

The Complete Spa Book *for* Massage Therapists



Steve Capellini

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**The Complete Spa Book for Massage
Therapists****Steve Capellini**

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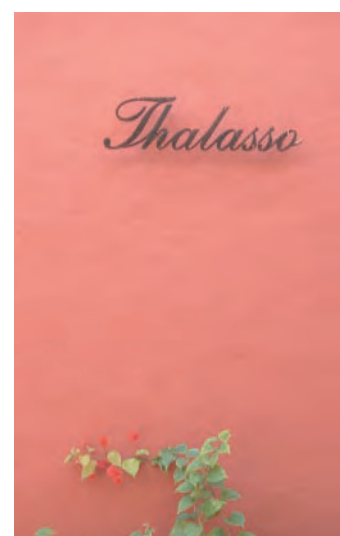
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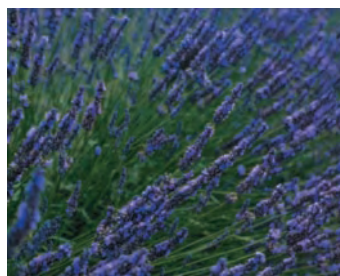
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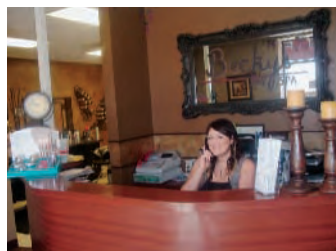
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Maybe you are a single parent. Maybe you are fresh out of school. Maybe you have reached a place somewhere in the middle of your life and you felt a change was needed. Whatever your particular situation, a career move into the spa industry can be vastly rewarding. In this field, you will help people feel better, look better, and actually *be* better through an emphasis on therapeutic wellness and stress relief.

The environments where you may find yourself working include some of the most beautiful in the world. The clients you will meet and interact with are often influential, well-known, creative individuals whom you can help and get to know. Many spa therapists travel far and wide, see the world, and make new friends. This can become your life, if you have the education and the tools to be successful at your new endeavor. That is what this book is all about. In these pages, you will learn more about spas than you perhaps realized was possible. In the first section, you will discover the rich history of spa cultures from around the world and how they have developed into the modern spas where so many therapists have found rewarding and fulfilling work. In Section 2, you will come to understand the intricacies of hydrotherapy and the ways it is actually applied by working therapists in the modern world. You will learn how to safely perform specialized spa bath and shower treatments, and understand how to master the powers of heat and cold to balance and soothe your clients. You will find out how human skin is regenerated through a myriad of exfoliations, and you will discover the many healing potentials found in our oceans. In Section 3, you will come to know the therapeutic properties of herbs, muds, clays, and other natural products from the Earth. You will learn what makes a spa massage different from a massage given in any other environment, and how you can make your own spa massages the best they can possibly be. You will work with heated basalt stones, learning how to safely apply them during a spa massage. You will be introduced to the most popular essential oils used in spa settings and be shown how to incorporate them into simple yet effective aromatherapy protocols.

Beyond learning about spa modalities and hydrotherapy, you will also find out what it takes to be a successful member on a top-notch spa team. In Section 4, you will learn the ins and outs of finding and securing the best spa jobs, and then providing the best possible customer service once you have done so. You will come to appreciate the importance of selling therapeutic spa products to clients

and how you can increase your own prosperity by doing so. And if you are one of the many therapists who hope to open spas of their own one day, you will find plenty of information here to get you started.

Throughout your studies in this text, you will be given many opportunities to both give and receive dozens of therapeutic (and luxurious) spa treatments. In fact, by the time you are through with your spa studies, you will have experienced more spa services than all but the most seasoned spa goer. Each and every protocol features detailed step-by-step instructions, as well as a full-featured set of information about products needed, room setup, benefits, contraindications, and much more.

Sprinkled within each chapter are many notes of interest in the form of tables, sidebars, and profiles of working spa professionals who will help inspire you on your quest for knowledge and skill in this field. You will also find SPA TIP callouts, SPA CAUTION callouts and SPA ETIQUETTE callouts to help draw your attention to those points deserving particular attention.

Throughout the book, you will notice that the instructions and examples are gender-neutral, meaning that some of them will use the “he” pronoun and some will use the “she” pronoun. Though there are more female therapists working in the spa industry than males, both genders are held in equally high regard by spa owners and guests, and no intentional favor is given to either in the following pages.

The new skills you gain through your study of spa therapy will make you a highly portable professional, sought after by many employers, with a repertoire of skills that has grown much richer and deeper. There is much to know if you want to successfully join the thousands of people who are making places for themselves in the spa world. So, let's get started . . .

EXTENSIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING PACKAGE

A number of ancillary materials accompany *The Complete Spa Book for Massage Therapists*. These materials are designed to support student learning and to provide instructors with everything they need to successfully teach the concepts in the core textbook.

Workbook

The Complete Spa Book for Massage Therapists – Student Workbook provides various review tools with both individual exercises—matching questions, word scrambles, crossword puzzles, true or false, and fill-in-the-blanks—and group activities like role-plays, hangman, and even a quiz fashioned after the *Jeopardy!* game show. Other features like Mental Portrait, Spa Tips/Techniques, Be Prepared, and Self-Searching allow students the opportunity to test their comprehension and place themselves in real-life situations. Plus, all important step-by-step spa procedures are reinforced by the use of detailed rubrics, allowing students precise self-assessments of skill performance and level of development.

Course Management Guide on CD-ROM

The purpose of *The Complete Spa Book for Massage Therapists Course Management Guide* is to give educators strong support in providing the highest-quality instruction in the discipline of spa therapies for the massage therapist, given the wide range of teaching institutions, course lengths, classroom facilities, and local licensing issues involved. It is designed to serve as your partner in making spa education effective, interesting, and fun, while also helping your students develop their mental, ethical, and therapeutic skills.

The comprehensive *Course Management Guide* has been created specifically to support spa therapy education in the massage school environment. Your students deserve the best possible education, and the public deserves competent, enthusiastic, and knowledgeable therapists to work on them. This material was developed with those goals in mind. The spa industry continues as a major force in the hiring and development of massage therapists. As educators, our primary focus is to support students in their growth and to prepare them for successful careers by providing inspiring yet realistic training and training materials. Because spa education for massage therapists in North America does not yet have any universally accepted standards, this *Course Management Guide* and *The Complete Spa Book for Massage Therapists* text, along with the companion workbook, strive to be as comprehensive and non-exclusionary as possible. In some states and regions, parts of the material may not apply to massage therapists, yet all of the information is important for therapists to understand and master if they are going to be well-rounded spa professionals, even if they are called upon to perform Swedish massage exclusively and no other services.

We are well-aware of the diverse learning environments present in massage schools and the wide range of needs as far as spa therapy education is concerned. For this very reason, Cengage Learning has not set this spa therapy training curriculum in stone but rather presents it as a range of options that are, then, further customizable according to your needs. The three main options, for which comprehensive lesson plans and support materials have been developed include:

Short “Weekend” Spa Course (16–24 Hours)

If your school is operating on a tight schedule with very little extra time for spa therapy training available, you could implement the short course, which can be taught over a weekend if necessary. This will give students an idea of what to expect if they were to pursue spa therapy training further, making it possible for them to decide if this is the right choice for them before investing a large amount of time or effort in their studies. This course is similar to what a professional massage therapist would experience as part of a continuing education program, and over the years, it has proven quite useful. Many therapists, after having taken this level of training, have been able to successfully perform several spa modalities and even develop a spa therapies specialty in their own practices. Because of the short duration of this course, only a fraction of the material in *The Complete Spa Book for Massage Therapists* can be delivered in the classroom itself. Thus, many supplementary learning exercises and activities are suggested for students’ self-guided learning after the class is over.

Mid-Length Spa Course (36–60 Hours)

For those students who know they want to pursue work in the spa field, but where time or other constraints do not allow the school to offer a full spa track, the mid-length course affords the opportunity to review the entire core text, with discussions and exercises in the classroom that reinforce learning. Lectures and hands-on experiences are limited to key points and major modalities, with an abundance of suggestions for self-directed study both during the course and after its completion. Students who pass this course will have a firm grasp of the basic skills and knowledge needed by therapists seeking a career in the spa industry. Graduates will feel confident in approaching spas when seeking employment. In addition, they will know how to set up and maintain a spa practice or small spa facility of their own.

Long Spa Course (78–130 Hours)

The long spa course can be implemented as a full post-graduate track, such as many schools provide along with tracks in sports massage or Eastern therapies, for example. This program is for the school that has seen a growing need among the student body for comprehensive, in-depth spa therapy training. All modules, modalities, exercises, and activities in *The Complete Spa Book for Massage Therapists* are covered, with guided lectures to elucidate each part of all 18 chapters. Students who successfully graduate from this program will have a thorough understanding of what it takes to work in the modern spa industry. They will be among the most knowledgeable and highly trained of all their peers seeking career opportunities in this field.

Customizable Learning

Any of the three main curriculum choices can be modified to fit the particular time frames and educational needs of your school. In shorter versions of any of the curriculums, educators can recommend that students experience many of the exercises and activities on their own, while limiting class time to core knowledge development and direct hands-on experiences. In longer versions of each curriculum, educators can take full advantage of the extensive support materials and educational tools provided in the text and in this guide. For the mid-length and long courses, one hour of hands-on documented practice time on spa modalities should be completed outside of class per each lesson provided. Alternatively, this documented practice can be carried out in the school's spa clinic, if such a clinic is available.

Course Management Guide Support Materials

Upon determining the length of the spa curriculum that you are offering at your school, you can choose the appropriate set of lesson plans from this guide. All three of the curricula are supplemented with a number of documents:

- syllabi
- sign-in sheets
- activity worksheets
- forms

- checklists
- academic progress evaluations
- hands-on skill level check lists
- theory grade records by course unit

These are found in the support materials section of this guide. The uses for most of these forms will be self-evident. However, the *theory grade records by course unit* may be new. This form is used to record the test grades of each successive test for each student in one location, so that it will not be necessary to file a large number of tests for each class. After the student signs this form, each separate test grading sheet can be recycled. The same form contains a place to keep records of student performance on all of the Hands-On Skill Level Checklists provided throughout the *Course Management Guide*.

Lessons Plans

The lesson plans in each of three curricula are divided into several sections:

1. SIGN-IN SHEET:
The sign-in sheet contains some of the information from the lesson plan, with the addition of an area for students to sign in on the bottom of the form. This can be printed separately, signed, and filed with the instructor's materials, creating a detailed written record of the subject taught, date, facilities and resources used, student responsibilities, and students in attendance.
2. SUBJECT:
The section (Part 1, 2, 3, or 4) of *The Complete Spa Book for Massage Therapists* addressed in the lesson.
3. TOPIC:
Specific topic(s) within the text section covered in the lesson plan.
4. LESSON OBJECTIVES:
What the students will be able to understand or perform upon completion of the lesson and practice.
5. IMPLEMENTS, EQUIPMENT, & SUPPLIES:
Items needed by both students and instructors to successfully complete the lesson.
6. TEACHING AIDS:
Audio/visual equipment, handouts, etc., to be used by the instructor.
7. FACILITY:
Theory, practical classroom, or both.
8. TIME ALLOTMENT:
Broad guidance is provided for the time allotted to each lesson. This *Course Management Guide* was written to function effectively in many teaching situations, with a wide variance in required learning hours. The instructor's choice of activities to be included and hands-on protocols to be performed as part of each lesson will greatly impact the time allotment for each lesson.
9. PRIOR ASSIGNMENT:
What the student needs to have completed prior to the class.

10. EDUCATOR REFERENCES:
References available to the instructor to further expand his or her knowledge on the subject and enhance the class.
11. NOTES TO THE EDUCATOR:
Suggestions and reminders to better prepare the educator for the class.
12. LEARNING MOTIVATION:
Reasons why the material presented in this lesson is relevant and useful to the student. Instructors, of course, can modify and personalize the introduction and motivation for the lesson if they so desire.
13. SPA THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:
Also found on the first instructor-support PowerPoint slide for each lesson, these quotes set the tone for the class and provide some spa-specific insights on which students can focus as they begin their training each day.
14. SUBJECT OUTLINES & NOTES:
A two-column format with a brief description of the material on the left side and more in-depth notes on the right side. Instructors can read or paraphrase the information here as they teach the class. Also listed here are supplementary materials that support the instructor's leadership in the classroom.
15. SUMMARY AND REVIEW:
Includes a summation of the class and answers to chapter review questions.
16. ACTIVITIES TO REINFORCE LEARNING:
This section lists activities, projects, games, group processes, etc. that instructors can assign to reinforce material covered in the class. Depending upon the time available, these activities can be incorporated into the class or assigned for time outside the classroom. Space is provided for instructors to write in additional activities developed by students or the instructor. These, then, can be used by other instructors at the school in the future.
17. STEP-BY-STEP MODALITY PROTOCOL HANDOUTS:
Where applicable, step-by-step protocols for spa modalities are provided within the lesson plan so they can be printed out and used by students in the practical classroom environment, removing the need to have the textbook present during potentially messy procedures. These sheets make it easier for the students to keep track of their progress while learning spa treatments.
18. HANDS-ON SKILL LEVEL CHECKLISTS:
Educators can use these forms to check the progress of students as they learn and master each practical skill. The forms are tied to the practical procedures presented and list specific performance criteria that can be used with the school's practical grading program to determine a student's competency in any given practical skill. These criteria have been provided because various accrediting agencies mandate that practical skills be evaluated on the basis of written criteria established by the school for the purpose of measuring student learning. To be effective, the application of these criteria must be uniform and consistent, and these forms may help you with that.

19. TESTS:

Multiple-choice tests are provided at the end of every lesson in *The Complete Spa Book for Massage Therapists*, and they are assigned, where applicable, in each lesson plan. For the short and mid-length curricula, where multiple chapters may be discussed in the course of one lesson, modified tests are provided that combine information from the various chapters.

20. TEST ANSWER KEYS:

Test answers are provided for instructors.

Instructor Support Slides

The Instructor Support Slides use PowerPoint® technology, offering instructors pre-designed presentations to accompany *The Complete Spa Book for Massage Therapists*, making lesson plans simple yet incredibly effective. This chapter-by-chapter CD-ROM has ready-to-use presentations that will help engage students' attention and keep their interest through its varied color schemes and styles. Instructors can use the presentations as-is or adapt them to their own classrooms by importing photos, changing graphics, or adding slides.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steve Capellini has been working in the spa industry since 1983, first as a massage therapist, then as a trainer, supervisor, consultant, and writer. He has trained the staffs at several top properties and currently teaches spa workshops to massage therapists, estheticians, and entrepreneurs across the U.S. and Canada. He wrote the monthly Spa Letters column for *Massage & Spa Today*, and he has published four previous books: *The Royal Treatment*, *Massage Therapy Career Guide*, *Massage for Dummies*, and *Making the Switch to Being Rich*. He has also published dozens of articles in trade journals and consumer magazines. As a spa spokesperson promoting spa-related products from Glade, Lands End, and others, he has given keynote speeches and appeared on dozens of TV shows and in many magazine articles. He was in charge of developing the spa programs for the Pelican Hill Resort in Newport Beach, California, and the Pritikin Longevity Center in Miami, Florida. He also created the spa training curriculum for East-West College in Portland, Oregon. He travels internationally to learn techniques that he incorporates into custom massage and spa treatments.



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PART

1

SPA HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT



*“History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time;
it illumines reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life
and brings us tidings of antiquity.”*



Cicero (106 BC–43 BC), Pro Publio Sestio

In this section, you will learn about the historical background of spas and how ancient practices gradually metamorphosed into the modern modalities that you will be practicing yourself. You will also become familiar with the overall spa industry as it is organized today, with its associations, allied businesses, demographics, and personalities. All of this information is provided to you so that, as you begin your work, you will not be operating in a vacuum. It is vital to know where you stand on the continuum of spas and spa therapists that have come before you and paved the way. You will also start becoming familiar with the myriad products and equipment that will become your everyday companions as long as you work in the spa environment. Gaining a firm grasp on the tools of the trade will serve you well as you seek to become a skilled and sought-after professional.

Spa History

CHAPTER

1



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explain the origins of spas and the word *spa* itself.
2. Describe the historical roots of Greek and Roman bathing practices.
3. Describe spa practices used in ancient Roman baths.
4. Describe the layout of ancient Roman baths with specific rooms and their uses.
5. Explain the use of hammams in Islamic cultures and describe traditional practices used there.
6. Explain the historical role of the massage therapist in various spas around the world.
7. Explain the historical development of spas in Europe after the Roman Empire.
8. Describe the healing philosophy of the “father of modern hydrotherapy” Sebastian Kneipp.
9. Explain the historical development of spa therapies in the Americas.
10. Describe features of some historical Asian spas, specifically Japanese.

INTRODUCTION

Spas have been around for a long, long time. Thousands of years, in fact. Ever since humans developed the technology that made it possible to harness the powers of water for pleasure and therapy, they have done so. And even long beforehand, in the lost recesses of pre-history, people all around the planet surely used natural hot springs, cold rivers, stones, plants, and touch to heal themselves and each other. These were the proto-spas of our race. The spas that we enjoy today did not spring up out of nowhere but rather were born from long experience over hundreds of generations. This is the world you are entering and which you will inhabit as a spa therapist.

You will be working with the accumulated experience and knowledge of those who have gone before you, and thus it is appropriate to take a look, in this first chapter, at the history of spas throughout the ages. Perhaps the most famous historical spas are those in ancient Rome, but they are by no means the only ones. This chapter will also cover spas from Turkey, Greece, Asia, and even the New World, among other areas. You will find many differences among these spas. Some were built for the exclusive use of men. Others were for women only. Still others were for both sexes. Some spas were considered almost sacred and reserved for quiet, contemplative experiences, while others were raucous meeting places filled with commerce, entertainment, sports, and other activities. Whatever their particular characteristics, they all shared a common origin in that most precious and useful of natural resources: water.

IN THE BEGINNING—SPAS’ WATERY ROOTS

Water (Figure 1–1) is the essence of many spa services. It is the environment in which much of the healing and rejuvenation at spas take place. We know from archeological studies and written accounts that the earliest spas were often

found at the source of a natural spring or, in the case of the ancient Romans for example, at sites to which such water was redirected via aqueducts. So, what exactly does the word “spa” mean? By some accounts, it is an acronym, which is a word formed by putting together the first letters of other words. In this case, they are the words “*sanitas per aqua*” or any of several variations on those Latin words, all of which mean the same thing: “health through water.” This belief, however, is somewhat misleading (see Did You Know). Various other stories about the derivation of the word have circulated over the centuries. Some say the term *espa* derived from the Latin verb *spagere*, which means “to sprinkle or flow,” like a fountain or spring. Others cite a Belgian spring called *Espa*, from the Walloon language word for “fountain.”

In spite of the folklore and mystery surrounding the origins of the word, it can be stated with certainty that our modern usage of the word “spa” came to us from the Belgian town of the same name, where spring waters rich in iron have been used for centuries to treat various illnesses. In sixteenth-century England, people began using springs medicinally in the same manner. One such spring, the Harrogate Tewit Well, was referred to in 1596 by English physician Dr. Timothy Bright as the “English Spaw.” In this manner, the term *spa* began to be used as a general description of a place with healing waters, rather than the one specific place in Belgium alone. The waters at these early spas provided their healing primarily through ingestion, rather than bathing, but over the years both internal and external applications became customary.

