13 years ago, said: "It's designed to create a feeling of weightlessness and



Emma James, owner and senior physiotherapist at Emma James Physio

sensory deprivation.

"It's especially good for people who are stressed and strung out, or for those with chronic pain, arthritic pain or general pain during pregnancy."

Emma, who first opened in Boxmoor's Horsecroft Road in

2003 before moving to George Street early last year, says that an hour in the tank is equivalent to four hours of restorative Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep.

The 39-year-old added: "Your body releases hormones called cortisol and adrenalin when you're stressed, which means it's constantly stuck in 'fight or flight' mode. The floatation tank suppresses that and allows the normal serotonin levels to be restored."

Serotonin is a chemical found in the body that is responsible for maintaining a balanced mood – and scientists have linked a lack of serotonin to depression.

Some of the therapy's benefits are greater circulatory health, better lymphatic drainage, lower blood pressure and improved sleep.

Emma, who graduated from Teeside University in 1998 with a BSc in physiother-



The I-sopod floatation tank, which is filled with 525kg of Epsom salts, is supposed to give the user a feeling of

apy, said: "The tank is the only one in Hertfordshire, and ties in with what we do as a practice because we are focusing on wellbeing."

The businesswoman first set up the company with the help of her sister, after falling in love with Dacorum and moving to Northchurch following a 'random' cycle ride

in Wendover Woods with her husband Daniel, now 40.

She now employs 10 members of staff and is a one-stop shop for all things health and fitness, including personal training, gait analysis, yoga and Apos Therapy – a drug-free and non-surgical cure for osteoarthritis.

Apos Therapy, which was

first practised in Israel nine years ago, is another recent addition to Emma James Physiotherapy's treatment list after Emma was headhunted by the therapy's developers Dr Avi Elbaz and Dr Amit Mor – making it the only certified provider in Herts and Beds.

The pioneering treatment – which costs £2,500 for a

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'weightlessness'

course – involves the patient wearing a pair of specialised boots for an hour a day, which change the distribution of their weight and re-trains their muscles as they walk.

Part of the reason for Emma's investment in the £30,000 cutting-edge I-sopod and Apos Therapy boots was a need for her company to 'di-

versify or die'.

She said: "Back in 2008, a lot of companies were investing in wellness but after the crash, everyone was just trying to survive. Now things are stabilising a bit we are feeling more optimistic."

The businesswoman now lives near Dagnall with Daniel, their daughters Isabelle, four,

Charlotte, one, and a seven-year-old Cockapoo called Poppy, but says she has a soft spot for the people of Dacorum.

Emma, who knew she wanted to be a physiotherapist since the age of 13, said: "As a non-local I found the people of Berkhamsted, Hemel Hempstead and Tring to be extremely friendly and supportive, and my patients have encouraged me to continue to strive for the best."

And she's doing just that – by helping set up the physiotherapy department at the new One Stop Doctors, a private healthcare practice due to open in Boundary Way, Hemel Hempstead, next month (read more on page 7).

A 45-minute float usually costs £50, but the practice is offering sessions for the discounted price of £30 until June 11. Visit www.ejphysio.co.uk or call 01442 870686 for more information.



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