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# Can this biohacking relaxation center make you more productive?

ReCover spa turns to top tech to help entrepreneurs, athletes, and pooped parents figure out how to best decompress—physically and mentally. I try it out.



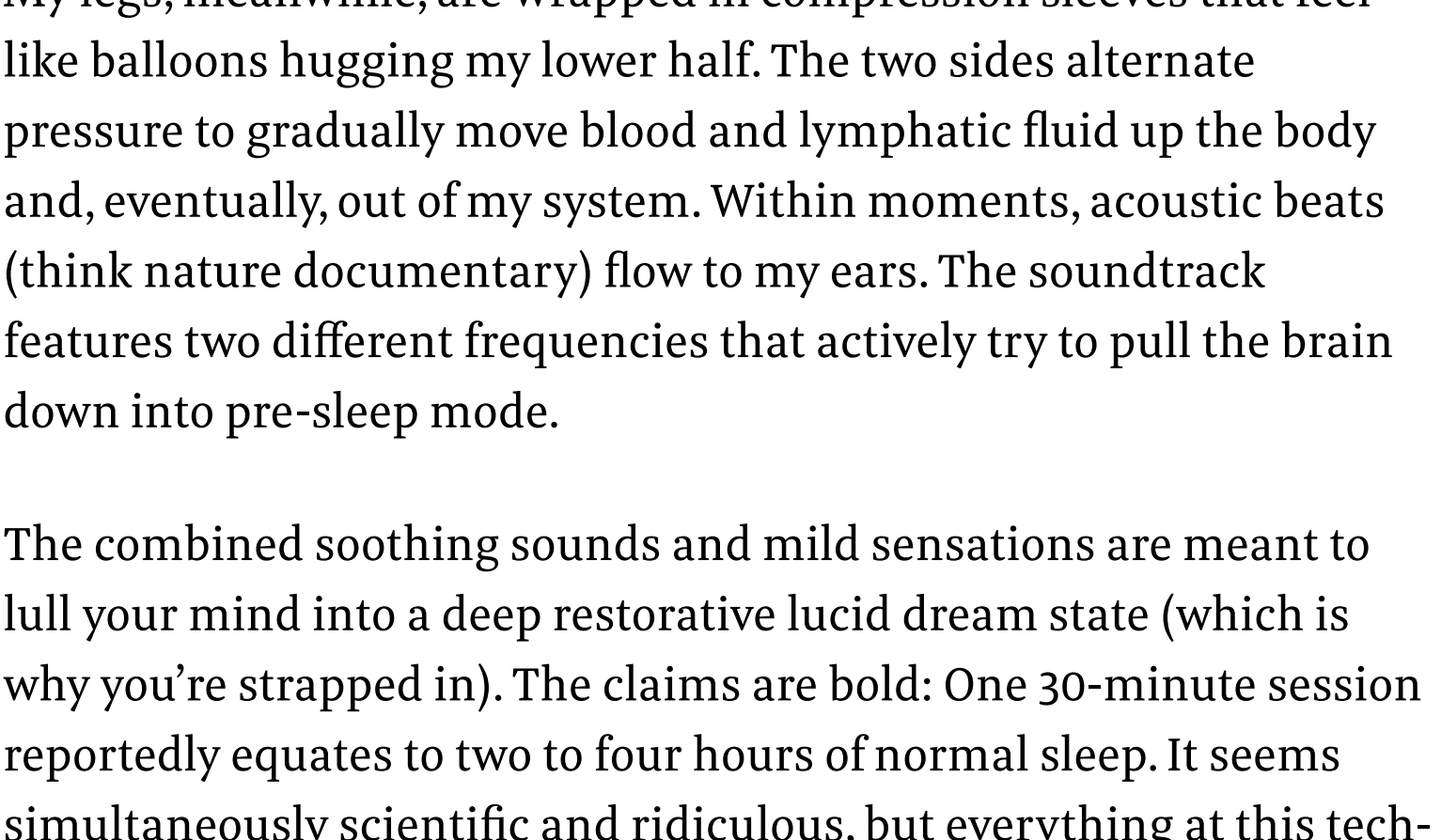
[Photo: Kevin Wong, courtesy of ReCover]



BY RINA RAPHAEL 7 MINUTE READ

I'm strapped into a leather lounge chair— not something I'd usually associate with relaxation—and feel awfully snugly as the attendant cements my position with a weighted gravity blanket. It's been a harrowing day on the New York City subway system and I am here to try out the biohacks at **ReCover**, a studio dedicated to helping the physically and mentally stressed re-center themselves.