Spas have always been all about water. Drinking medicinal waters. Soaking in mineral-laden waters. Inhaling the vapors of steaming water. Gazing at the tranquil waters of a spring-fed pond deep in the forest. Wherever people came together to enjoy these waters and take advantage of their healing properties, the spirit of spa was alive. In many cultures, communal bathing became a part of this



FIGURE 1-1 Water: the origin of spa.

The Spa Acronym Conundrum

Did You Know?

The letters S.P.A. are sometimes said to stand for an acronym of various Latin words, including:

<i>Sanus per aquam</i>	}	health through water
<i>Salus per aqua</i>		
<i>Sanitas per aqua</i>		
<i>Solus per Aqua</i>	–	water in itself

All of these, though, are most likely “backronyms” rather than acronyms. A backronym is a word thought to be originally coined as an acronym; in reality, its source was different and the acronym was applied later. Acronyms, with one exception, have only been used since the beginning of the twentieth century. The exception, “SPQR,” is, not surprisingly, Roman, and stood for *Senatus Populusque Romanus*.

spa experience. Early Mesopotamians, Egyptians, and Minoans sought health and healing through the use of public baths thousands of years ago, but it was not until the Greeks and Romans came along that the art was truly taken to its peaks. The Greeks enjoyed baths as far back as 500 BC. In fact, one of the most famous battles of all times took place on the site of a hot springs that was used as for communal bathing. When the legendary 300 Spartan warriors first arrived at Thermopylae in August 480 BC to defend the narrow passage from invading Persians, they found bathers enjoying the springs and had to advise them to leave prior to the great battle. The word *Thermopylae* itself comes from the Greek for “hot gates.” The gates refer to the narrow passage between the sea and the cliffs that existed there at that time, and the heat, of course, refers to the hot springs.

The Greeks enjoyed natural hot springs like those at Thermopylae, and they also partook in more formalized bathing and sweating. Homer, among others, wrote that Greeks developed basic hot water tubs and hot air baths known as **laconica**, named after the region where Sparta was located, and where the idea originated. The laconica were built next to a gymnasium, in a round shape with a high tapering conical roof that could be closed or opened to permit the escape of hot hair and steam. These were basic structures heated with hot coals or hot rocks, and although the ancient Greeks created the foundations for future development in bathing, and they definitely enjoyed the pleasures and purifications that hydrotherapy offered, their efforts were rudimentary compared to those that followed during the days of the Roman Empire.

laconica

hot, dry chambers in Roman baths, similar to today's sauna, named after the more ancient Greek hot air bath (singular **laconicum**)

THE ROMAN BATHS

For at least 200 years prior to the opening of the first grand scale bath, Roman citizens enjoyed smaller-scale baths known as **balnea**, which were inspired by the Greek laconica. Each balneum was designed for use by a particular neighborhood, where they stood five to a block on average in Rome. These modest facilities were so popular that a succession of Roman emperors was inspired to eventually create much larger baths, calling them **thermae**, after the Greek word for heat. It was Marcus Agrippa, Augustus Caesar's trusted friend and general who, in 25 BC, began construction on the first of the larger-scale baths, which bore his name. After that time, thermae became an important part of many an emperor's legacy, and successive leaders seemed to vie with each other for the creation of ever more opulent bathing facilities. Among the most important of these, each named in honor of the emperor who commissioned its construction, were Nero (65 AD), Titus (81 AD), Domitian (95 AD), Commodus (185 AD), Caracalla (217 AD), Diocletian (305 AD), and Constantine (351 AD).

In 33 BC, there were 170 public and private baths in the city of Rome. At the end of the fourth century AD, there were 11 grand thermae and almost a thousand private baths or balnea. The baths of Diocletian alone could hold 3,000 bathers at one time. With the institution of these baths both in Rome and in its far-flung provinces, and the construction of the massive aqueduct system to supply them, the average Roman citizen used 300 gallons of water per day, compared to just 50 gallons per day for the modern American. The baths were very important, not just for cleansing, but for health, fitness, and as a social gathering place.

balnea

smaller neighborhood communal bathing facilities of the Roman Empire, precursor to the much larger and more grand Thermae (singular **balneum**)

thermae

Roman name for their central communal bathing complexes, constructed by emperors, which featured sports halls, restaurants, massage areas, and various types of baths; *thermae* means heat in Greek

The larger baths could accommodate thousands of people, and entrance fees were kept extremely modest so that even the most humble of citizens could enjoy them. Emperors subsidized these colossal projects in order to gain fame and popularity, and the emperors themselves enjoyed the baths as much as anyone else. Some were reported to have bathed several times a day. Poetry was read in the baths. Political discussions were held. Exercise and sport were common, as were the preparation, sale, and consumption of food and drink. And, of course, there was massage.

Although attending the public baths was a big part of daily life for huge numbers of Romans, not every citizen was a big fan of spas. Some people felt that the baths inspired indolence, gluttony, and an overall weakening of health. The famous rhetorician Seneca wrote an unflattering description of a typical bath that he happened to live next to:

Imagine all these kinds of voices . . . While the sporting types take exercise with dumb-bells, either working hard or pretending to do so, I hear groans; every time they release the breath they have been holding, I hear sibilant and jarring respiration. When I meet some idle fellow content with a cheap massage, I hear the smack of a hand on the shoulders, and, according to if it is open or closed when it strikes, it gives a different sound. If a ball-player appears on the scene and begins to count the scores, I'm finished! Suppose there is also some brawler, and a thief caught in the act, and a man who likes the sound of his own voice while taking his bath. Then there are the bathers who leap into the pool, making a mighty splash. But all these people at least have a natural voice. Just imagine the shrill and strident cries of the attendants who pluck the hair from the bathers' bodies, who never cease their noise except when they are plucking the hair from somebody's armpits and making another scream instead of themselves. Then there are various cries of the pastry cooks, the sausage-sellers, and all the hawkers from the cook-shops, who advertise their wares with a sing-song all their own. (Stobart, 1961, p. 337)

In addition to the noise mentioned by Seneca, the baths also featured poets trying to outdo each other, reciting their poetry aloud in hopes of winning a dinner invitation from a wealthy patron. There was gambling going on, board games being played, philosophy being loudly espoused, prostitution being practiced, and an overall raucousness that is quite dissimilar from what we consider a spa to be today.

Layout of the Roman Bath

When Roman citizens visited the baths, they had a choice of many different environments in which to spend their time. Arriving after the workday was over in the early afternoon, they would often first visit the changing area, or **apodyterium**, where they would leave their clothes under the supervision of bath workers, or, if they were more well-to-do, with their own servants or slaves. It was not wise to leave property unguarded in the baths, which were a notorious haunt of thieves. Many patrons would take advantage of the **palaestra** for some exercise before bathing, perhaps engaging in ball games, wrestling, or boxing. From there, patrons progressed through a series of rooms warmed to varying temperatures by a fire kept raging below the stone floors of the building in a furnace-like room called the **hypocaust**. Each of these rooms had a special name. The **tepidarium**, or warm



SPA TIP

As proven by the discovery of oil lamps at the baths in Pompeii, night-time bathing was sometimes practiced by ancient Romans.



SPA TIP

"It would be a mistake to assume that the average Roman engaged in strenuous exercise before taking his bath, like the Greek athletes. Roman gymnastics was merely a prelude to bathing, a form of recreation, and not intended as training for competition. The 'athletes' were often elderly and not necessarily in good shape, but they hoped to improve their health and ward off disease through exercise."

from *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*
by Fikret Yegül

apodyterium

changing room in a Roman bath

palaestra

exercise area found at many early Roman bath houses, modeled after the ancient Greek wrestling schools

hypocaust

a hollow space in the floor or walls of ancient Roman spas into which hot air was created by fires for heating a room or bath

tepidarium

coolest of the warmed rooms in a Roman bath, where patrons received massage

Meet the Original Massage Therapist—A Slave

Did You Know?

The typical Roman masseur was a skilled slave. These slaves either belonged to the owner of the bath house, or to a particular wealthy patron who would bring them along to the baths for his own private use. Some Roman citizens even had private baths at their own villas where their slaves would perform massage for them. Various of these slaves also became expert at blending aromatic oils and also at cleansing and exfoliating the skin. Several types of oil were used for massage at this time, including olive, sesame, and almond, and among the most common essential oils added were thyme, lavender, and rose.

Following in the Greek tradition, oils and sand would often be applied to the skin of Roman spa goers, usually before exercise, and this needed to be cleaned off afterwards with water and special instruments called **strigils**, which are described in Chapter 6. Thus, these ancient slaves employed aromatherapy, massage therapy, and hydrotherapy, as well as exfoliation techniques, and in this sense they could be considered very similar to the spa therapists of today.

Not much is known about the actual massage maneuvers employed by these slave therapists, but we know one thing at least: There was extensive and vigorous tapotement involved, at least in some of the massages, as described by a famous chronicler of the time. Suffice it to say that the typical massage given by a masseur/slave was likely to be a rather invigorating experience compared to the tranquil and relaxing spa massages of today.

These ancient therapists could be found working in several areas of the bath, often in the tepidarium. Some texts mention special rooms for offering massage, called **unctorium**, which comes from the Latin *unctio*, which means anointing. Thus, it is likely that these therapists were known as *unctors*. Another word, **aleipterion**, which came from the Greek, was used to describe warm rooms for the application of oil, but eventually, after the time of Augustus Cesar, it came to describe larger portions of the structure or the entire bath, not just the massage area.

strigil

metal scraper used by ancient Romans to exfoliate the skin

unctorium

room for applying oil massage in an ancient Roman bath

aleipterion

warmed room for applying oil in an early Roman bath

caldarium

main hot room in Roman baths

frigidarium

coldest room in the Roman thermae, with cold water plunges, where bathers cooled down after sweating in the other heated chambers

room, is where massage often took place. It also had a large bathing pool. The **caldarium** was much hotter and featured baths of different temperatures as well. The floor was heated to such a degree in this room that Romans needed to wear sandals to walk upon it. The laconica was even hotter and could be compared to a modern-day sauna, where hot, dry air permeated the space and induced profuse sweating. After heating their bodies and building up a good sweat, bathers usually paid a visit to the **frigidarium**, which featured one or more large unheated pools. The modern-day equivalent is the cold plunge featured at many spas. See Chapter 5 for more information about cold plunges. Linen towels were available to vigorously rub the skin dry afterward, leaving patrons refreshed and revitalized.

Romans did not have a set pattern for visiting the bath chambers, and patrons could experience any area they chose in any order they wished. The entire indoor area was kept perpetually warmed. Several days were needed to heat a thermae, and it was not practical to heat them up and cool them down. The hypocausts kept hot air flowing under floors and through walls at all times. The amazing system of Roman aqueducts kept a plentiful supply of water streaming in for use in the baths. All of this activity took place under magnificent vaulted ceilings, and the grounds surrounding the bath buildings themselves were often equally as impressive, with vast gardens, stately libraries, and private meeting rooms.



SPA TIP

The grand opening of a major spa was as important an occasion thousands of years ago as it is today. At the well-preserved *thermae* in Pompeii, Italy, a still-readable inscription is visible on one wall: “There will be a dedication of the baths and the public is promised a slaughter of wild beasts, athletics, awnings to shade the sun, and perfumed sprinklings.”

As Roman civilization spread, so too did the use of the baths. “*Bene lave*” (meaning “have a good bath!”) was a familiar greeting for people in the Roman empire stretching from northern Africa all the way to England. Many Roman outposts were built at the site of a spring so that one of their baths could be constructed there. Some of these locations still feature spas today, and some, like Bath in England (Figure 1–2), have undergone extensive recent renovations.



FIGURE 1–2 Roman baths at Bath, England.

THE TURKISH HAMMAM

Descendants of the Roman *thermae*, **hammams** developed as an integral feature of daily life in the Ottoman Empire (1299–1923). Men and women bathe separately in the hammam, which, besides being a social center of the community, also holds spiritual significance. Often, the atmosphere inside the hot steamy main chamber known as the **sicaklik**, where bathers are scrubbed and massaged, seems more like a church than a spa, with diffused lighting streaming down from small glass windows in the domed ceiling, and silence reigns. Some form of the hammam, which means “heat” in Arabic, has been incorporated into the culture of Arabic peoples for centuries.

Western nations, including England and the United States, have imported the concept of the hammam, which they called Turkish baths, with varying degrees of success. A British diplomat, David Urquhart, first popularized the concept in England in the 1850s. Turkish baths became quite popular, and since that time, over 600 such baths have opened in Britain alone, with many more in other countries, including the U.S., where Dr. Charles Shepard opened the first one in 1863. In spite of such success, the hammam has

hammams

found in Islamic countries, the hammam, called a “Turkish bath” in the West, is a communal bath house, usually quite ornate, with separate facilities for men and women

sicaklik

main heated chamber in a hammam, where the massage and exfoliation take place



SPA TIP

Although Roman baths are often associated with debauchery and orgies, during most of the Roman Empire, bathing was not a co-ed experience. Women typically came to the baths earlier in the day, and men arrived after noon. Mixed bathing was sometimes practiced in the larger pools, but it was not until near the end of the Empire that these standards were relaxed and licentious behavior between bathers became more common.



FIGURE 1-3 Islamic hammams were monumental and beautiful structures similar to Roma thermae.

camekan

changing room in a hammam

gobektasi

large heated marble platform found in hammams, upon which scrubbing and massage are performed by tellaks

sogukluk

in a hammam, the cool chamber for relaxing after massage and scrub received in a heated chamber



SPA TIP

The opulence and grandeur of ancient spas has inspired the creation of many fabulous modern spas. For a list of some of the best spas around today, take a look at *100 Best Spas of the World*, an informative and inspirational book by Bernard Burt and Pamela Joy Price.

not achieved the widespread use and acceptance elsewhere that it has in Turkey and several other parts of the Islamic world, where it is ubiquitous and tightly interwoven into the daily lives of most people, being used as a social gathering place for many occasions.

As far as the hammam facility itself, very little changed from the system first implemented in the Roman thermae. The original hammams of the Ottoman Empire were, at first, structurally part of mosques, but they quickly evolved into separate facilities and then monumental complexes designed by the greatest architects in the Islamic world (Figure 1-3).

The typical hammam consists of a changing area, or **camekan**, which is lined with changing cubicles, with a fountain in the center. The **sicaklik** (similar to the caldarium) is the main heated chamber, and this is where massage and vigorous exfoliation take place atop a large heated marble slab called a **gobektasi**, which means “belly stone.” The cool room (similar to the frigidarium), is called the **sogukluk**. This is where patrons can relax, have a cup of tea, and perhaps doze off in a private cubicle.

EUROPEAN SPAS

When the Roman Empire fell, the magnificent thermae crumbled into ruins (Figure 1-4). Over the ensuing years, baths and bathing rose and fell in popularity, reaching a famed nadir in the Middle Ages, when bathing was considered by many to be bad for one’s health. Some organized bathing took place even at this time, however, most notably in the court of Charlemagne in the late eighth century. According to the emperor’s biographer, one of the main reasons Charlemagne chose Aachen for his court rather than Rome was because he enjoyed swimming in the city’s thermal baths, which he visited often with family and guests. So, it can be seen that even during times when bathing was most out of favor, some adherents were still enjoying its healing properties.

The Ottoman Empire, as noted, saw a resurgence in the popularity of the baths with their hammams, which spread into Europe. By the time of the Renaissance, there were several established spa towns across Europe, including Paeffers in Switzerland, Baden-Baden and Karlsbad in Germany, Montecatini and Saturnia in Italy, Bath in England, and, of course, Spa in Belgium. Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and several other European countries also have a history of spa culture. The first scientific book on the Czech spa treatment regimen for treating disease was published in 1522. The locales where such spas operate are still known today as “spa towns” (Figure 1-5). They owe their existence to the water source and the therapies that were applied there. In addition, the Finns

Massage Therapists in the Hammam

Did You Know?

When you visit a hammam, you experience an intense form of spa therapy consisting of vigorous scrubbing and firm massage strokes, all taking place in a hot steamy chamber. The massage therapist uses a coarse mitten, known as a **kese**, to scrub your skin. Other people are around you, beneath a high domed ceiling. Hot water is poured over your body to wash away the soap and grime from the outside world. You are given a pair of wooden clogs, or **nalins**, so you will not slip on the wet marble floors, and you wear a wrap called a **pesternal** around your body.

Massage workers in hammams are known as **tellaks**. Originally, hundreds of years ago, these were primarily young boys who not only massaged and exfoliated patrons but also often acted as prostitutes for their male clients as well. In fact, a book in the Ottoman archives called *Dellakname-i Dilkusa* (The Record of Tellaks) offers surprising detail about the services performed by these bath workers: their rates, their relative beauty, and their ability to satisfy their customers. Tellaks were recruited from non-Muslim nations under the Turkish Empire, such as Jews, Albanians, Bulgarians, Lebanese, Greeks, and others. The relationships that formed between a tellak and his clients could become very intimate and emotional. Wars were fought over these young massage boys. Moguls and sultans prized their companionship.

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the modernization that followed, the tellaks no longer fulfilled this sexual function. Today, hammam therapists are adults who offer spa therapy, not prostitution. Female hammam attendants are known as a **natirs** and work on women. But in spite of this reformation, the term “hammam oglani,” or “bath boy,” is used in Turkish as a euphemism for a homosexual.



FIGURE 1-4 Ruins of the ancient Roman baths of Caracalla.

kese

a coarse mitten carried in the soap case, it not only scoured the dirt out of the pores, but also served to deliver a bracing massage; it was specially woven out of hair or plant fibers

nalins

the wooden clogs, often ornate, worn in the hammam to help avoid slipping

pesternal

ornate cloth or silk wrap worn around the body while at a hammam

tellaks

hammam workers, providing massage and exfoliation; in ancient times, sexual favors and sometimes close emotional relationships with clients were also a part of the tellak's role

natirs

female versions of the tellaks, traditional hammam workers

FIGURE 1-5 Advertisement for an early European spa in a typical spa town, Karlsbad, Germany.



banya

traditional Russian communal steam bath

crenotherapy

from the Greek “crene,” which means “rising,” any treatment incorporating spring water, mud, and vapor



SPA TIP

If you want to pronounce the word “spa” like a native of the town Spa in Belgium does, start with an “sh” sound as if you were going to say “shopping,” and then add the “pa” for the slightly Germanic sounding word, “shpa.”



SPA TIP

“Water is not the source of life, it is life”
— Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

became famous during this period for their saunas, and the Russians for their **banyas** (as will be explained in Chapter 5), but these are not full-fledged spa facilities as we have come to think of them.

For centuries, Europeans have gone to such locations to “take the cure” and undergo **crenotherapy** using the natural mineral waters found there, hoping to stimulate digestion, improve the immune system, and even cure disease. In Europe, to this day, spa philosophy continues to be more remedial and medically oriented than spa philosophy in the New World. Many European health plans pay for spa visits and spa treatments. Spa goers are likely to be prescribed a regime by medical personnel on staff at the spa. This regime may include multiple immersions in therapeutic waters and even the ingestion of mineral-laden spring waters in an attempt to improve physical conditions.

SEBASTIAN KNEIPP

Sebastian Kneipp (pronounced “knipe”) was a towering figure in the world of hydrotherapy and natural healing. Born in Germany in 1821, he fell ill with tuberculosis at the age of 28 and was able to cure himself by following the advice he found in a little-known manual on hydrotherapy. His primary method for this self-cure was frequent immersions in the frigid waters of the Danube river,

which, he believed, would literally shock his body back into health. His plan worked.

