

Hydrotherapy with Mum

Yesterday I took Mum to the pool. I don't think she's been swimming for about 60 years. "It's not swimming," I told her, "it's hydrotherapy."

Which was completely true. Mum was highly amused by the whole business. Every time I brought it up, she'd tell me the same thing: "You're quite mad... but I'm not averse to the idea."



She was definitely up for it.

The first problem was finding a swimsuit. After flicking through racks of high-cut racing suits, I stumbled upon a maternity version. It was soft and comfy with ruching and roominess in all the right places; black with polka dots and a halter neck. Perfect. Last Saturday Mum tried it on. She checked out her reflection and was pleasantly surprised. "Shall we go, then?" I asked.

Mum declined. "I think that's enough excitement for one day. How about some afternoon tea?"

This Saturday, we got into things straight away. Swimsuit on, clothes on top. We went directly to the pool. Holding firmly to my arm, Mum waded down the ramp. The water was warm and bath-like, and our fellow bathers were friendly. They were also few and far between. But as soon as she was in, Mum became anxious. She was worried about the depth of the water, about her head going under, and about losing her glasses.

So we explored the shallows, held onto the rails, and kept our feet on the bottom of the pool. As long as Mum was vertical and stable she was fine. Her confidence grew and I held her up as we aqua-strolled, bobbing up and down from one side of the pool to the

other.

There was plenty to look at. There was an eye-poppingly pregnant woman striding into the water, a large man being lifted out of his wheelchair by a mechanical hoist and gently deposited on the ramp and much more. In the end we stayed for almost an hour. Once we were dried and dressed, we made our way through throngs of small children to the cafe where we had a splendid afternoon tea.

“I’m glad I went,” said Mum. “Actually, I feel marvelous.”

I was curious. “In what way?” I asked.

“Well-being,” said Mum. “Even my feet feel happy. Happy in my shoes.”

BY **SARAH JANE**

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