I kick off my shoes, don black blindfolds and noise-cancelling headphones, and settle in. I am about to experience **NuCalm** (at \$45 for 30 minutes), a patented set of New Agey relaxation techniques that are supposed to take me away from it all. An attendant applies a topical cream on my neck that, I'm told, restricts the body's adrenaline at the base of my neck. Behind my ears, he places two microstimulant patches to “employ transcranial stimulation to assist the manipulation of brainwaves to theta.” Science!



[Photo: Kevin Wong, courtesy of ReCover]

My legs, meanwhile, are wrapped in compression sleeves that feel like balloons hugging my lower half. The two sides alternate pressure to gradually move blood and lymphatic fluid up the body and, eventually, out of my system. Within moments, acoustic beats (think nature documentary) flow to my ears. The soundtrack features two different frequencies that actively try to pull the brain down into pre-sleep mode.

The combined soothing sounds and mild sensations are meant to lull your mind into a deep restorative lucid dream state (which is why you're strapped in). The claims are bold: One 30-minute session reportedly equates to two to four hours of normal sleep. It seems simultaneously scientific and ridiculous, but everything at this tech-oriented wellness center is slightly but delightfully off-kilter. You have to wonder: Does Gwyneth do this?



[Photo: Kevin Wong, courtesy of ReCover]

This near sleep-inducing sorcery has made athletes, CEOs, and over-stressed New Yorkers regular customers at ReCover NYC's studio, a block south of bustling Penn Station. It sees the likes of the Golden State Warriors, the Washington Capitals, and Philadelphia Eagles. But this is no nap room. ReCover is more than just meant to help one relax; it's meant to help one reset with the intention of reaching 100% productivity.

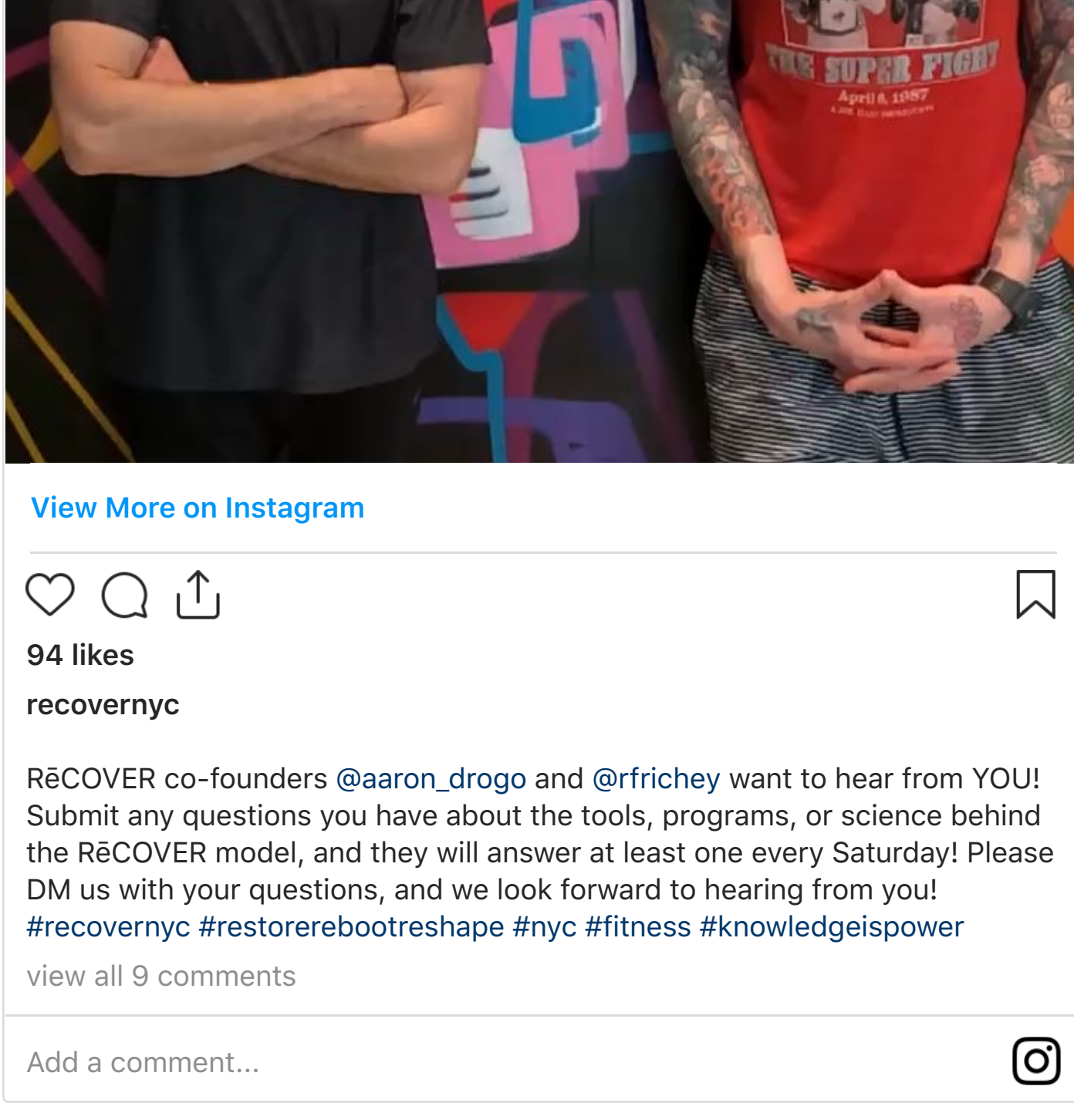
“To be at a really high-performance level, you have to go through that recovery process,” says ReCover cofounder Rick Richey. “We just create a means to facilitate that.”