Kneipp became a priest and used some of the healing methods he had developed through self-experimentation to treat severely ill people. When some of these people recovered, he gained notoriety, eventually writing a book on the subject. The publication of *My Water Cure* (*Meine Wasserkur* in German) in 1886 became a phenomenon and catapulted him to fame, making him one of the best known people in Germany. He published another book, *The Way You Should Live*, in 1889, cementing his fame and influence. More than simply a treatment method, Kneipp's **kur** entailed an entire lifestyle change centered upon natural living. He claimed that this lifestyle, which he practiced and taught for 42 years in the spa village of Bad Worishofen, Germany, consisted of five main components, or pillars.

kur

German word meaning (course of) treatment, or cure, often used in conjunction with “wasser,” meaning water; *Wasserkur* can mean “hydrotherapy” and specifically that type taught by German healer Sebastian Kneipp

The Five Pillars of Kneipp Therapy

Kneipp encouraged people to lead a healthy lifestyle that included physical exercise, wholesome foods, and five specialized practices that can be considered direct precursors to the modern day spa lifestyle. These practices are: hydrotherapy, phytotherapy, exercise, nutrition, and lifestyle.

Hydrotherapy

Sebastian Kneipp was considered by many to be the “father of modern hydrotherapy.” He developed over 100 treatments involving the use of water in all its forms: solid, liquid, and steam. You will learn how to perform many of these treatments in Section 2. The powerful effects of water, both hot and cold, proved to be helpful for even the most seriously ill of Kneipp's patients. During his lifetime he became known as the “water doctor” and was known to have cured many people.

Phytotherapy

Kneipp proved through his research that certain herbs and plants could support healing, and he developed several products such as teas, ointments, and oils for use in baths, herbal wraps, and other treatments. The use of such products is called **phytotherapy**, and many of his formulations are still used in spas around the world today under the Kneipp brand.

Exercise

Kneipp believed that regular physical exercise stimulates natural bodily functions in the musculoskeletal, cardiovascular, digestive, and nervous systems. He also considered massage to be an important supplement to exercise.

Nutrition

Because he experienced it in his own life, Kneipp knew that many diseases could be avoided or cured through the implementation of a proper nutritious diet consisting of simple foods prepared with care so that their minerals and vitamins were not lost.



SPA TIP

Sebastian Kneipp created certain hydrotherapy treatments that might be considered strange by some people. Some of his more exotic creations include:

Dew Walking: walking barefoot on dew-moistened grass to promote circulation and strengthen the immune system

Water Treading: walking in a body of water filled below the knee, such as large basin, bathtub, fountain, lake, or ocean, to strengthen veins, induce sleep, and stimulate metabolism

Snow Walking: walking barefoot in snow from a few seconds up to three minutes to stimulate the immune system and promote circulation

phytotherapy

the use of plants or plant extracts for medicinal purposes, especially plants that are not part of the normal diet

kivas

large chambers, often wholly or partly underground, in a Pueblo Indian village, used for religious ceremonies and other purposes, sometimes heated to create a sauna-like environment

temazcal

a native steam-bath that was in general use in Mesoamerican cultures, from the Nahuatl language meaning “bath house” or “house of heat”

Temazcalera

specially trained healer who conducts sessions using heat, herbs, and sometimes massage in the temazcal, or Mexican sweat lodge

Lifestyle

Kneipp taught people to live a balanced lifestyle that was in harmony with the natural environment and the surrounding culture. He also taught people to be self-reliant about their own health and showed them how they could pursue the “five pillars” on their own at home. Kneipp lived to be 76 years old and died in 1897 after a long and productive life made possible by adherence to his own five principles.

AMERICAN SPA ROOTS

In the Americas, hot springs have been revered as sacred healing sites for centuries. Native Americans often set these places apart and agreed not to fight or hunt in them. They also created their own early “spas” by pouring water over heated stones in small enclosures called *sweat lodges*. Southwest Indians such as the Anasazi constructed special ceremonial structures known as **kivas**, in which they performed rites and induced sweats. These rites are still carried out today by modern tribe members and other interested people. Usually a group experience, the sweat lodge was used for purification, worship, and for strengthening social bonds. Often, young men would enter the lodge, which was then heated to extreme temperatures. It was thought that by taking on this suffering, the stronger members of the community could symbolically help relieve the suffering of the older, weaker, or sickly members.

One particular type of early American sweat lodge, the **temazcal** (Figure

1–6), took root in pre-Columbian Mexico, where they could be found in every village, no matter how small or remote. The Nahuatl Indians gave the temazcal its name, meaning “house of heat” or “bath house.” These special igloo-shaped dwellings were turned into steam chambers by introducing red-hot volcanic rocks, which were then covered with herbs and water to produce a therapeutic vapor. A specially trained healer, called the **Temazcalera**, directs the experience, using a vent and a fan to control the heat and humidity in the chamber. She chooses herbs to help promote healing of specific conditions, and she can even administer massage when called for. In the Nahuatl culture, the goddess of the sweat bath was Temazcalteci, “the grandmother of the baths,” who was worshipped in every temazcal throughout the region. In addition, these bathing chambers were aligned in cosmic directions, with the fire being placed in the East where the sun god rose, and bathers entered the doorway from the South, which was thought to represent entry into and rebirth out of the womb. The Spanish conquistadors, naturally, reacted strongly against this practice, which they considered idol worship. Thus they banned the use of the temazcals and tried to eradicate them, but were never completely successful.



FIGURE 1-6 The Temazcal, an early Mesoamerican spa experience.



FIGURE 1-7 U.S. health spas or “sanatoriums” like the ones in Hot Springs, Arkansas were popular early in the 20th century and drew thousands of people to fancy new hotels like the Majestic.

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, spa-like health retreats were built in many areas of North America, most notably Hot Springs, Arkansas (Figure 1–7), White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, and Saratoga Springs, New York. These facilities were often referred to as **sanatoriums** because people visited them when attempting to cure themselves of diseases such as tuberculosis. John Harvey Kellogg opened the Battle Creek Sanatorium in Michigan. Typical treatments administered at these early hot springs health spas always included a soak in the mineral pools, which became very popular. Saratoga Hot Springs, for example, was first introduced in its natural state to white settlers by Native Americans in the 1700s, and by the early 1900s it was accommodating thousands of visitors a day in extensive facilities. Franklin Delano Roosevelt spent much time at Warm Springs, Georgia, where he originally went to help treat his polio, eventually purchasing the land and building a cottage which came to be called the Little White House.

As the 1900s progressed, older facilities gave way to more modern spa ventures that focused on holistic health, fitness, diet, and overall well-being. The first such spa was the Golden Door in California, which opened in the late 1950s. Since that time, spas have continued to expand and modernize their offerings and facilities. See Chapter 2 for more information about present-day spas.

sanatoriums

also spelled *sanitariums*, resorts for improvement or maintenance of health, especially for convalescents, early examples of which, such as the Kellogg Sanatorium in Battle Creek, Michigan, are thought of as precursors to the modern health spa

ASIAN SPA ROOTS

Many Asian cultures have a tradition of massage and hydrotherapy treatments that has been passed down through the ages. In Thailand, for example, these traditions have included the use of heated herbal poultices during massage, which was often performed on temple grounds or other special locations. You will learn more about these poultices and their use in Chapter 8. In Indonesia, ritualistic bathing and massage were developed hundreds of years ago, especially for royalty, and you will learn one example of these practices, the Lulur ritual from Java, in Chapter 12.

onsen

hot springs, and especially the bathing facilities and resorts around them, in Japan

In modern times, many Asian countries have developed thriving spa industries, but the country with the most extensive historical bathing practices in Asia is definitely Japan. Because it is such a volcanically active country, Japan is sprinkled with thousands of hot springs, or **onsen**, which have been used for communal bathing, personal renewal, and meditation for centuries. The word *onsen* has come to signify more than just the spring itself. It also includes the facilities and lodging that have grown up around these sites. So, in a way, the word can be understood as a traditional term for “spa” as we use it today. Onsen are always found in natural outdoor settings, and they feature baths of varying temperature. Treatments at many onsen include massage and hydrotherapy. Some Japanese people regard these sites as more than spa vacation destinations, but rather as spiritual retreats, where specific customs are to be observed.

According to tradition, men and women typically bathed together at the onsen, though this practice has become less common over the years. The onsen, in addition to providing sanitation and therapeutic waters, also became a central fixture of Japanese social life. Family, friends and even coworkers visit them in groups. They are considered to be a retreat from daily life. As such, the atmosphere in most onsen is tranquil. Noise is kept to a minimum, and the surroundings are intentionally beautiful, set in nature, with baths made of cypress, marble, or granite.

SPA PROFILE

Susie Ellis, President, SpaFinder, Inc. and Editor in Chief, SpaFinder.com

The Spa Community

Susie Ellis and her husband Peter purchased the spa-specific travel company, SpaFinder, in 2001. Since that time, they have greatly expanded the business, and it is now the leading media and marketing force in the spa industry, working with over 8,000 spas to provide marketing solutions, customer management technologies, gift certificate programs (SpaFinder and its new gift division, Salon Wish), publications, and research. The company has also used its technological expertise to develop an online booking and management system called SpaBooker. This means that spas have no need to install software on their own computers and that the program can be updated quickly and often. The system is of particular benefit to massage therapists, who can go on the Net to check their appointments and schedule for the day. “We were able to use the latest technology to come up with something truly different and valuable for businesses of all sizes,” notes Ellis.

This willingness to embrace new technology and forge so many new directions in the industry has

turned SpaFinder into a key player, not just in the U.S. but all around the world. As president of the multi-branched organization, Susie Ellis sits squarely in the hub of the ever-expanding global spa community. “This is exactly what it feels like,” says Ellis. “We get to be in a place where we can see what’s happening globally in the spa industry. We maintain a database that is quite broad—as there are tens of thousands of spas in the world and dozens of separate spa associations. We work with the industry and media internationally and we are proud to be deeply involved with the development of the Global Spa Summit. All of this activity is marketed via the Internet and through our publications.”

Even though SpaFinder is embracing technology and all things new, Ellis puts a strong emphasis on traditional spa values that have been passed down through history. She studies the historical perspective on spas, all the way back to Greece and the Roman Empire, down through European developments and spas in the New World, right up

(Continued)

SPA PROFILE

*Susie Ellis, President, SpaFinder, Inc.
and Editor in Chief, SpaFinder.com* continued

to modern times. Then she takes that historical perspective and applies it to her vision for the future direction of spas. When someone has studied the history of an industry, and has been witness to its evolution for the past three decades, it is easier to use that information to envision the future. That is why Susie has become known as a trend expert in the spa arena and her annual Spa Trends Forecast is anticipated throughout the industry.

Ellis began her spa career in the fitness end of the industry, doing an internship at a spa during college. Shortly after graduation, she was hired at the Golden Door and quickly became steeped in the full-immersion spa experience. She considered moving into another career like banking or business consulting, but by that time the spa industry was really percolating, day spas were beginning to sprout up all over, resorts and hotels were adding spas, and in general opportunities were opening up. “The bottom line?” she asks. “I stayed. And I’m so glad I did, because the spa community has become my community.

“And when you talk about spa community, you’re talking about the very essence of connecting with other people. Historically, spas were built for community. They were social institutions, filled with myriad human interactions, and that, I think, has been part of the health and healing benefits offered by spas all along. I see that trend of community continuing and perhaps even accelerating in our own time. The powerful effects of community can be absolutely life saving, as described by scholars who have proven that a tight-knit community can actually raise life expectancy and happiness levels. I learned the same thing at the Golden Door. Forming a sense of community is part of the progress people make in their quest for health at spas. Spa guests are nurtured by their newfound connection with other people, with the staff somewhat and certainly between guests. They are literally filled up inside, and that’s a feeling that is hard to get nowadays. Interestingly, this is one benefit of the spa lifestyle that cannot be measured and cannot be sold.

Community is not something to be marketed; it is something to be facilitated.

“In prison, the worst punishment they can give you is the isolation cell, because it completely cuts off the sense of community. Sadly, we in the modern spa industry have at times lost a bit of community ourselves as we isolate separate pieces of the spa experience such as massage and relaxation. It’s often lonely in the sauna, for example. You see people sitting in thermal rooms and hydrotherapy baths staring into space. It used to be more about togetherness. If I could magically go back in time, I would like to experience one of the great Roman baths, to see what the sense of community was like, the bathing together, exercising together, eating together. I would like to have known that feeling.”

Ellis recognizes the important role that massage therapists play in creating this sense of community. “There is growing respect for therapists because people recognize that spas are not just about gold and marble. They’re about what happens when the treatment room doors close. They are about the practitioner, not the place. Therapists need to know that. They need to be encouraged and realize that what they are doing is as helpful as it actually is. They need to read and research what the medical field is saying about massage. It’s important work. At Spa Finder we gather Readers’ Choice awards every year, and one category is the top ten therapists. We recognize the special people who create the value of the spa experience because they play a vital role. Human touch is one of the timeless foundations of the spa experience, along with the use of water and temperature.

“The community we are talking about in spas is an ancient community, gathered around a source of life and warmth, with the reassuring touch of other human beings playing a big role. It is the community of mankind itself. That’s what spas are about. We need to remember that in modern times and bring a little bit of that ancient spa togetherness back into our experience.”

RESEARCH

Choose an ancient spa from any culture (an example would be the baths of Caracalla in Rome) and write a one-page report about the site, including its location, size, layout, and any other details you can find. Can you tell from your research what a typical visit to this particular ancient spa may have been like?

CONCLUSION

Understanding the historical roots of spa cultures from around the world gives you a strong foundation upon which you can build your spa career. It is important to remember that spas are not new but are, in fact, thousands of years old, and therapists have been working in them for equally as long. The role therapists have played in spas has changed greatly over the centuries, developing from that of servant, or even slave, to medically oriented practitioner, to wellness-oriented professional. Familiarize yourself with the bathing rituals of other civilizations. Develop an appreciation for the vast effort and ingenuity involved in creating these ancient spas. Give some thought to where the modern spa industry came from. By doing so, you will become a more fully rounded, capable, and perhaps more humble and appreciative spa therapist yourself.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain the origins of the word “spa.”
2. What is the difference between an acronym and a “backronym,” and how does it apply to the word “spa”?
3. What did the ancient Greeks develop as forerunners to more modern spas?
4. How did the Roman balneum and thermae differ?
5. Briefly describe the typical massage practitioner in a Roman thermae.
6. How were the Roman thermae heated?
7. Give a brief description of a typical day for a Roman citizen at one of the thermae.
8. What were some of the defining characteristics of a Turkish hammam?
9. What does it mean when European spa goers “take the cure”?
10. Who was Sebastian Kneipp, and what were his major contributions to the world of spa therapies?
11. Name two examples of early American sweat lodges.
12. Which Asian country developed the most extensive bathing culture? What are their bathing facilities like?

Spas in the Modern Age

CHAPTER

2



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Describe statistically the state of the modern spa industry.
2. List current trends in the spa industry.
3. List and define the main types of spas.
4. Describe the four key systems that must be in place to certify a spa for SpaExcellence.
5. List percentages of spa clients matching specific demographic profiles and treatment preferences.
6. Describe the five broad categories of spa goers.
7. List in order of importance the main reasons why consumers visit spas.
8. Define the differences between the facts and the myths concerned with working as a massage therapist in the spa industry.
9. List and briefly describe the main spa industry trade associations.
10. List the main categories of companies related to the spa industry.
11. Name key people in the history of modern U.S. spa development and why they are important.

INTRODUCTION

As you have learned in Chapter 1, spas have been many things in many different cultures at many different times throughout history. Today, spas remain equally as diverse, but one thing can be said that applies across the board to the entire worldwide spa industry in the twenty-first century: It is large, dynamic, and growing. This chapter focuses on the many manifestations modern spa businesses have taken, plus the associations, companies, products, and politics that run the industry behind the scenes.

According to the **International Spa Association (ISPA)**, a modern spa is a facility that is “devoted to enhancing overall well-being through a variety of professional services that encourage the renewal of mind, body and spirit.” This official definition encapsulates much of what spa owners, operators, and employees attempt to do for their clients every day. Although some consumers think of spas as places to indulge superficial pleasures and receive “pampering” services, and some spas continue to promote themselves as such, there is a growing trend toward recognizing the therapeutic and even life-changing value that spas can offer.

Modern spas are as diverse as the people who run them. Some are big beautiful resorts with lavish facilities and many amenities like golf, fitness, swimming pools, and tennis courts (Figure 2–1). Some are rustic retreats situated in nature, with a heavy emphasis on diet, internal cleansing, and physical fitness. Others are chic, modern facilities located in the heart of urban centers, offering the latest in high-tech skin care. There are large spas, with hundreds of employees, and tiny spas operated by just one person. Some spas have hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of hydrotherapy equipment, while others have no such equipment

International Spa Association (ISPA)

most visible and widespread worldwide professional spa association, founded in 1991 by a small group of North American spa professionals, headquartered in Lexington, Kentucky, now with branches in Europe and Asia, and holder of the largest annual international spa convention



FIGURE 2-1 Some modern spa facilities are lavish.

at all. There are spas that offer psychological counseling, medical screening, shamanic vision-questing, Watsu®, team building, Turkish bathing rituals, rock climbing, tennis clinics, cooking classes, weight loss, skiing, women's retreats, and much more.

In recent years, spas have become specialized, with certain types of spas featuring specific offerings and catering to specific audiences, such as weight-loss spas, outdoor adventure spas, hydrotherapy spas, and others. All of this specialization has made education a priority in the spa industry, for two reasons. First, the public needs to be educated regarding spas in order to make the best choices for themselves when selecting a spa experience. Second, spa employees and potential employees need to be educated on the ever-growing number of modalities and special services available in order to perform them in a safe and effective manner.

THE STATE OF THE SPA INDUSTRY TODAY

The spa industry today is a dynamic and ever-changing segment of the economy that has seen tremendous growth in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Officially part of the **hospitality industry**, spas provide extremely

hospitality industry

the entire economic sector, including spas, that serves the public through lodging, dining, personal services, and entertainment offerings

SPA TIP

With approximately 14,000 spas in the U.S. alone, it may seem like the marketplace is already overcrowded and you should not bother joining the industry. But if you divide total approximate spa revenues (\$10 billion) by the total number of spas (14,000), you come up with the average income per spa, which is \$714,286. Do you think that number makes it worthwhile to explore the spa industry a little further?

specialized services that set them apart from other choices when consumers are deciding where to spend their discretionary income. An increasing number of people are seeing the benefit of these services, as evidenced by the rising tide of spas and spa-going. The total number of U.S. spas almost quintupled during the late 1990s into the early 2000s, rising from under 3,000 to nearly 14,000 (Figure 2–2). People paid a total of 138 million visits to spas in 2007, spending \$10.9 billion (Table 2–1).

In the first few years of the twenty-first century, the spa industry experienced a leveling out of its meteoric expansion, and many experts now believe it is entering a phase of moderate growth. The industry has experienced the first year-to-year dip in the number of consumers planning to visit a spa. While the number of facilities is still increasing, overall spa revenues and the total number of spa employees are not exploding any more. Spa owners and directors have begun to catch their collective breath and are now focusing on improving the quality of their workforce and their offerings for an ever more experienced and demanding audience. Accordingly, the need for qualified, well-trained personnel continues to be strong.

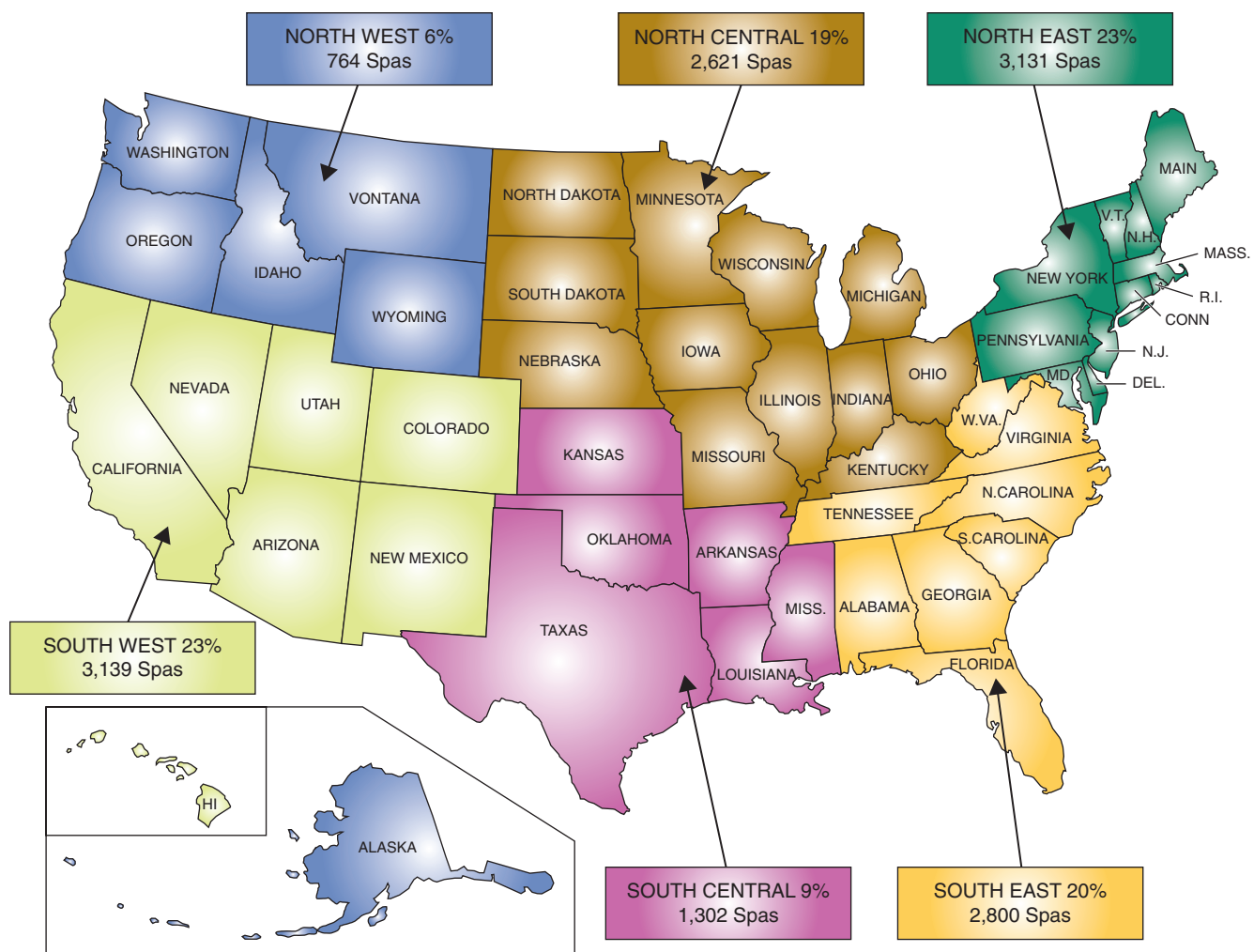


FIGURE 2-2 Distribution of U.S. spas by region.

ISPA 2008 U.S. SPA INDUSTRY UPDATE THE BIG FIVE			
	2006	2007	ANNUAL GROWTH
Revenue	\$9.4 billion	\$10.9 billion	16%
Spa Visits	111 million	138 million	25%
	JULY 2007	JUNE 2008	ANNUAL GROWTH
Locations	14,615	18,089	24%
Total	232,673	303,719	31%
Employees	117,067	143,267	22%
Full-Time	73,076	111,973	53%
Part-Time	42,530	48,479	14%
Contract			
Square Footage	56.2 million square feet	59.9 million square feet	7%

TABLE 2-1 Overall Size and Growth of the U.S. Spa Industry (courtesy ISPA).

© International SPA Association

A number of trends continue to shape the character of the spa landscape. According to Susie Ellis, president of SpaFinder, these trends include:

- **Weight Loss:** The number-one reason that people cite for making a visit to a destination spa is to get healthier and slim down.
- **Luxury:** Spas represent the height of luxury, and people are willing to pay for a special luxurious experience at a spa, even if it is once in a lifetime.
- **Mother/Daughter:** People are looking for ways to include friends and loved ones in their spa experiences, and those spas that make it easy with special packages such as mother/daughter retreats can increase their business. Even children and teens are being taught the benefits of spa-going, and it is not unusual to encounter youthful clients in many spas that offer a family emphasis.
- **Men:** Although spas are more popular with women, they are attracting an ever-growing number of men as well. Spas cater to a mere 30 percent male audience, but that still signifies over \$3 billion in sales to men per year.



SPA TIP

Spas are the number-one employer of newly graduated massage therapists. No other single industry employs so many therapists or offers them such a wide range of opportunities for growth and success.

Types of Modern Spas

Spas encompass a wide array of businesses, offering their customers many choices, in much the same way that restaurants offer people choices in price, menu, service, and ambience. Although each spa is unique, they can be categorized into six major types: destination spas, hotel/resort spas, day spas, club spas, medical/dental spas, and mineral spring spas.

Spas in all of these categories, of course, are “devoted to enhancing overall well-being through a variety of professional services that encourage the renewal of mind, body and spirit.” This is their commonality. Yet they attract a diverse clientele and present a wide range of philosophies and methods. The following

destination spas

facilities with the primary purpose of guiding individual spa goers to develop healthy habits and achieve lifestyle transformation through a multi-day comprehensive program that includes spa services, physical fitness activities, wellness education, healthful cuisine, dedicated overnight accommodations, and special-interest programming

two examples, Canyon Ranch Spa and Joy Spring Day Spa, highlight the broad spectrum of offerings.

Many therapists would consider it a dream job to work for Canyon Ranch, one of the best known **destination spas** in the world. The spa was founded in 1979 by Mel Zuckerman, a businessman in Tucson, Arizona. He was successful but overweight and unhealthy, like so many people who lead sedentary, high-stress lifestyles. A trip to a California spa offered him and his wife a new vision, and they hoped to offer that same vision to guests at their new spa. The operation grew rapidly, expanded to a new location in Massachusetts in the 1980s, opened its first SpaClub at the Venetian Resort in Las Vegas in the 1990s, and continues to grow rapidly today, with a Canyon Ranch spa aboard the *Queen Mary II* cruise ship, a healthy lifestyle community in Florida called Canyon Ranch Living, another resort spa near Orlando, and much more. Canyon Ranch has become a global brand, attracting thousands of the most affluent and well-traveled people in the world. Its staff of medical doctors, psychologists, fitness experts, nutritionists, bodyworkers, chefs, and hospitality specialists cater to people who pay thousands of dollars a week. This is definitely the high end of what spas represent today.

Spas need not be grand ventures backed by multimillionaire investors. Tiny spas can offer the same level of service and therapeutic value as large spas like Canyon Ranch. One such spa was Joy Spring. Owned and operated by just one woman, Joy Spring was situated in a trendy California coastal town for many years. The owner has since sold her spa to open another location in Los Angeles, and her future is looking bright. The waiting room at Joy Spring consisted of two chairs and a single bookshelf in an area the size of a closet. But there was a little water fountain there, and a sense of calm. The small selection of books and gift items on the shelf was carefully chosen and arranged in an appealing way. Inside the treatment area was a steam cabinet, a massage table, and not too much else. When clients spent time in that room, however, they felt as if the rest of the world disappeared.

Both of these examples, Canyon Ranch and Joy Spring, have the right to call themselves spas because spas can be so many things to so many people. Regardless of the size of the operation or the breadth of offerings found there, a spa's success or failure will usually be determined by the quality of the therapeutic interaction between one guest and one therapist at a time. Canyon Ranch owner Mel Zuckerman was aware of this, and that is why he signed himself up for a massage and an herbal wrap every day during the first year of business in order to keep the emphasis where it belonged, on the treatments.

What is a modern spa, in its essence? It is certainly different than spas of antiquity or even spas of a generation ago. Today, people expect a lot from spas. When visitors enter, they want to be swept away. Spas in this sense are almost a form of entertainment, and while the best spas certainly strive to enhance customers' lives and offer visible improvements in health and beauty, they must also pay heed to the "experience" they are creating and the feelings their guests go home with after that experience. Each type of spa has a different type of opportunity to do that for its clients. Take a look at Table 2–2 for a description of the six main categories of spas in operation today. Read through the sections which describe the clientele at each type of spa and what you as a massage therapist can do to improve guests' experiences when working there.

TYPE OF SPA	APPROX. U.S. #	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	CLIENTELE	THERAPISTS' GOALS
Destination Spa	71	Facility with overnight accommodations catering exclusively to spa guests, often featuring advanced modalities and elaborate signature services in beautiful surroundings.	Usually a separate building or compound with several buildings set apart from neighboring businesses or residences.	High-discretionary-income individuals or couples willing to spend \$2,500 to \$6,000 per week on health and wellness.	Therapists working at destination spas should become thoroughly familiar with the spa's mission and overall treatment philosophy so they can enhance guests' experience through allied modalities.
Hotel/Resort Spa	1,218	Spas located within larger encompassing hotel or resort. Spa can be a main feature of the property or simply an "amenity" for guests to use at their leisure, offering a wide array of treatments, some rivaling those at destination spas. Also includes cruise ship spas.	All major resorts and high-end hotels include spas with their new properties or add them to existing properties in order to compete effectively. Spas rated highly by consumers on list of requested hotel features.	Families, couples. Medium to high income range, either dedicated spa goers or casual vacationers. Often one partner will spa while the other golfs, plays tennis, etc.	Therapists should strive to learn what each guest needs, whether that be relaxation services or specific work to assist in activities (such as golf, tennis, swimming, etc.) undertaken at the resort.
Day Spa	10,988	A spa where guests visit for a few hours or a day, with no sleepover accommodations available. These spas range from rudimentary one-person operations to full-blown centers offering treatments on a par with the large resorts.	Often situated within a hair salon. Can be a store front, stand-alone building, a single multipurpose room, part of a massage clinic, in a shopping mall, or even in airports.	Day spas cater to a wide array of individuals of many social classes, from low-medium to high income levels who prize proximity, affordability, and personalized service.	Therapists should forge strong client-practitioner bonds with the spa's guests because they will become repeat customers and therefore benefit by ongoing therapy.

TABLE 2-2 Types of Spas. (Continued)

TYPE OF SPA	APROX. U.S. #	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	CLIENTELE	THERAPISTS' GOALS
Club Spa	484	Spas that are part of a larger physical fitness facility, ranging from a minor addition to a major focus of the business.	Many upscale urban fitness clubs consider it essential to include a spa, especially multipurpose lifestyle clubs.	Physically active individuals who prize optimal performance and appearance. Medium to medium-high income range.	Therapists in club spas need to know the fitness goals of each client and how the use of weights and equipment has affected them physiologically.
Medical/Dental Spa	915	Medical/dental spas are either dedicated spa facilities that operate in conjunction with a nearby medical practice or are incorporated into the actual practice, always under the supervision of a medical professional.	Can be located at a wellness retreat center, at a resort, in a stand-alone building, or as part of an existing medical/dental practice.	Ranging from high-income individuals willing to pay extra for personalized medical services in a comfortable environment to everyday patients at medical/dental offices given extra attention with or without spa services in a spa-like setting.	Therapists should have a basic knowledge of the procedures employed at the spa and how they affect the overall health of the clients, especially regarding the skin and muscles affected by these procedures, whether they be invasive or noninvasive.
Mineral Springs Spa	77	Spas located at the actual source of mineral springs and incorporating these waters into their program and treatments.	Can be located at a wellness retreat center, at a resort or in a stand-alone building.	A wide range, from weekend family vacationers at rustic spring sites to five-star hotel goers on gourmet retreats.	Therapists should be familiar with the chemical components of the spa's waters and how they affect health through their chemical, thermal, and mechanical actions.

TABLE 2-2 Types of Spas.

SPA PROFILE

SpaQuality

As spas proliferate, an agreed-upon standard of quality becomes necessary. Consumers need to be protected from dangerous, unethical, or unsanitary situations, and spas themselves need a standard against which to judge their progress and relative standing within the industry. They also need tools that will help them improve their businesses and attract more customers. While membership in an organization or placement on a spa travel Web site may be an implied endorsement, it does not certify that the spa has achieved a certain level of quality. Thus, independent agencies have arisen to act as certifying bodies for the spa industry. One popular standard is **SpaQuality** (Figure 2-3).

Julie Register, a journalist and spa industry expert, developed The International Standards of SpaExcellenceSM to provide a framework for spa owners, directors, and managers who wish to achieve a sustainable spa business with loyal clients, dependable staff, smooth operations, and financial success. She created this system specifically for the spa industry, building on the foundation of recognized quality management standards such as the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, the International Standards Organization (ISO 9000), Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and others.

“Rather than reinventing the wheel,” says Register, “we decided to examine the standards from other industries and see how we could apply many of them to spas. We basically reorganized the quality assessment process to work within this specialized field, putting things in a language spa professionals could understand. Some spas were already certified by ISO 9000, but we wanted something very specific, just for spas.”

The system that Register and her partner Linda Bankoski have created is detailed and in-depth



FIGURE 2-3 One popular standard for certifying that spas have achieved a certain level of excellence is SpaQuality.

(Figure 2-4). It offers spa owners, operators, and employees a way to truly get to know where they stand: their strengths, their weaknesses, and how they can improve. And attaining higher levels of certification can bring greater success as well.

“One whole section of our Standards focuses on constant improvement,” says Register. “We never let them rest! Even when a spa has attained our highest Level of Excellence, we keep coming back to do anonymous assessments to make sure they maintain their standards. Our anonymous guests have been thoroughly trained; it’s much more detailed than just a regular **secret shopper**, so our spas really have to be on their toes.”

So, what exactly does the SpaQuality process entail? “The intent of the Standards is to describe the common elements of successful spas in an organized framework,” says Register. “While the Standards describe what successful spas do, they

(Continued)

SPA PROFILE

SpaQuality *continued*

FIGURE 2-4 The analysis involved with certifying the quality of spas is in-depth and comprehensive.

do not describe exactly how the spa must operate nor do they seek to make all spas alike. Basically, we utilize a series of observations, self-evaluations, interviews and on-site anonymous guest assessments to determine whether spas have successfully achieved the next level of SpaExcellence. There are five levels in total, and in the SpaExcellence system, to be successful, spas need to demonstrate that they have achieved the highest level in the following areas: spa management, spa guest experiences, spa operations support and spa improvement.”

Register believes the spas that embrace these principles of effective management will promote confidence among spa goers and enhance the public image of the spa industry as a whole. “We provide a comprehensive education, assessment and certification process,” she says. “And for those spas that have gone through the process and demonstrated compliance to the standards at a level of excellence 3, 4 or 5, we give the crystal award of SpaExcellenceSM.” (See Figure 2-5.)

“Right now we as spa professionals need to get the word out to the rest of the world and help them understand the value spas have to offer. One of the ways to do that is to make sure that there are not so many bad spas out there. We are at a point



FIGURE 2-5 Spas that have demonstrated compliance to the standards of SpaQuality at a level of excellence 3, 4 or 5 are given the crystal award of SpaExcellenceSM.

right now before spas are really going to blast off. There are millions of consumers who are still waiting to feel 100% comfortable about spas before they venture inside. We’re all in this together and we’re hoping our standards will help.”

THE SPA CLIENT

Who, exactly, visits the thousands of spas now in operation and pays all those billions of dollars to receive all those spa services? It is helpful to know more about spa goers for three main reasons:

- **in order to find them:** Statistical information helps spas find potential clients and then develop successful treatment programs and marketing plans to entice them to visit.
- **in order to understand them:** Instead of experiencing a stream of random people flowing through the front door, spas can use **demographic** information to help categorize clients according to their background, needs, and desires.
- **in order to treat them better:** By learning why people visit spas (or do not visit spas) and what keeps them from (or encourages them to) experience new services, spa owners and practitioners can more reliably give high-quality service that guests will appreciate.

The most obvious generalization that could be made about spa goers is that they are primarily women. While this is certainly true, the percentage of female versus male spa goers has been steadily decreasing. Now, nearly one-third of spa goers are men. This is a big change. In the 1980s, male spa visitors made up less than 10 percent of all spa goers.

The average age of spa goers is around 40, so the crowd tends to be a mature one, slightly older than the typical age for those who receive massage therapy outside the spa setting, which is around 30 years old. Income and education are also determining factors, with the average spa goer reporting an income of over \$70,000 and over half of them holding college degrees. See Table 2–3 for more detailed information about spa goers.

People visit spas for a wide variety of reasons. For some, it is mere curiosity. For others, it is a life-or-death decision. Many have gone to spas to change their lifestyles completely and try to regain lost health. The data in Table 2–4 highlights the most common reasons people visit spas.

Without a large and increasing number of consumers interested in experiencing spa services, today's spa industry would collapse in short order. It is important, therefore, for therapists to understand these consumers and determine how to best serve them. Although each person is of course unique, spa consumers in general can be classified into five broad categories: Non–Spa Goer, Novice Spa Goer, Opportunistic Spa Goer, Enthusiastic Spa Goer, and Seasoned Spa Goer.

Client Type 1 – Non–Spa Goer

Regardless of how excited you as a massage therapist are about the large numbers of people who visit spas, the reality is that a much larger number do not go to spas. Many, perhaps, never will. Non–spa goers outnumber spa goers approximately three to one. Do these non–spa goers have something wrong with them, then? Do they not understand the stunning benefits, not to mention pleasures, they would receive upon visiting a spa? Is money that much of an issue that they have decided never to check out spas, even one time? Are they that self-conscious

SpaQuality

a popular standard (with multiple tiers of achievement) by which to judge spa businesses, created by an independent agency that acts as certifying body for the industry

secret shopper

individual hired to visit a (spa) business anonymously and be treated as a normal guest in order to report back about the quality of service provided

demographics

the characteristics of human populations and population segments, especially when used to identify consumer markets



SPA TIP

While some spas are successful catering exclusively or primarily to women, many are now finding it wise to cater to men also, or they risk losing a third of their potential business. A few spas have even been successful catering to men only. Whether you work in a spa or open your own spa one day, it is important to make men feel at home.