## RELAX, GO DO IT

Mankind has been working on the art of relaxation for, like, forever. From Roman baths to Brookstone gadgets (**RIP**) and mindfulness apps, our search continues. ReCover elevates the concept to focus it on individual productivity. What if, it asks, relaxation techniques could help you physically and psychologically function at a higher capacity?

A few years ago, cofounders Rick Richey and Aaron Drogoszewski saw an industry that positioned recovery as a last resort, usually in response to injury or a mental breakdown. The overworked or overactive turn themselves down without incorporating time for their bodies and mind to heal from stress. Often, like in exercise, overstimulation without proper recovery leads to compromised results.

“Over and over, we see people don't take care of themselves,” says Richey. “They usually just take care of pain.”



The entrepreneurs imagined a studio that could help a range of clients consistently recover from whatever holds them back, no matter their profession or goals. Athletes often have access to such optimization technology, but what about the frequent-flyer CEO or the hard-wired mom? The duo opened ReCover in March, focusing on fine-tuning cognitive function skills, stress management, even sleep quality.

[Photo: Kevin Wong, courtesy of ReCover]

“You can find a place that has an infrared sauna or compression therapy for the legs, but the common denominator behind all of them is still synonymous with athletic,” explains Drogoszewski. “We stepped back and said, “You know, there are a lot of people out there that have very real performance demands that have nothing to do with how their legs feel.”

At ReCover NYC, a neon signs glares, “Restore, reboot, and reshape.” That purposely means different things to different people, explains Drogoszewski. “Anybody that has a performance demand has performance stress ... [this is] for optimum performance in whatever you do.”

## WE ARE ALL STRESSED

Over 79% of Americans report experiencing daily stress, mostly brought on by work and family obligations, according to **Gallup**. Meanwhile, the **CDC reports** that 1 in 3 adults don't get enough sleep. Those facts alone fueled entire industries dedicated to making people feel better—or just less miserable. From health supplements to **biohacking centers** to butter-infused coffee, we all have different ways of dealing.

Richey and Drogoszewski both worked as fitness trainers and had a front-row seat to a monumental shift toward “wellness.” Clients no longer wanted to just body build or cut fat; they wanted to feel and function better. Recovery grew into a sizable sector of the fitness industry, with the **American Council on Exercise** rating it a top consumer trend.

“We see people buying more foam rollers and percussion devices that help to facilitate recovery, but there are so many more technologies out there that can provide much more in-depth focus than these modalities,” explains Richey. These cost-prohibitive technologies end up in top athlete-training facilities or **Dave Asprey's** personal gym.

[Photo: Kevin Wong, courtesy of ReCover]

Richey and Drogoszewski wanted to share these physical and mental recovery technologies with the public at a more affordable price point (by Manhattan elite standards at least). Most ReCover treatments cost \$1-\$2 a minute, with the cheapest service being a 15-minute hydromassage for \$20.

ReCover is not, however, a rehab facility. It's the difference between a blown-out knee and strained hamstrings—or stress-induced insomnia versus a full nervous breakdown. “We're a place to go if you may be hurt but you're not broken,” says Richey.

The studio features a wide range of physical and cognitive technology: infrared saunas, compression therapy, 3D body scanning technology, electromagnetic radiation therapy, and hyperice vibration technology, to name a few.

[Photo: Kevin Wong, courtesy of ReCover]

The CVAC (Cyclic Variations in Adaptive Conditioning) pod, for example, looks better suited to transport Superman than address a mere mortal's needs. The intimidating chamber drastically changes in pressure, alternating between 2,000 to 4,000 feet every 30 seconds.

It's supposed to improve circulation and boost oxygen-rich blood cells, but all you'll likely notice at the time is that your ears pop and you can't stop yawning.

## IS IT ALL A GIMMICK?

It might all sound rather gimmicky, but that's partially the appeal. Undoubtedly, it might be a placebo effect, but parting with \$45 to engage in a 20-minute space-age ride might just convince you that the technology holds credibility. ReCover's offerings are based on numerous research studies, scientific backing, or hold FDA clearance, but it's hard to determine how individuals' bodies (and neuroses) will react.