	U.S.			CANADA		
	TOTAL 100%	MALE 31%	FEMALE 69%	TOTAL 100%	MALE 29%	FEMALE 71%
How long have you been visiting spas?						
Less than 1 year	15%	18%	15%	16%	26%	25%
1–2 years	13%	14%	12%	17%	20%	16%
3–5 years	31%	28%	32%	25%	22%	27%
6–8 years	16%	15%	17%	13%	16%	12%
9–12 years	11%	7%	14%	9%	7%	10%
More than 12 years	13%	18%	11%	10%	9%	11%
First service received on first spa visit						
Massage	68%	84%	61%	45%	75%	33%
Facial	13%	5%	17%	20%	6%	25%
Manicure	6%	3%	7%	10%	1%	14%
Pedicure	4%	1%	5%	9%	3%	11%
Body Scrub/Body Wrap	3%	2%	3%	4%	3%	4%
Hydrotherapy	3%	5%	2%	5%	7%	3%
Hair Removal	2%	0%	2%	4%	1%	5%
Other	1%	1%	2%	4%	4%	3%
Most common treatment received in the past 12 months						
Facial	54%	27%	67%	57%	27%	70%
Manicure	57%	23%	72%	54%	22%	67%
Massage	63%	61%	64%	46%	54%	42%
Pedicure	56%	22%	72%	52%	22%	64%
Sauna/Steam	43%	49%	40%	39%	51%	34%
Deep Tissue Massage	48%	53%	45%	33%	43%	29%
Typical spa partner						
Alone	69%	57%	74%	74%	64%	78%
Close female friend(s)	31%	5%	43%	28%	6%	37%
Spouse or domestic partner	28%	50%	18%	24%	46%	15%
Age						
18–24	11%	8%	12%	10%	9%	10%
25–34	19%	13%	21%	20%	17%	21%
35–44	22%	24%	21%	25%	24%	25%
45–54	24%	24%	24%	20%	23%	19%
55–64	14%	15%	14%	13%	13%	13%
65 and older	10%	15%	8%	12%	13%	12%
Marital status						
Married	60%	64%	59%	51%	59%	48%
Single	19%	17%	20%	18%	20%	17%
In a committed relationship	12%	9%	14%	16%	15%	17%
Widowed/Separated/Divorced	8%	10%	7%	15%	7%	18%
Education						
No college degree	19%	9%	23%	37%	31%	40%
College graduate	40%	40%	40%	38%	36%	40%
Post-graduate schooling	41%	51%	37%	24%	33%	20%
Household income						
Under \$50K	15%	9%	18%	34%	26%	38%
\$50K–\$99K	41%	34%	44%	40%	39%	40%
\$100K and over	44%	57%	38%	26%	35%	22%

TABLE 2-3 Characteristics of the Average Spa Goer, abbreviated (courtesy ISPA).

about their bodies? How can they be brought around to the “right” perspective and finally see the true value of spas?

While it is true that some people just need a little education in order to see the benefits of spas, others have pondered the benefits and determined that they are not worth the effort. Some, indeed, are price-conscious and see spa spending as a waste of money. Others are not so price-conscious, but they do not have the time to visit spas. Others simply choose to not make spa-going a priority in their lives.

Regardless of how foreign spas may seem to this majority of people, the possibility still exists that their minds could be changed. Somebody could think up a new spa concept that makes them feel comfortable instead of intimidated. Somebody could begin offering spa services at bargain-basement prices. Thousands of massage therapists could begin offering spa services in people’s homes.

These people, the non-spa goers, are the ones paid least attention to by existing spas, simply because the cost of attracting a new client is so much higher than gaining repeat business from an existing one. Some spa professionals have been tempted to conclude that the “masses” who have not yet visited a spa are not worth the effort of attracting and educating, but this would be a mistake. Although a large majority of people have never visited a spa, many need only a few kind words and some brief explanations to understand how safe, fun, and satisfying spa-going can be.

Client Type 2 – Novice Spa Goer

The novice spa goer has already paid a few visits to spas and found them enjoyable, but she has not decided to make spas an ongoing part of her life. This is somebody who may still feel uncomfortable or intimidated by some aspects of the spa experience. She is not sure if she’s “doing everything right.” She harbors secret feelings that the other patrons at the spas she visited were more knowledgeable or worldly. She may not have been thoroughly convinced about the true value of spa services and still considers them a luxury.

REASON FOR SPA VISIT	PERCENTAGE
Reduce Stress	46%
Soothe Sore Joints/Muscles	38%
Feel Better about Myself	31%
Mental/Emotional Health	28%
Improve My Appearance	22%
Overall Wellness	19%
Opportunity to Socialize	8%
Recovery from Injury	5%
Lose Weight*	4%
Recuperation from Cancer	<1%

TABLE 2-4 Reason for Spa Visits (courtesy of ISPA).

**Note that weight loss is the number-one reason for visits to destination spas, as cited earlier in this chapter, but when all the day spas and resort spas are added to the equation, the percentage of visitors seeking weight loss drops dramatically.*



SPA TIP

A Spa for the Masses

The vast majority of people are non-spa goers, and this is partly so because of real or perceived self-image concerns. “That’s just not me,” many of these people will say. They cannot imagine themselves inside the typical spa setting, which they may consider “snobbish” or “elitist.” Spa owners can make non-spa goers more comfortable by creating more relaxed environments that do not scream “exclusivity.” When first-time spa goers finally do pay a visit, massage therapists can make them feel more comfortable in the spa setting by thoroughly explaining the benefits of the therapies and gently educating them about spa etiquette in a helpful tone that is not condescending. Until this industry creates a home for the 75 percent of all consumers who still shun spas, spa business owners and massage therapists have no grounds for complaining about a lack of business.

This client needs ongoing education, and a bit of hand-holding as well. Massage therapists should pay special attention to these clients, because they represent the greatest opportunity for creating positive impressions that will turn occasional spa goers into dedicated fans. Sometimes, spa goers at this stage have the tendency to become loyal to a particular therapist rather than to a particular spa. This is understandable, but it is not recommended. Cultivating star therapists on staff is counterproductive to the ultimate success of a spa business, and while it is sometimes difficult to avoid, it should definitely not be promoted.

Client Type 3 – Opportunistic Spa Goer

This type of client has decided unequivocally that spas are a good thing. He goes to spas (almost always a day spa or medical spa) when he has the time and he remembers to make an appointment, which is usually done on the spur of the moment, the same day or at most one day in advance. He keeps his eyes open for any spa coupons or special offers, and when the time comes for a little self-indulgence, spas are up there on the list with things he would like to do, in addition to sports, entertainment, and other leisure pursuits. Massage therapists need to be aware of clients in this category so they can educate them about the benefits of more consistent spa-going.

Client Type 4 – Enthusiastic Spa Goer

This client frequents spas and yet still feels that she does not have enough time and/or money for all the spa-going she would truly like. She books appointments in advance and keeps up with the largest trends in the spa industry. She may be among the first to want to experience new treatments when they become available. Perhaps subscribing to a consumer spa magazine, she looks for value and excitement in her spa-going, perhaps seeking out new spas. She may even have visited a destination spa once or twice, or a mineral spring spa, paying top dollar for an all-inclusive spa immersion experience.

Massage therapists need to recognize these spa enthusiasts when they arrive because they like to be treated a little special, and they deserve it. Therapists can help them feel cared for by discussing the details of spa products and spa treatments, speaking as if to an equal so as to include the client in the inside world of spa therapy.

Client Type 5 – Seasoned Spa Goer

The seasoned spa goer has the discretionary income necessary to experience all types of spas, often on a consistent basis. She has been to several destination spas, plans her travel and vacations around spa availability, and actively seeks out the latest and greatest facilities, products, and therapists. However, she will often not sign up for seasonal offerings because she realizes they may be more of a trend than a core therapeutic offering. She tends to stick to what works: massages, facials, and a select set of signature treatments.

Massage therapists may find it hard to impress the seasoned spa goer, who may have an “I’ve seen it all” attitude. Therapists, then, need to treat her with respect and strive to make her a co-creator of her own spa experience. Therapists can ask her about her varied spa background and seek informed input that will help further customize the treatment.



SPA CAUTION

Massage therapists working in spas should be aware of the different types of spa clients and adjust their interactions with them accordingly. “I treat all my clients as equals,” is a phrase often heard spoken by well-meaning therapists, but this attitude may in fact make certain clients feel less appreciated and less understood. Those therapists who learn to distinguish between non-spa goers, novices, opportunists, enthusiasts, and seasoned spa goers will advance their careers more quickly and do a more admirable job representing the spas that they own or where they work.

MESSAGE THERAPISTS IN THE SPA SETTING

Without massage therapists, spas would be very different places. The most popular image people have of spas and the one most often used in advertising is that of a woman or man lying on a massage table, head tilted unnaturally to the side, smiling for the camera while getting treated to a massage (Figure 2–6). Spas since Roman times have featured massage, and today, people still expect massage to be front and center on the menu. Yet while it is true that people consider massage an essential part of the overall spa experience, it is not the only thing they value. Also important are ambience, guest service, esthetic treatments, wellness, nutrition, and more. They want the spa to run like a well-oiled machine, with no delays or inconsistencies. In short, while massage is the most important thing to you as a therapist, it is secondary to the overall spa experience for guests. You need to remember this and focus the same amount of energy on becoming a valuable player on the spa’s “team” as you do on your own personal therapeutic skills (see the section on Teamwork in Chapter 15).

How many therapists actually work in the spa industry? While the number is in constant flux and impossible to determine exactly, you can estimate the number by referring to Table 2–1 once again. When you consider that the spa industry employs over 300,000 people, and if you assume that approximately 15 percent of the spas’ employees are therapists (a conservative number), you can see that spas may easily employ 45,000 therapists. That is a small city filled with nothing but massage therapists working in U.S. spas alone. Imagine what the number must be in the quickly growing international spa community.

A therapist needs no other license or qualification other than a massage license or certification in order to work in the spa industry. However, many therapists feel it is helpful to take a spa training program, either as a part of their schooling or through continuing education. This education makes them more likely to find jobs in the spa industry as it demonstrates seriousness and dedication. Many spas offer their therapists continuing education at a reduced cost, or free, as a benefit of prolonged employment at the spa. Instructors either visit the spas to train the entire staff or the spa pays all or part of the tuition for off-site trainings. Before accepting this type of benefit, therapists must make a firm commitment to the spa by completing a certain period of employment or by signing a contract that makes them liable for the cost of their training if they leave the spa within a specified period of time.

Even those therapists who are not directly employed by the spa industry stand to benefit greatly by the popularity of spa modalities. As shown in Table 2–5, the most frequently requested spa offering among consumers is “home visit spa” services. Independent therapists who provide these services and market themselves stand to greatly increase their overall business (see the profile—Succeeding with Home Spa Services—in Chapter 17). Those therapists who wish to provide home spa modalities for their private clients can judge which ones may be most popular by studying the data in Table 2–6, Interest in Particular Types of Spa Services.



FIGURE 2-6 The most popular image people have of spas and the one most often used in advertising is that of a woman or man lying on a massage table.

INTEREST IN PARTICULAR TYPES OF SPAS	EXTREMELY INTERESTED	VERY INTERESTED	FAIRLY INTERESTED
Home Visit Spa	6%	10%	20%
Family-Oriented Spa	2%	10%	16%
Country Club Spa	3%	5%	12%
Airport Spa	3%	5%	8%
Pet Friendly Spa	2%	5%	6%
Males-Only Spa	2%	4%	6%
Prenatal Spa	2%	3%	4%
Teens-Only Spa			2%
Dental Office Spa			3%

TABLE 2-5 Spa Treatments: Experience and Interest (courtesy of ISPA).

	% OF SPA GOERS WHO HAVE ALREADY EXPERIENCED SERVICE		% OF SPA GOERS VERY INTERESTED IN TRYING IT FOR FIRST TIME	
	U.S.	CANADA	U.S.	CANADA
Massage	72%	53%	11%	16%
Facial	66%	69%	8%	6%
Manicure	66%	63%	5%	5%
Pedicure	63%	59%	5%	7%
Deep Tissue Massage	54%	41%	13%	17%
Sauna/Steam	52%	51%	9%	9%
Body Scrub/Wrap	41%	37%	10%	12%
Aromatherapy	39%	42%	9%	8%
Movement Classes	23%	24%	13%	16%
Hot Stone Massage	22%	18%	28%	26%
Hydrotherapy	17%	19%	8%	13%
Couples Massage	17%	9%	16%	15%
Shiatsu	16%	17%	17%	18%
Energy Work	11%	22%	12%	16%
Lifestyle Classes	10%	17%	13%	12%
Guided Meditation	8%	12%	6%	10%
Thai Massage	8%	8%	17%	20%
Vichy Shower	7%	5%	6%	11%
Tai Chi	5%	10%	8%	12%
Lymphatic Drainage	3%	6%	4%	8%
Ayurvedic Treatments	3%	3%	5%	7%
Watsu	1%	1%	4%	7%

TABLE 2-6 Interest in Particular Types of Spa Services (courtesy ISPA).

Forming Realistic Expectations

The prospect of working in the modern spa industry may seem daunting at first because there are so many variables involved, so many questions to ask. Through the influence of the media, gossip, or sheer lack of information, some massage students and beginning therapists form incomplete or misguided perceptions about what it is like to work in a spa. These perceptions spread through the massage community, making it nearly impossible to tell myth from reality. Some of the most common misperceptions circulating about the spa industry are listed in the Did You Know? sidebar: Spa Myths vs. Spa Realities.

It is important to form realistic expectations about what it will be like working in the spa industry. Some therapists tend to romanticize the idea, while others disparage the idea. The reality is that working in the modern spa industry is quite similar to working in any other modern industry. Challenges and concerns will inevitably arise, many of which you will learn about in Chapter 15. At this stage, it is important to understand three basic realities:

- The spa industry is the largest single employer of massage therapists.
- Competition among therapists for the best spa jobs will continue to grow as higher-quality spa-specific education in massage schools becomes more widely available and a greater number of freshly minted therapists enter the market each year.
- Many opportunities exist in spas for massage therapists to move up to supervisor, manager, director, and other positions.

THE SPA COMMUNITY

The modern spa community is comprised of three main components: associations, corporations, and individuals. Though each of these is a distinct entity with its own self-interests and goals in mind, they have also come together to form a cohesive industry with a collective voice. Those massage therapists who are serious about entering the spa industry need to learn as much as they can about this community as they seek their own unique places within it, whether that be as employees, private practitioners, or spa owners.

Associations

A number of associations directly or indirectly serve the spa industry (Table 2–7). The associations that have the most impact on therapists working in spas include the **Day Spa Association**, the Medical Spa Association, and ISPA, which is the main professional association of the spa industry (Figure 2–7). ISPA was officially launched in 1991 by a small group of dedicated professionals who had a vision for the future of spas. There were 150 attendees from 10 countries at the first conference, and no trade show floor. Membership included no day spas and very few affiliates. Prior to that time, spas were run by independent business owners with only loose affiliations with each other, if any at all. Sixteen years later, the organization had thousands of members from 75 countries, and the

ACTIVITY

Spa Association Membership Application

Write a one-page essay as part of an application for membership in a spa association. Include at least three reasons why you think your participation would benefit the organization. Also, list two or more projects or committees you would like to take part in as a member, and explain why.

Day Spa Association

an association of member spas, vendors, and related companies devoted primarily to the successful practices of day spas, as opposed to resort or destination spas; sponsors an annual day spa–specific convention

Spa Myths vs. Spa Realities

Did You Know?

MYTH: As a therapist in a spa, you will be expected to do 10 massages in a row without a break.

REALITY: While a very small number of insensitive spa owners still try to force the maximum work out of their therapists, the trend today is to take care of therapists. A burnt-out staff is not good for customer relations. Five to six massages per day, often with a 10- to 15-minute break between sessions, is the normal maximum. Also, spa modalities such as body scrubs and wraps are not as hard on therapists' bodies.

MYTH: The only kind of massage done in spas is "pampering" massage.

REALITY: Many spas offer advanced bodywork modalities on their menus, including craniosacral, neuromuscular, myofascial, and more. In some cases, training in these techniques is even provided and paid for by the spa.

MYTH: Therapists are always poorly paid in spas.

REALITY: While it is true that spas have high overhead costs and must try to keep their expenses down, therapists still typically make \$20 to \$40 per hour, with no overhead expenses of their own.

MYTH: Only unmotivated or unskilled therapists work in spas.

REALITY: Many highly motivated and skilled therapists work in spas. Some find it optimal to let the spa take care of business while they focus on therapy, and they are content to remain in that relationship for many years. Others quickly move up to become supervisors, trainers, lead therapists, and directors. Some therapists pursue other goals while working in the spa, using it as a stepping stone.

MYTH: You cannot perform in-depth work over a period of time in spas because the clientele is constantly changing.

REALITY: Roughly three-quarters of all locations are day spas or club spas, with a local, repeat clientele. Even at resort and destination spas, therapists can work with clients repeatedly during their stay or even during return visits.



SPA TIP

The Day Spa Expo is a smaller conference, held in Las Vegas each year, that specializes in helping owners and practitioners who work in day spas as compared to the larger resort and destination spas that receive much of the attention at the ISPA conference. Therapists who work in day spas or plan to open their own day spas will find this conference valuable.

trade show could only be held at the largest conference centers because it was so huge. In addition to providing a forum for growth, commerce, education, and mutual support, ISPA has become in some ways a guiding light for the industry as well, as evidenced in the code of ethics (see Did You Know? sidebar) by which all member spas must abide.

Attending a Spa Tradeshow

If you become serious about pursuing a career in the spa industry in any capacity, it is important to visit events where thousands of other like-minded professionals gather to share knowledge and inspiration, as well as buy and sell products and services. Spa tradeshow can be broken down into two main categories: those organized by associations and those organized by corporations. Though they are not drastically dissimilar at first glance, the association-sponsored events tend to focus more heavily on general education and inspiration, while the corporate

INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS			
ASSOCIATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	WEB
Spa			
American Spa Therapies Education and Certification Council (ASTECC)	1014 N Olive Ave West Palm Beach, FL 33401	(800) 575-0518	http://www.asteccse.com
Day Spa Association	310 17th St Union City, NJ 07087	(201) 865-2065	http://www.dayspaassociation.com
International Spa Association (ISPA)	2365 Harrodsburg Rd, A325 Lexington, KY 40504-4326	(888) 651-4772	http://www.experienceispa.com
National Coalition of Esthetic & Related Associations	484 Spring Ave Ridgewood, NJ 07450-4624	(201) 670-4100	http://www.ncea.tv
Leading Spas of Canada	PO Box 157 Sooke, BC V0S 1N0	(800) 704-6393	http://www.leadingspasofcanada.com
Medical Spa			
American Association of Naturopathic Physicians	2366 Eastlake Ave E Ste 322 Seattle, WA 98102	(206) 323-7610	http://www.naturopathic.org
American Holistic Medical Association	4101 Lake Boone Trl, 201 Raleigh, NC 27607	(919) 787-5181	http://www.holisticmedicine.org
International Medical Spa Association	310 17th St Union City, NJ 07087	(201) 865-2065	http://www.medicalspaassociation.org
Medical Spa Society	60 E 56th St New York, NY 10022	(866) MEDISPA	http://www.medicalspasociety.org
National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM)	9000 Rockville Pike Bldg 31, Rm 5B-38 Bethesda, MD 20892	(888) 644-6226	http://nccam.nih.gov
The Ayurvedic Institute	PO Box 23445 Albuquerque, NM 87192	(505) 291-9698	http://www.ayurveda.com
Massage & Bodywork			
American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA)	820 Davis St Ste 100 Evanston, IL 60201	(847) 864-0123	http://www.amtamassage.org
Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals (ABMP)	28677 Buffalo Park Rd Evergreen, CO 80439	(800) 458-2267	http://www.abmp.com
National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy	4509 Interlake Ave N #233 Seattle, WA 98103-6773	(888) ASK-NAHA	http://www.naha.org

TABLE 2-7 Spa-Related Associations.

events focus more heavily on the vendors who supply products and product-specific education. Both are extremely worthwhile for anyone serious about spas. One day spent on a trade show floor and in the classrooms of experienced teachers at these events can supply information it would take months to gather on your own.



FIGURE 2-7A&B The International Spa Association (ISPA) and the Day Spa Association (DSA) are the main professional associations of the U.S. spa industry.

When attending a spa trade show, keep the following points in mind in order to get the most out of your experience:

- Go with a friend if possible. Even if you don't know anyone who's going, call your local massage school or chapter and see if somebody else from your area will be attending.
- If you want to save money on your trip, suggest sharing a hotel room with another attendee.
- Call the conference headquarters and ask for a list of other people attending alone who are looking for rides or roommates.
- Mingle at luncheons, dinner banquets, and parties, introducing yourself to as many people as you can. People expect to be approached at conferences. No need to be shy.
- Spend a lot of time talking to vendors at the booths in the exhibit hall. They all want to get to know you because you may be a potential customer or business partner. Stroll slowly through the aisles, spending time getting to know each person and their products. Later, when you see them in the hallways or at functions, you'll have a basis for conversation.
- Have fun. Definitely partake of the social agenda created for each one of these events. If people have seen you doing the limbo the night before, they'll be more likely to strike up a conversation the next day.
- If you notice any other people there alone, see if you can offer them a little company.



SPA TIP

Remember to bring *plenty* of business cards to the spa trade show. A commonly heard line goes as follows: "Oh, I just gave out my last card. Sorry." As a general rule, bring three or four times as many business cards as you think you will need.

ISPA Member Code of Ethics, abridged (courtesy ISPA)

Did You Know?

ISPA Spa Member Code of Ethics, abridged (courtesy ISPA)

- Member will be guided in all activities by truth, accuracy, fairness, and integrity.
- Member pledges loyalty to the Association and agrees to pursue and support its objectives.
- Member pledges to keep informed on the latest techniques, developments, and knowledge pertinent to professional improvement.
- Member will help fellow members reach personal and professional fulfillment.
- Member will utilize every opportunity to enhance the public image of the spa industry.

Staff

- Staff, when hired, is provided with a Policy and Procedures Manual that is reviewed and updated annually.
- Staff is provided with and/or given access to constantly updated Treatment Procedure and Product manuals for all treatment modalities, including the spa's menu.
- Staff is given a job/responsibility description upon hiring, followed up with at least one annual evaluation of each individual's job performance.
- All specialized staff such as fitness instructors, personal trainers, massage therapists, estheticians, nail technicians, hairstylists, nutritionists, physiologists, psychologists, and medical technicians comply with applicable international, federal, state, and local regulations with regard to licensing, registration, and appropriate certification.
- During operating hours, there is at least one staff member scheduled on site who has current CPR certification.

Service

- Staff is courteous, helpful, knowledgeable, and articulate.
- Staff is committed to anticipating the guests' needs and serving them.
- Staff believes in the precepts of spa wellness and is willing and able to share these philosophies with guests.
- Staff zealously guards the guest's privacy and modesty.
- Staff is attentive to preserving the spa environment at all times.

See Table 17–3 for a listing of spa trade shows and Table 17–2, Choices in Spa Education, for more information.

Companies Related to the Spa Industry

As the spa industry has grown, a number of companies have grown alongside it. The eight main categories these companies fall under are: spa treatment products, spa/hydrotherapy equipment, exercise equipment, software, apparel/lifestyle, spa travel and recommendation, consulting, and distribution. Within each one of these categories, certain companies have excelled, forming partnerships within the spa industry and capturing a large percentage of sales. At the same time, new companies

vendors

companies or individuals that supply a (spa) business with needed equipment, products, or supplies

are rapidly being formed and entering the spa. These companies, taken as a whole, are often referred to as **vendors**. As a massage therapist in the spa industry, you will need to be familiar with these companies and their products in order to understand spa guests' overall experience. If you know how a specific piece of the spa's exercise equipment works the quadriceps muscles, for example, you will be better-prepared when treating a guest who is complaining about his sore thighs. Table 2-8 lists the eight main categories of spa-related companies with some examples of the most well-known companies within the industry and the reasons

SPA COMPANY CATEGORY	PRIMARY GOODS AND SERVICES	REPRESENTATIVE COMPANIES	IMPACT ON MESSAGE THERAPISTS
Treatment Products	oils, lotions, seaweeds, muds, clays, herbs, cosmetics, esthetic products	Pevonia, Aveda, Spa Tech, Dermalogica, Creative Spa, Jurlique, mdskinicare, B. Kamins, Babor, Darphin, Jamu, Tara Spa Therapy	When therapists know more about the products they apply, through vendor training or self-study, they can better serve clients and enhance retail sales
Spa & Hydrotherapy Equipment Manufacturers	saunas, steam baths, Jacuzzis, hydro tubs, specialized showers, treatment chambers, pools, massage tables, wet tables, massagers	Living Earth Crafts, Custom Craft, Touch America, HydroCo, LPG USA, Sanijet	Therapists need to know the contraindications for and health impact created by each piece of equipment on guests. They also need to be extremely familiar with operation for ease of use
Fitness Equipment Manufacturers	treadmills, stationary bicycles, elliptical machines, weight machines, free weights, aerobics equipment	Precor, Cybex, Nautilus, Life Fitness, Gym Source, Nordic Track	Therapists gain knowledge about guests' therapeutic needs by knowing how each piece of equipment affects guests' muscles and overall health
Spa Software Companies	scheduling, inventory, booking, point-of-sale and marketing software, as well as biofeedback and relaxation tools	Spa Soft, Spa Biz, Harms Software, Resort Suite, Wild Divine, Mikal	Therapists who have an understanding of how spa software facilitates booking, scheduling and sales can perform their duties more effectively
Spa Apparel and Lifestyle Companies	books, DVDs, CDs, candles, teas, sport drinks, nutrition products, ingestible herbs, supplements, robes, clothing, fitness wear	Hay House, Silhouette, Jen Morgan, Cypress, Kimbaks, Sensi, Prana	The most effective therapists can recommend products that fit guests' expectations of how to continue the spa experience at home
Travel and Recommendation	Spa ratings and information, travel agent services, gift certificates	SpaFinder, Spa-Addicts, Spa and Salon Wish	Therapists who open their own spas need to know how travel and recommendation services can help grow their businesses
Consulting	Assistance to develop or improve spa businesses	Wynne Business, Resources and Development, Preston Inc., ESPA, JGL, Smith Club & Spa, Blu Spa, Sylvia Planning and Design, Interdesign Spa Consulting	Some therapists become spa consultants and others hire consultants to help them develop their own spa businesses
Distribution	Clearinghouse for many spa product and equipment categories all within one company	Massage Warehouse, Scrip Massage & Spa Supply, Universal Companies, New Life Systems, Relaxus	Distributors streamline the purchase of spa equipment and products for therapists who want a "one-stop spa shop"

TABLE 2-8 Companies Related to the Spa Industry.

why it is important for massage therapists to become well-versed in the products and equipment these companies provide. In addition to the companies working directly in the spa industry, many allied industries have received a boost in sales due to the growth of spas, including architects and designers who have been contracted to help create spas, banking and insurance professionals who have specialized in helping spas do business, and construction firms that have built spas.

Spa Treatment Product Companies

Perhaps the most visible companies in the spa industry are those that provide the products that are actually applied to clients' bodies in the treatment rooms. These companies need to gain the respect and trust of spas in order to provide the products that will come into such intimate contact with their clients. If those clients do not have a positive experience with the products, they will not return to the spa, no matter how beautiful, expensive, or well-run it is. In addition, the products being used in the spa help create the overall ambience through the dispersal of aromas from herbs, seaweeds, clays, and oils (see discussion on "spa smell" in Chapter 17). Guests' most direct, lasting impact at many spas may be created, ultimately, by the product companies, not the spas themselves.

Spa and Hydrotherapy Equipment Manufacturers

Spas acquire much of their pizzazz from the fancy equipment they purchase. Sleek, space-age devices create a sense of exclusivity in high-end spas, and manufacturers who know this create ever more sophisticated and stylish equipment (Figures 2–8, 2–9, and 2–10). At the same time, spa equipment has become much more utilitarian in recent decades as spas moved out of antiquated systems featuring monolithic tubs and slabs upon which to perform **wet treatments** and into custom-designed pieces created with the input of practitioners in mind. See Chapter 3 for a thorough discussion of spa equipment.

Exercise Equipment Manufacturers

Most destination spas and resort spas (and certainly all club spas) feature an array of fitness equipment to supplement the spa lifestyle. Some medical spas also use exercise equipment, often with medical components, such as treadmills with stress test **EKG** devices and body composition analysis machines. Massage therapists who understand the basic uses, contraindications, and effects of this equipment will have a much better grasp of spa clients' needs on the treatment table.

Spa Software Companies

Software is an integral part of most modern spas of any size. Without it, spa business owners would be forced to spend much more time on paperwork and menial tasks. Because software is integrated so thoroughly into most aspects of spa operation, software development companies have had to become conversant in many aspects of the spa business. The representatives who train spa owners and employees on the software, whether in person on site or remotely over the phone, often provide a great deal of help to spas, especially during startup and expansion phases.

wet treatments

spa treatments that involve the use of water, often in specially manufactured showers or baths

EKG

a graphical recording of the cardiac cycle produced by an electrocardiograph, often used in conjunction with treadmills at medical spas



SPA TIP

Massage therapists who understand the basic uses, contraindications, and effects of exercise equipment in the spa will have a much better grasp of spa clients' needs on the treatment table.



FIGURES 2-8, 2-9, 2-10 High-end spas often feature sophisticated and stylish equipment.

Spa Apparel and Lifestyle Companies

Each spa has its own philosophy. This philosophy is represented not only by the services offered at the spa but also by the products the spa offers its clients to take home. Spa retail shops are filled with lifestyle items such as candles, cards, tapes, books, and apparel. Fitness outfits, loungewear, and spa robes are especially popular. Therapists who wish to be in sync with the spa's philosophy often choose to become customers of these lifestyle companies themselves. They “walk the talk” of the spa lifestyle.

Spa Travel and Recommendation Companies

Consumers seeking recommendations and spa-specific travel services turn to a handful of companies that feature special offers combined with plentiful information. Many of these companies include gift certificate programs that are valid at hundreds or thousands of spas. The top-tier travel companies also produce consumer magazines.

Spa Consultants

Hundreds of individuals and companies offer consulting services in the spa industry. Some specialize in concept and design, others in treatment menu and staffing, and others in finance. A small number provide all of these services, plus ongoing spa management that is outsourced to them by resorts, hotels, and country clubs. The field has become so well-established that some **spa consultants** are even offering training services that certify other people as spa consultants.

Spa Distributors

Several companies have gathered all the items needed by spa operations under one roof. Often, these companies have the economies of scale that make it possible to offer the best pricing, plus reduced shipping costs through consolidation. In addition, distributors have made forays into spa education and consulting as well. These companies will continue to merge and grow as the spa industry matures.

spa consultants

professionals with expertise in helping entrepreneurs and practitioners navigate the waters of spa design, development, and management, sometimes doing hands-on work during various stages and at other times offering advice only

Important Individuals in the Modern Spa Industry

Although the energy and hard work of many people has certainly contributed to the amazing growth of the spa industry, there are certain individuals whose contributions stand out. As someone who will potentially make all or part of your living within the spa industry, it is appropriate and respectful to understand the gift you will be inheriting from those pioneers who have made the modern spa industry what it is today. The following list, though by no means exhaustive, highlights some of the individuals who played key roles in creating and developing modern spas in North America.

Deborah Szekely

Deborah Szekely is often referred to as the *grande dame* of the modern spa industry. Along with her husband Edmond (a Hungarian scholar, author, and philosopher known as “The Professor”) she opened the first destination spa, Rancho la Puerta, in Baja California in the 1940s. She then visited Japan to study the traditional Ryokan inns, which were designed to welcome and restore weary travelers. After that trip, she and her husband opened the famed Golden Door Spa in Escondido, California, in 1958. This eventually became the most well-known spa in the United States. The Szekelys’ firm belief in fitness, wellness, a healthy, pesticide-free diet, and living close to the land was adhered to by movie stars, moguls, and average individuals from every walk of life. Mrs. Szekely has also been active in the arts, politics, and humanitarian pursuits, having opened a school for the deaf, established a learning center and museum dedicated to immigrants, and even running for Congress. As the years went by, her son Alex Szekely took over the operation of the spas until his untimely death from cancer in 2002. In honor of his contribution to the spa industry, the International Spa Association announced the Alex Szekely Humanitarian Award, which is given each year to individuals who made contributions toward integrative medicine, actively promoting the preventive health and lifestyle behavioral changes that contribute to longevity and quality of life.

Mel Zuckerman

Mel and Enid Zuckerman founded the original Canyon Ranch Health Resort in Tucson, Arizona, in 1979. Canyon Ranch opened in Lenox, Massachusetts, in 1989. The first Canyon Ranch SpaClub opened at The Venetian Resort in Las Vegas, Nevada, in 1999. In 2002, Canyon Ranch opened a SpaClub facility at the Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center in Kissimmee, Florida. In January 2004, Canyon Ranch debuted its third Canyon Ranch SpaClub onboard the *Queen Mary II* luxury ocean liner. And Canyon Ranch Living, the company's first healthy living residential community, is now open in Miami Beach, Florida.

Andrew Weil

Though not a spa owner himself, Dr. Andrew Weil has played an important role at the Canyon Ranch Spa in Tucson. He is the director of the Program in Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona College of Medicine, which receives support from the spa, and he is a past recipient of the Alex Szekely Humanitarian Award. Dr. Weil has also been the keynote speaker for the annual ISPA conference, and penned the forward to *The Canyon Ranch Guide to Living Younger Longer: A Complete Program for Optimal Health for Body, Mind, and Spirit*. Many in the spa industry look to him for leadership and inspiration.

Noel de Caprio

Noel de Caprio is acknowledged throughout the industry as the “Mother of Day Spas”. The owner of Noelle Spa for Beauty and Wellness in Stamford, Connecticut, she helped originate the modern day spa concept back in the 1970s. She fought a twelve-year battle against breast cancer, which inspired her to turn her spa into a true healing center that offers private meditation, hypnotherapy, Reiki, shiatsu, and acupuncture, not just pampering services. She also helped create a “Look Good . . . Feel Better” program for cancer patients, and the spa provides a wig service for those undergoing chemotherapy. Mrs. de Caprio passed away in 1998, but her spa and her work still survive.

John and Ginny Lopis

A husband-and-wife team that has been at the forefront of spa development for many years, as consultants and spa directors they have helped create some of the most popular spa facilities and programs in the U.S. and internationally, including Canyon Ranch, the Doral in Miami, and Topnotch in Vermont. Eventually, they became owners of a new destination spa, The Lodge at Woodloch, in northeast Pennsylvania. Their programs take people beyond health, fitness, and relaxation into self-discovery. Honored as visionaries in the industry, they have found ways to attain success and profitability for spas while always maintaining a focus on environmentalism, economic sustainability, and human growth.

RESEARCH

Spa Profile

Complete a two-page profile of an operational spa, either one that you can visit and research in person or one that you can research at a distance on the Internet, in books, or through phone interviews. Include a profile and/or interview of the owner, spa director, manager, treatment supervisor, or staff therapist if possible. Focus on the spa's operating procedures, its competition, its employees, and its clientele. Ask hard questions about what it is really like working in the spa industry day-to-day, such as:

- What is the turnover rate for staff, and how often do new people need to be hired?
- How many staff are full-time or part-time? Does the spa pay benefits?
- Does the spa know the cost of acquisition for each new client? What is it?
- Is it difficult to adjust staffing for seasonal ups and down in business?
- How does the spa target potential clients and market to them? Do they specifically try to attract male clients?
- What are the most popular services at the spa? Least popular?
- How often does the spa add new services to the menu? How do they train therapists to perform them? Do they pay for therapists' training?
- Approximately how many vendors and suppliers does the spa need to keep stocked and open for business? Are all of these relationships positive? Do any vendors supply training for therapists on staff?
- Does the spa belong to any industry associations? If so, has membership been helpful? Has anyone at the spa attended industry trade shows?
- Does the spa have any quality-control systems in place? Do they follow a specific set of guidelines or code of ethics?

After you have gathered the real-world information for this profile, ask yourself how it compares to your vision of the spa you would like to create or work in one day.

Bernard Burt

For years, Bernard Burt has kept his finger on the pulse of the spa industry and has kept many people in touch with that pulse through his "Spa-Goer Newsletter" and his widely read books, including *Fodor's Healthy Escapes* and *100 Best Spas of the World*. He took part in the founding of the International Spa Association and has played an important role in creating a cohesive, marketable spa industry to which the general public can relate. Many spa professionals look to him for the latest news and trends.

Sheila Cluff

Sheila Cluff is founder of The Oaks at Ojai Spa in Ojai, California. An internationally known fitness expert, a former board member of ISPA, and a member of the College of Sports Medicine as well as the Intercontinental Hotels Advisory Travel Board, Cluff was the recipient of the ISPA Visionary Award, rewarding her for her dedication to the industry. In May 2002, *Spa* magazine recognized her as a pioneer of the American spa industry with a "Trailblazer" tribute. Cluff introduced "cardiovascular dance," a forerunner of aerobics, to the world in the 1950s. For decades she has helped guests at her spa attain wellness and personal power through healthy living.



ACTIVITY

Your Ideal Spa

Write a one-page description of the ideal spa that you would one day like to work in or own yourself. Who would you like as your boss, or who would you like to hire? What type of spa would it be? What model(s) of previously successful spa(s) would you follow? How many therapists would be on staff? Where would it be located?

**SPA ETIQUETTE**

When visiting spas in person or calling spas on the phone to gather information for a research project, always identify yourself honestly and state the true nature of your business rather than pretending to be a spa customer and asking lots of probing questions while receiving a treatment.

CONCLUSION

Spas today are some of the most innovative and fast-moving businesses in the world. Although based on ancient techniques and traditions, they are thoroughly modern. Becoming a part of the spa industry offers massage therapists a way to join the fast-paced global economy without sacrificing their dreams and goals of helping other people through massage therapy and other wellness services. In order to play a successful role in this industry, it is helpful to understand how other people forged successful spa careers and how they simultaneously helped many clients and colleagues along the way. It is important to learn and grow with colleagues and mentors in spa associations. And it is crucial to form strong connections with the people who support the industry through their products and knowledge. Without becoming an active member of the spa community, massage therapists will play only a limited role in the industry that supplies more massage jobs than any other.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Name some trends in the spa industry.
2. Approximately how many people were working in the spa industry in 2008?
3. What is the main difference between a destination spa and a day spa?
4. What are the five general categories of spa goers, and how can therapists positively affect their experiences in the spa?
5. Which professional spa associations are most relevant to therapists working in the spa industry? Why?
6. How do those therapists who are not directly employed by the spa industry stand to benefit greatly by the popularity of spa modalities?
7. What are some of the member codes of ethics of the International Spa Association that directly affect massage therapists who work in spas?
8. Why is it important for massage therapists to be familiar with companies that are related to the spa industry?

Spa Equipment, Facilities, and Procedures

CHAPTER

3



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Describe the difference between a spa “wet room” and a spa “dry room.”
2. List and describe the items necessary to set up a spa dry room.
3. List and describe equipment used in spa wet rooms, including showers, baths, tables, and chambers.
4. Explain how to stock the proper supplies and products for a spa treatment room.
5. Identify and explain the main safety issues encountered in the spa environment.
6. Define 10 general spa safety rules and explain why they are important.
7. Define 10 general spa therapist self-care rules and explain why they are important.
8. Define risk management as it applies to the spa therapist, and explain the three main categories of risk management issues faced by spa businesses.
9. Define the actions that spa therapists and spa owners can take to improve risk management.
10. List the most important issues regarding sanitation and hygiene in the spa.