The NuCalm eased my anxiety, but I happen to like nature doc music and simulated waves. For some, getting buckled down into a chair in midtown Manhattan is the exact opposite of zen. There are, however, numerous Google reviewers who laud ReCover's miracle-making modalities.

[Photo: Kevin Wong, courtesy of ReCover]

While the CVAC's pressure cabin reminded me of travel stress, several clients attested to its benefits. One wrote it made her feel “sharp, alert, and ready to go,” while another said its energizing properties left her “with greater lung capacity” (whatever that means).

Undoubtedly, there's a strong market for busy New Yorkers who want their recovery and relaxation as quick and scheduled as their Seamless orders. Multitasking is near religion in this city. It's why the infrared sauna rooms come complete with tablets: Why not also catch up on your Netflix queue while detoxing?

## NEXT UP FOR RECOVER

ReCover plans to expand within the New York City metro area. (Eventually, they'll bring their modalities to secondary markets, but New Yorkers, it seems, need recovery more than others.) The next iteration of the studio might look a bit different: The cofounders are in talks with high-end residential buildings as well as contemplating corporate wellness initiatives. There might even be a pop-up version of ReCover in well-known exercise studios.

“We're starting to see a transfer from fitness centers more into wellness centers,” says Drogoszewski. “That's the next evolution.”

The **Global Wellness Institute** placed a \$3.7 trillion estimate on the wellness economy, with fitness and mind-body sector responsible for \$542 billion. Factor in the 3.2 billion workers who report feeling “unwell,” and initiatives such as ReCover seem on track to gain further momentum.

“Nobody aspires for mediocrity,” says Drogoszewski. “If you know that you have the option to be the best version of yourself possible—whether that's an athlete or an entrepreneur or a creative type—we understand it systemically. We help those people find balance to find their best outcome.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR  
Rina Raphael is a writer who covers technology, health, and wellness. Sign up for her **wellness industry newsletter** and follow her at **@rtrinsmore**

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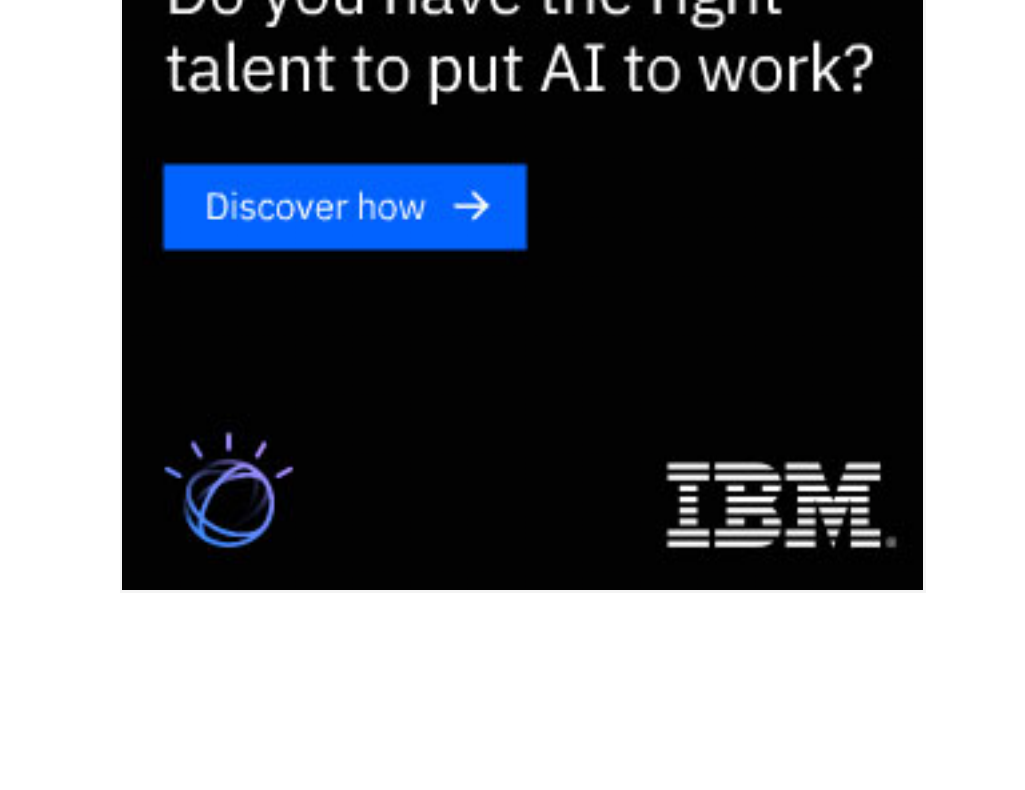
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