INTRODUCTION

As a future spa employee or owner, you need to know everything you can about the fundamental physical reality of spas, especially the equipment and facilities needed to make spas work, yet a surprisingly large number of massage therapy students have never even visited a spa. Imagine you were an aspiring baseball player hoping to join the major leagues, but you had never even seen a baseball game played. Or you were a novice actor hoping to make it big in Hollywood, but you'd never been to the movies. This total lack of knowledge and experience is unthinkable, and yet therapists routinely apply for spa positions with absolutely no idea what spas are like. This is not acceptable. Study this chapter carefully in order to familiarize yourself with the basic realities of spas, including the sanitary and safe use of spa facilities and equipment, and the orderly effective use of spa supplies. The information and activities here will help you develop an appreciation for the environment in which you may soon be spending a good deal of time.

When clients walk through the front door of a luxurious spa, or even a private therapist's small spa treatment practice, what do they experience? What are the impressions created by spas on the senses of spa goers? Every decision made regarding physical spa facilities has a direct impact on the spa's guests as well as the spa's employees. The quality of the facility and equipment is of the utmost importance. This by no means implies that only expensive facilities and equipment are appropriate. As long as they are safe, sanitary, effective, and attractive, even the most basic facilities can create a fabulous spa experience. The key to this type of experience lies in an intense attention to detail regarding every aspect of the physical spa itself. This chapter addresses those details.



ACTIVITY

Go to a Spa!

Go visit a spa! In Chapter 14 you will be assigned the activity of visiting a spa and receiving a treatment in order to evaluate the experience. For now, simply visiting a spa is enough. You need not spend any money or take any risks. Simply stop by a spa and ask for a menu of services. If it is available, ask for a tour of the spa facilities as well. Take close note of the equipment, furniture, and fixtures. Are there lockers? Changing rooms? Hydrotherapy equipment? Are any “back of the house” areas visible, or is there a seamless façade of tranquility and beauty? Are any guests visible? Do they look comfortable and secure, or vulnerable and uncertain? Upon returning from your visit, write a paragraph outlining your overall impression of the spa, giving your gut reaction as to what it felt like to be there.

DRY ROOM VERSUS WET ROOM

The very first distinction that must be drawn when describing spa treatment facilities is that between a **wet room** and a **dry room** (Figures 3–1 and 3–2, Table 3–1). As a spa therapist, you will be operating in either a dry room or wet room for much of your time on the job. It is important, then, for you to understand how these rooms function, how to clean, maintain, and stock them correctly, which treatments can be best performed in each, and how to properly use each for the benefit of your clients.

wet room

a spa treatment room that is usually tiled and has a source of water (showers, bath, wet table, etc.) and drainage for the application of hydrotherapy treatments and cleansing of spa products from clients' bodies

dry room

a spa treatment room that does not have a source of water (showers, bath, wet table, etc.) or drainage, requiring the use of moist towels, insulated containers, heating elements, and other supplies to recreate a full spa experience



FIGURE 3–1 A spa dry room can be a regular massage room, even with carpeting on the floor. Notice the heater/insulator units to keep products, towels, etc., warm.



FIGURE 3-2 A spa wet room includes plumbing and usually a high-end table or hydrotherapy equipment.

hydrotherapy tub
technician-operated soaking tub with computerized zone-specific jet systems and underwater massage hose

Vichy shower
a horizontal bar with multiple down-facing nozzles along its length, suspended above a wet table used to shower clients lying below

A dry room can be defined simply as a spa treatment room that does not have a source of water. There is no shower, no bathtub, no hydrotherapy tub, no wet table, no drain in the floor, and usually no tiles on the floor or walls. A dry room can be a normal massage room, even if it has carpeting on the floor and no sink. A source of water somewhere nearby is necessary, however. Dry rooms require the use of moist towels, insulated containers, heating elements, and other supplies to recreate a full spa experience, but all of these can be purchased for much less than the cost of installing the plumbing and spa equipment needed for a wet room.

A wet room can be defined as a spa treatment room, usually tiled, that has a source of water in it such as a shower, a bathtub, a **hydrotherapy tub** or a wet table

with **Vichy shower**. Also, by definition, it requires drainage for the water. This is where hydrotherapy treatments take place, and also where many spas perform their body wraps and exfoliation services. The advanced shower systems (see Chapter 4) found here aid in the cleansing of spa products from clients’ bodies as well.

Until the late 1980s, wet rooms were often tiled from floor to ceiling and featured a monolithic tiled slab in the center of the room upon which clients lay to be slathered with copious amounts of product and sprayed with forceful bursts from hoses attached to the wall. This is no longer the case. Modern wet rooms feature tables with built-in drains that make tiling on the walls and ceiling (and sometimes even the floor) unnecessary (Figure 3-3). Spa products can be washed from the skin and sent directly into the drain, doing away with the

	WET ROOM	VS	DRY ROOM
Infrastructure	plumbing, plumbed treatment table, drain, tiled floors and perhaps walls as well		regular massage room without shower or tub or even sink needed in room, but a source of water is needed nearby
Equipment	treatment table (called a wet table), shower(s), optional hydrotherapy tub		massage table, insulating container to keep products and towels hot
Supplies	blanket, sheets, towels, thermal blanket, plastic body wrap, exfoliants, muds, clays, seaweeds, massage lubricants, essential oils		blanket, sheets, towels, thermal blanket, plastic body wrap, exfoliants, muds, clays, seaweeds, massage lubricants, essential oils
Advantages	perceived as high-end and luxurious, fast and effective hydrotherapy, quick washing of product from skin, immersive hydrotherapy benefits for clients		inexpensive to build, can be included in any massage practice with little alteration, clients often enjoy luxury of more intense hands-on care by therapist
Disadvantages	expensive to build, perceived as “cold” by some clients, uses large amount of water, underused if not equipped for regular massage treatments		difficult to clean certain spa products from clients’ skin, cannot provide high-tech hydrotherapy baths and shower treatments
Safety Issues	slips on wet tile floors, potential electrical hazards, copious use of hot water makes burning a concern		the need to heat towels and product can create a burn hazard

TABLE 3-1 Wet Room/Dry Room Comparison.



FIGURE 3-3 Modern wet tables have built-in drains.

need for extra cleanup. This also serves to keep therapists dry as well. In the past, many therapists donned bathing attire to perform wet treatments.

The Spa Classroom

Although a growing number of massage training facilities have built spa-specific classrooms that may include wet rooms with showers, wet tables, and hydrotherapy equipment, the majority do not have such amenities. While it is unique and enjoyable to learn in an environment that closely simulates a spa wet room, it is not absolutely necessary. Spa owners and directors repeatedly state that the most important aspects of spa training are in fundamental knowledge, modality familiarization, basic hands-on technique, appropriate team-oriented attitude, and customer service skills. Ability to operate specific pieces of spa equipment is not on the list. If you do have the opportunity to study in a wet room environment at your school, enjoy the experience, but also be aware that you will likely need more equipment-specific training when you begin work, because the brand, model, and procedure may differ from property to property. Even if your school has the latest wet room equipment, it will benefit you to learn dry room procedures as well to round out your skill set and make you a more valuable all-around spa professional. In addition, if you open a spa yourself one day (see Chapter 17) you might choose to offer dry room treatments at first because infrastructure costs to build out a wet room are high. The spa treatment protocols described in Chapters 4 through 13 in this book will be clearly marked as to whether they are dry room–specific or not.



SPA ETIQUETTE

A regular massage room in a spa is not referred to as a “dry room” unless it is equipped to perform spa treatments in addition to massage. Do not make this classic squares-and-rectangles error. Every dry room can be used as a massage room, *but* not every massage room can be used as a dry room.



SPA TIP

Resourceful therapists can perform a large number of spa treatment modalities in a dry room with the use of hot wet towels to remove product and cleanse the skin. Paradoxically, clients sometimes prefer this technique because of the added personal attention. High-tech showers and tubs are great, but the simple act of having the skin cleansed by a caring therapist can be just as luxurious, and sometimes more so.

Wet Room Confusion

Did You Know?

Therapists are sometimes confused as to whether they need to develop an expertise in wet room procedures in order to become full-fledged spa therapists or to open their own day spa. Several basic questions arise from this confusion. Answers to these questions are listed below.

Q: Are there any spa treatments that cannot be administered in a dry room as compared to a wet room?

A: Yes. A Vichy shower, for example, cannot be administered in a dry room because, by definition, it includes a shower. The same applies to a hydrotherapy bath. However, all body wraps and exfoliation services performed in spa wet rooms can be modified for application in a dry room setting.

Q: Will clients still visit a spa if it does not include a wet room?

A: Definitely yes. Some guests may expect a wet room at larger spa facilities, but the majority of guests are quite happy receiving massages, esthetic services, and body treatments in a dry room.

Q: In order to compete with other spas, is a wet room necessary?

A: Only if the spa is a large, high-end facility, usually a resort or destination spa. Smaller day spas with dry rooms can compete with larger wet room–outfitted spas in the same area, especially if they offer a better price and/or equal or better service.

Q: Isn't it better to have a wet room because massage treatments can be offered in them as well, and that way the room will be used more?

A: Not necessarily. The extra costs associated with building and maintaining a wet room may outweigh the benefits of having the extra space available. Also, some clients prefer not to receive massage treatments in a wet room because they feel, rightly or wrongly, that it is too cold or impersonal.

Setting Up the Spa Dry Room

Later in this chapter you will find descriptions and explanations regarding the spa wet room and equipment specific to it. For now, we will concentrate on the dry room, how it works, and how to prepare it. How big does a spa dry room

need to be? In general, the answer to that is, approximately the same size as a massage room, but preferably a little bigger to accommodate the extra equipment, supplies, and linens needed to perform spa treatments. At the very least, spa dry rooms need extra storage space compared to typical massage rooms. The equipment you will need to perform spa services in a dry room is listed in the sections below.

Treatment Table

The centerpiece for any successful spa dry room is the treatment table. Ideally, this should be a multipurpose table, meaning it can be used for a number of spa services plus massage in a manner that is comfortable for clients and ergonomically effective for therapists (Figure 3–4). A multipurpose table costs more than a typical



FIGURE 3–4 The multipurpose treatment table is the centerpiece of an effective spa dry room. (Photo courtesy of Massage Warehouse.)

massage table, but the benefits far outweigh the extra cost. These tables make it easy to lift clients' upper bodies for face treatments or raise the knees for foot treatments, and some even include foot basins for soaking during these procedures.

Water Source

As we learned in Chapter 1, the word *spa* has come to stand for water (*sanitas per aqua*), and so it will come as no surprise to you that water is a needed ingredient for your spa services, even in a dry spa room. However, it is important to note that the water source need not be within the room itself. A sink down the hall or in a nearby bathroom is sufficient. This source is used to moisten towels, wash clients' skin, warm products, and steep herbs. Water can be brought into the dry treatment room in various kinds of containers, including hydrocollators and roasters.

Heating Units

Most dry spa rooms contain heating units of one kind or another. Although it is possible to offer spa services using hot water from the tap to heat products and towels, it is difficult and inefficient. The three most popular heating units used in dry spa rooms are hydrocollators, hot towel cabbies, and roasters (Figure 3–5).



SPA TIP

A spa dry room should be slightly larger than a normal massage room (ideally a minimum of 10" × 14") in order to accommodate the extra equipment and supplies.



FIGURE 3–5 These three options are the most popular heating units used in dry spa rooms. (Photos courtesy of Massage Warehouse.)



FIGURE 3-6 Ice chests, also known as Spa Thermal Units, can be used to keep towels and spa products hot in the dry treatment room.

Spa Thermal Unit (STU)

an ice chest or other insulated container repurposed for use in a spa dry room to keep towels and products hot prior to treatment

cocoon

another term for spa body wrap, so called because the client is tucked inside the surrounding sheets and blankets like a chrysalis

Insulated Containers

Even the most luxurious and well-equipped spas use insulated containers in their treatment rooms to keep products, towels, sheets, and sometimes stones hot while in transport or while waiting to be applied to the client's body. Often, these are simply ice chests, plastic bus trays or other readily available containers, repurposed for use in the dry room (Figure 3-6). When used in this capacity, an ice chest is referred to by some therapists as a **Spa Thermal Unit (STU)**. When kept in such containers, towels and products remain hot throughout the duration of a treatment so that, for example, a therapist can wring out towels in

hot water and place them in the STU at the beginning of an exfoliation service to have them available to cleanse products from the body during a full half-hour.

Blankets

Blankets are used extensively in spa treatments to wrap clients, creating a layering effect for warmth and protection which is sometimes referred to as a **cocoon** (Figure 3-8). Specific types of blankets have been favored in different areas at different times. At one point, wool was the preferred fabric because it was thought to be the best insulating material. However, spas today employ a wide range of materials for use in wrapping. The blanket layer is usually on the

ACTIVITY

Hot Towel Safety

Because hot towels are used so extensively in dry spa rooms, and potentially in your classroom as well, become familiar with their use by practicing this simple procedure. First, fold a high-quality hand towel in half twice, roll it up, then dip it into very hot water—165°F maximum, 120°F minimum—and wring it out. Make sure to wring out every drop of moisture you can, using protective gloves (Figure 3-7). Place the towel in an insulated container or hot towel cabbie, then have a partner lie on the massage table, face down. Take the towel out, unroll it and air it out for a moment, then place it gently on your partner's back, letting the heat soak into the pores. Make sure to check the temperature of the towel on the skin of your own inner forearm first. Slide the towel slowly over your partner's back, as if you were cleaning spa products from the body. Many people find the sensation of being “washed” in this way by another person is more enjoyable than simply taking a shower to clean off spa products.



FIGURE 3-7 People find the sensation of hot towels being applied quite enjoyable.



FIGURE 3-8 Being wrapped in blankets during a spa treatment is sometimes referred to as a “cocoon.”



FIGURE 3-9 Thermal blankets play a role in insulating clients during spa treatments.



SPA CAUTION

It is not recommended that you use a microwave oven to warm up towels for spa treatments. Microwaves heat objects unevenly, and towels heated in this manner may have patches you do not notice that are too hot to safely apply to clients' skin.

bottom closest to the treatment table and consists of the outermost layer in any wrapping procedure.

The **thermal blanket** (Figure 3-9), also referred to as a **space blanket**, is made from a special material first developed by NASA in 1964 to help protect delicate space ship parts. It is also used by outdoor enthusiasts to remain warm in harsh conditions. It reduces bodily heat loss by reflecting 80 percent of it off a silver metallic surface back to the wearer. These blankets are constructed by layering a precise amount of pure aluminum vapor onto a thin, durable film substrate. In spa dry rooms (and wet rooms, as we shall see), these blankets often form an extra insulating layer around clients' bodies when they are wrapped. They can also be used to protect massage treatment tables from water and spa products.

thermal blanket

metallic blanket often used by outdoor enthusiasts to remain warm in harsh conditions, repurposed for body wraps in the spa setting and also for protection of massage treatment tables from water and products

space blanket

see *thermal blanket*



FIGURE 3-10 Spa bowls are used by therapists to keep products warm and easily accessible.

spa bowls

rubberized bowls used to hold and to warm spa products during treatments, prized for their insulation, sturdiness, and stability

Spa Bowls

Spa bowls were originally developed for use as the mixing bowls dentists use to prepare the paste for tooth molds. They are rubberized, extremely durable, usually brown or green in color, and prized for their ability to retain the heat of any spa product placed within them (Figure 3-10). Therapists use them for seaweeds, muds, clays, exfoliants, and other products, often floating the bowl in hot water or nestling it next to hot towels in a cabbie or roaster. Another attractive feature of spa bowls is that they tend to wobble instead of overturn, thus avoiding a multitude of messy spills in the spa room.

Wheeled Stool

Many spa rooms feature a small stool for the therapist to sit on while performing specific treatments, especially head, hand, and foot treatments, that require extended periods focusing on one part of the body. It is best if this stool is on wheels for easy movement from one side of the treatment table to the other (Figure 3-11). Comfortable stools with high-quality, quiet wheels are most suitable for the spa room.

Face Cradle

Face cradles are not used as often in spa rooms as they are in massage rooms, for one main reason: Traditional spa wet rooms featured treatment slabs instead of tables, and there was no way to attach a face cradle to these slabs. Over the years, as specialized spa treatment tables became more popular, they usually lacked face cradles, like the slabs, even though face cradles could have readily been added to the spa treatment table. Then, as practitioners began using regular portable massage tables for spa services in dry rooms, this tradition continued, and most dry spa services were applied without face cradles, too. Now, however, spa therapists have realized that face cradles are acceptable, easily adaptable, and actually preferable for spa treatments, and they are incorporating them into most, if not all, services (Figure 3-12). You will notice that many protocols in this book feature face cradles. If you see protocols anywhere that do not feature the cradles, you can adapt the protocol for use with them.



FIGURE 3-11 A comfortable wheeled stool is a great tool for the spa treatment room.

Optional Dry Room Equipment

In addition to the basic supplies and equipment needed to perform most services, dry spa rooms can feature a wide range of optional devices to enhance the therapeutic outcome of the treatments rendered. Some of these

devices add an element of heat to spa therapy, either through immersion in a hot medium such as wax or steam, or through general heating of the treatment space with infrared lighting or other means. Optional equipment is sometimes devoted to the organizing or streamlining of the treatment space as well. See Chapter 17, under “A Consciously Created Environment,” for more detailed information about optional supplies and décor to enhance the spa room. The items listed below are commonly found in dry rooms.

Paraffin Wax

Estheticians and cosmetologists have used therapeutic paraffin wax in the spa setting for many years, and more recently, massage therapists have begun applying it as well, with good results. The wax is heated to approximately 129°F in electric basins that are usually kept on a counter or table in the treatment room. These basins vary in size and shape depending on the intended use (Figure 3–13). Detailed information about the therapeutic application of paraffin can be found in Chapter 5.

Treatment Bar

With all of the extra products and supplies needed to apply spa services in the confined space of a treatment room, some spas elect to consolidate these items in one console called a **treatment bar**. These consoles allow an economical use of space by providing multiple heated bins for items such as rocks, towels, sheets, oils and body muds, and they also have storage space below the bins.

Steamy Wonder™

Steamy Wonder™ is the brand name for a steam canopy that can be placed over the treatment table (Figure 3–14). Clients recline on the table as usual, and the canopy is lowered over them. Steam generated in a crock pot is fed into the



FIGURE 3-12 Face cradles can be used for almost all spa treatments.

treatment bar

console (often wheeled) with various heated bins for storage and easy access to spa products and supplies

Steamy Wonder™

the brand name for a steam canopy that fits over treatment tables, allowing therapists to apply heat treatments in a limited space



FIGURE 3-13 Paraffin heating basins are a common sight in spa treatment rooms as therapists become more well acquainted with their use.



FIGURE 3-14 The Steamy Wonder™ is used effectively by many therapists when space or budget does not allow for a full steam room or sauna.

Russian steam cabinet

small, usually fiberglass chamber in which a person sits, head outside, while bathed with steam generated from a unit in the base

laser skin resurfacing

sometimes used in medical spas, the process of using laser light to remove damaged or wrinkled skin, layer by layer, to minimize fine lines, especially around mouth and eyes, and also for treating facial scars or uneven pigmentation

Botox®

trademark name for a highly purified preparation of botulinum toxin Type A, injected under the skin to smooth wrinkles and to treat certain muscle conditions

microdermabrasion

technique using a high-pressure stream of abrasive crystals against the skin for exfoliation, usually performed only on the face by licensed estheticians

facial machines

piece of equipment used by estheticians to treat clients' skin, usually combining several instruments including steam generator, brushes, magnifying lamp, vacuum, galvanic current, and others

wet area

that part of a spa devoted to services using water including baths, showers, sprays, wet tables, etc.; can include both private treatment rooms and public spaces; often broken down into separate male and female areas

canopy with a fan, heating the client's body quickly and effectively with minimal residual moisture and no damage to the table. These steam canopies are appropriate for use in small dry rooms with minimal space available. Some spas hang a canopy from the ceiling and lower it for the appropriate treatments. The steam tents are especially useful before herbal wraps and other heat treatments.

Infrared Lamp

Spa rooms can and do become cold. It is especially important to keep clients warm when they are wet or when they have spa products applied to their skin. Therefore, many spas incorporate supplemental heating units to warm the air around the treatment table. The most common heaters are infrared lights. These can be recessed in the ceiling or mounted on a stand. Some stands are on wheels so they can be moved to the area of the spa room most needed.

Russian Steam Cabinet

Another option for applying steam heat to spa clients in an enclosed dry space is the **Russian steam cabinet**. This device opens in the front and has a seat inside upon which the client sits. The cabinet is closed and a small generator in the base emits steam, creating moist heat. The client's head remains outside of the unit throughout the treatment, which helps avoid sensations of claustrophobia in most clients.

Saunas

Saunas are a staple at many larger spas, but in smaller spas and dry rooms they are less common, if not completely unknown (see Chapter 5 for more detailed information about saunas and steam baths). One exception is the infrared sauna, which uses radiation to heat the client rather than hot rocks to heat the air inside the sauna. Infrared saunas can be plugged into a normal wall outlet, and the smaller units only take up a few square feet of floor space.

Foot Bath

Some spa dry rooms have foot baths that can be filled in a preparation area and brought in for treatments. These can be simple basins or electric models that feature heat, vibration, and water jets.

Other Equipment

Many spas, of course, also feature other equipment such as **laser skin resurfacing** systems, syringes to inject **Botox®**, **microdermabrasion** machines, and **facial machines**. The use of these and other pieces of equipment found in the spa will not be described in this book, because treatments performed with them are outside the scope of practice for massage therapists.

SPA WET ROOM EQUIPMENT

The equipment used in spa wet rooms or **wet areas** can be broken down into four main categories: showers, tubs, tables, and chambers (Figures 3–15 through 3–17). Each category features several variations, and equipment manufacturers have all come up with their own version of each one of these variations, leading



FIGURE 3-15 Vichy showers are a key feature in many spa wet areas.



FIGURE 3-16 Hydrotherapy tubs offer a great deal of adjustability for the operator and a comprehensive treatment for the client, including therapeutic ingredients and targeted percussive action from multiple water jets.



FIGURE 3-17 Modern wet tables contain most if not all excess water and product during spa treatments, keeping the area neat and clean.



SPA CAUTION

The Russian steam cabinet is comfortable for most people because the head remains cool outside the heating chamber. Even so, some clients report intense claustrophobia inside these devices. Clients should never be left alone when entering a Russian steam cabinet for the first time.

to a wide array of products. Wet room equipment is often expensive, costing thousands or even tens of thousands of dollars for one unit. These units can be the centerpiece of a room which has been designed specifically for them, or they can be combined with one or more other pieces of equipment to create a spa suite or dedicated wet treatment area.

Because each spa has its own unique array of wet room equipment, newly hired therapists are not generally expected to know how to operate them all. Training is offered on operations, sanitation, and precautions for each. It is beneficial, however, for therapists to have a conceptual knowledge of how each piece of equipment works, its intended therapeutic outcomes, and a brief background or history of how it was developed. The following chapters will introduce you to the use of this equipment in detail. For now, familiarize yourself with the data in Table 3–2 to gain a preliminary understanding of wet room equipment and its purpose.

WET ROOM EQUIPMENT				
CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	USE	POPULARITY
Showers	Hot/Cold Shower	regular shower at hot or cold temperature	washing off product, heating body, closing pores	most common option, but has the least therapeutic applications
	Vichy Shower	multiple showerheads on horizontal bar extending over table	washing off product, relaxation, hot/cold contrast therapy, luxurious	popular in many high-end spas, but clients need to be educated on use; sometimes underused
	Swiss Shower	multiple showerheads in large stall pointing at clients from all directions	washing off product, stimulating circulation, hot/cold contrast	installed in traditional European-concept spas, not as popular in modern facilities
	Scotch Hose	powerful spray jet aimed at standing client	forceful stimulation of circulation and skin	popular in traditional seaside thalassotherapy centers, less so in modern spas
Baths	Hydrotherapy Tub	technician-operated computerized zone-specific jet systems and underwater massage hose	targeted stimulation of multiple zones on client's body plus powerful water-pressure massage	very popular in destination and resort spas, less so in day spas
	Jacuzzi/Whirlpool/Hot Tub	tub with non-programmed jets	relaxation prior to massage or spa treatment	very popular, common in spas with wet areas
	Soaking Tub	non-jetted tub for soaks, usually with therapeutic ingredients	relaxation and absorption of therapeutic ingredients	popular in spas with a focus on natural therapeutic ingredients and/or seawater
	Mud/Enzyme Bath	tub or vat filled with therapeutic mud, peat, sawdust, etc.	absorption of therapeutic ingredients, relaxation, detoxification	popular but only in specialized resort spas with nearby natural mud, enzymes, etc.

TABLE 3-2 Wet Room Equipment. (Continued)

WET ROOM EQUIPMENT				
CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	USE	POPULARITY
Tables	Wet Table	waterproof table with built-in drainage, usually with shower mounted overhead or on nearby wall	easy cleansing of spa products from skin, ability to drain large amount of water (as from Vichy shower) without mess	very popular, most spas with a wet room invest in a wet table, though a shower and regular massage table suffice
	Treatment Pedestal	solid structure built to waist height upon which clients lay for wet treatments	washing of spa products from skin	common in older traditional spa setups, not common in modern spas
	Soft Pack Table	rubberized cover atop a platform that lowers into liquid medium	cushions and supports clients during body wraps	rare, expensive, but highly prized by therapists and clients who experience it
Chambers	Steam Chamber	tiled room with adjacent steam generator to produce moist heat	open pores prior to treatment for effective absorption of spa products	very popular in spas with wet areas
	Rasul Chamber	ornately tiled room of Middle Eastern design for multiple clients to experience steam and mud application	creates a specialized ritual for application of products, opens pores, promotes group experience of spa service	popular in high-end spas, especially in Europe
	Hamмам	Turkish style treatment room with moderate steam and treatment table for exfoliation and massage	recreation of Turkish bath experience in modern spa setting, cleansing of skin, purification, relaxation	creates an exotic spa environment which is increasing in popularity
	Spa Suite	private room(s) meant for one guest or private party at a time with a range of wet room equipment available (showers, baths, tables, etc.)	provides clients with privacy while receiving spa wet treatments and massage	popular in exclusive spas with clients who want to pay for privacy and exclusive use of equipment for a period of time

TABLE 3-2 Wet Room Equipment.

Spa designers and builders need to keep many details in mind while installing wet room equipment, and they go through considerable expense to get them running properly. As a spa therapist, you need to understand this. Owning and operating this equipment is expensive. It requires skill, hard work, and a professional focus on safety and sanitation issues (see sections later in this chapter) to provide wet room services. The spa therapist is part of a team that makes the offering of these services possible.

Stocking and Storage in the Spa Room

Spa rooms require a larger capacity for stocking and storing supplies and equipment than a simple massage room. Consider the amount of towels and sheets alone that you will need to perform multiple spa treatments each day, and you will understand that provisions must be made for extra storage space either in



SPA TIP

The successful operation of spa equipment requires the cooperation of the equipment manufacturer, spa designer, installation expert, trainer, and finally the hands-on therapist who will perform the treatment. If you develop a healthy respect for the entire team of individuals who make the treatment possible, you will become a more professional therapist.



SPA ETIQUETTE

Wet Room Temperature

In the spa wet room, temperature control is of the utmost importance. At many points during wet room services, clients will be vulnerable to getting chilled. This occurs when you moisten a client's skin with water or product, and when you unwrap clients who have been warmly cocooned for a time, exposing them to cooler air than that inside the wrap. The general rule for wet rooms is to keep the temperature warmer than you as a therapist might prefer; 80°F to 82°F seems to be ideal for most spa wet rooms. Though you may sweat a bit while working in such conditions, it is the client's comfort that comes first.



FIGURE 3-18 Wheeled carts are valuable in the spa room to store supplies and keep ingredients handy for treatments performed in different parts of the room.

the spa room or nearby. This extra storage is normally carved from unused areas such as under treatment tables and along walls near the ceiling. Often, extra cabinets, drawers, and shelving are added to spa rooms in order to increase storage capacity.

Available counter space in the spa room is valuable real estate for the storage and display of **back bar** products, heating units, music players, tabletop fountains, mixing bowls, and other supplies. A wheeled cart (Figure 3-18) is helpful when performing treatments in the spa room because it allows you to easily move needed supplies close to your side for easy access during a face, foot, hand, or full-body service.

Spa rooms, unlike massage rooms, need a **staging area** or **prep area** in which to mix ingredients, heat towels, wring sheets, and also store products and supplies. Ideally, this takes place out of the client's view, either in a curtained-off area within the treatment room itself or in a separate area outside the room. The treatment area that is visible to the client should be stocked neatly with all products, equipment, and supplies necessary to perform each procedure.

Towels and Laundry

back bar

refers to the larger (compared to retail) spa product jars and bottles kept on the shelf and used in the spa treatment room, originally an esthetician's term

staging area

(same as prep area)

prep area

space in which to mix ingredients, heat towels, wring sheets, and also store products and supplies, either inside the treatment room, ideally curtained off, or outside the room in a hallway, closet, etc. (same as staging area)

Spas generate an inordinate amount of laundry. It is not unusual for one treatment to require four hand towels, three bath towels, and a full-sized sheet. Multiply that by six treatments a day in a modest number of treatment rooms (four, say), and the amount of linens washed on a daily basis easily soars into the hundreds. When dealing with laundry in the spa treatment area, it is important, therefore, that spa therapists observe the following guidelines:

- Whenever possible, hide laundry concerns from clients. Use a hamper or other receptacle in the room, preferably out of sight.
- Wash linens in hot water for sanitation reasons (see section on sanitation later in this chapter).
- Use storage wisely, keeping as many linens as possible in the treatment room itself and easily accessible, with a backup supply in a nearby storage area.
- Conserve on the number of towels and sheets used in each service. Do not use extra linens unnecessarily.

For those towels and sheets that come into direct contact with muds, seaweeds, and other products, spas often choose darker earth-tone colors to mask



ACTIVITY

A Clean and Organized Work Area

When practicing spa treatments in your classroom, it is important to keep the treatment area clean and organized for two main reasons. First, you will be learning how to present an attractive and professional environment to the clients who will enter your spa treatment room one day, and second, you will learn how an organized work area allows you to quickly find whatever product or equipment you need while performing a treatment. Professional spa therapists share in the responsibility for keeping treatment areas organized and clean, and you as a spa therapy student need to become accustomed to this task.

As a group activity for the whole class, spend time cleaning the treatment area, folding towels and sheets neatly, refilling bottles with oils, etc., replenishing the back bar, polishing equipment, stocking all products and supplies in appropriate spaces, sweeping the floor, and disinfecting all surfaces.

When working at an actual spa, you may not be required to clean and organize the treatment space to this degree, but this “basic training” will help you build your spa skills from the ground up, much as professional chefs do while in culinary school.

potential staining and create a more natural look. Blue, green, and brown shades are popular. White is sometimes used because these linens can be bleached. Blankets of any color can be used as they do not come into direct contact with spa products during normal use.

SAFETY ISSUES IN THE SPA

Regarding safety, spa therapists require an especially high level of vigilance for two main reasons: risk to clients and risk to themselves. As far as clients go, spas pose a specific combination of risks found in few other work environments. These risks are caused primarily by the pervasive use of heat and water, which can lead to a number of potential dangers, including fainting, heart attacks, slips and falls, drowning, burns, and scalds. In addition, there are potential issues with products due to allergic reactions. All safety issues and contraindications for each treatment will be covered as part of the hands-on instruction in the following chapters. In Table 3–3 you will find some general safety rules that apply to all treatments and the spa environment in general.



SPA CAUTION

If a client has an allergic reaction to a spa product, therapists should follow the spa's written procedures for such an incident. If no such written procedures exist:

1. Remove product from client's skin, rinsing it off with soap if necessary.
2. Make sure the client is comfortable, with no immediate threat to health or well-being.
3. If a severe allergic reaction takes place, call medical authorities.
4. Let spa management know about the reaction.
5. Document the incident in writing, using an incident report if one is available at the spa.

SAFETY RULE	DESCRIPTION
#1 Keep surfaces dry.	Any surface in the treatment room that becomes slippery can potentially create a problem, even if the surface is high, such as a countertop, and does not normally come into contact with clients. Spilled products can drip onto floors where people can slip on them.
#2 Self-test product temperatures.	Before applying products or hot towels, rocks, etc., to clients' skin, test them on your own skin first to make sure they are not too hot. The most typical area for this kind of self-testing is the inner forearm, which has thin, sensitive skin (Figure 3–19).
#3 Use non-slip floor coverings.	Wherever a potentially slick floor surface exists in the spa, such as tiles, linoleum, wood, slate, etc., have non-slip covers where clients are likely to walk. In the case of a sudden unexpected spill, throw a towel down over the area to absorb the mess and then make sure it is cleaned up immediately.
#4 Post warning signs where appropriate.	Place cautionary signage wherever it might be necessary in addition to the lawfully required warning signs near hot tubs, pools, saunas, etc.
#5 Assist clients when exiting heat treatments.	Clients may become lightheaded at any time in the spa, especially when exiting heat treatments such as baths and wraps. Always provide support and assistance at these times.
#6 Keep water temperatures in safe range.	Whenever water is being used for application to clients directly or to heat other spa products or equipment, monitor the temperature with a thermometer or digital readout.
#7 Fully wring out sheets and towels that come into contact with clients.	Wet towels and sheets that are applied to clients' skin need to be wrung out thoroughly to avoid the possibility of scalding. The material itself will not scald clients, but the moisture in the material may, making it important to get as much moisture out as possible.
#8 Use intake forms and ask about allergies.	Many spas use intake forms that ask about allergies, medical conditions, or pregnancy in order to more safely treat clients. If the spa does not use an intake form or if a client refuses to sign one, problems can arise (see sidebars).
#9 Communicate with clients.	If a client appears disoriented or distressed at any time in the spa, immediately communicate your concern. Have the client sit down. Offer to bring a glass of fresh water. If it is necessary, contact a nurse or other health care practitioner or call 911.
#10 Document everything.	Whenever a safety issue arises, a client is hurt, you are hurt, or any complaint is made, communicate this with your superiors and write down any pertinent facts. Some spas provide incident reports for this purpose (see Figure 18–15).

TABLE 3-3 General Spa Safety Rules.

incident report

official written, signed document outlining the details of an event that may potentially be cause for litigation or disciplinary actions



FIGURE 3-19 Test hot products, towels, rocks, etc., on your own skin before applying them to clients. The sensitive skin of the inner forearm works well for this testing.



SPA ETIQUETTE

One of the most basic safety tips in spas involves the traditional custom of offering water to clients after a massage or body treatment. It is important that clients stay hydrated, and some therapists believe that drinking water after treatments helps with the elimination of impurities. So, offering clients a glass of water is not only good for their health, but a gracious gesture as well, perfectly suited for spas. Some spas make this offering into a special ritual (Figure 3–20).



FIGURE 3–20 Offering clients a glass of water after massage and body treatments helps keep them healthy, and it is a gracious gesture.

SELF-CARE FOR THE SPA THERAPIST

As a working professional massage therapist, you will always be faced with the challenge of avoiding **burnout** and maintaining your own health. When you work as a spa therapist, these challenges will be magnified by two primary factors:

1. Spa therapists typically work non-stop for many consecutive hours. They are often called upon to do more back-to-back treatments, including massage and other modalities, than those therapists who perform massage therapy alone. Their hours may be longer as well.
2. Spa therapists work in conditions that are somewhat dangerous due to slippery surfaces, an abundance of water, the presence of heat, and the use of heavy equipment.

Many hardworking spa therapists have had their careers cut short by repetitive stress injuries, accidents, and just plain fatigue. Even though it may appear to an outside observer that spa therapists' work is done in slow motion, in tranquil environments, with very little chance for injury, you will eventually find the job physically challenging. In order to minimize these risks, follow the self-care rules for spa therapists described in Table 3–4.

burnout

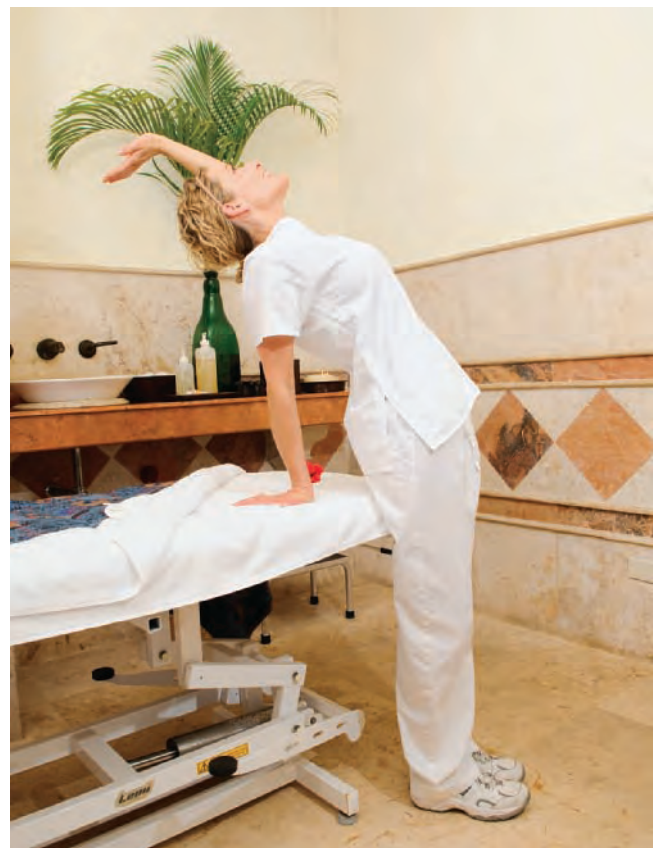
the fatigue or injury suffered by therapists as a result of an excess workload

Indisputably, self-care is central to the long-term health of all spa therapists, and the warnings mentioned here should be taken seriously. Yet, at the same time, it is interesting to note that regarding self-care, therapists who perform spa treatments hold two key advantages over those who perform massage therapy alone:

1. The products, hydrotherapy and heat that spa therapists apply to clients have an equally therapeutic effect on their own bodies. Thus, performing spa therapy is therapeutic for the therapist.
2. Many spa modalities require less effort on the part of therapists, such as body wraps, during which clients are covered for much of the allotted treatment time and the therapist has little or no work to perform.

SELF-CARE RULE	DESCRIPTION
#1 Identify and consistently engage in proper body mechanics.	You need to follow the same guidelines for proper body mechanics during spa therapy as you do for massage therapy. See the tip for Spa Therapists' Body Mechanics below and also refer to the body mechanics guidelines supplied with the protocols for each treatment in the following chapters.
#2 Manage your time wisely.	Spa therapists have only short periods of time between treatments for breaks. Use this time wisely. Have products and supplies prepared beforehand so breaks can be used for rest.
#3 Organize the treatment area.	Spa therapy entails the use of many more products than massage therapy. If all of these products, plus the equipment and supplies needed to prepare them, are within easy grasping distance in the treatment room, this will eliminate the need to reach, bend, and lift unnecessarily.
#4 Get a good floor mat to walk on around the treatment table.	The back and legs can become extremely sore and tired while working all day in a spa treatment room. Rubberized padding or a thick rug or carpet beneath the table takes some of the strain off. Floor mats should be of the anti-fatigue variety, with enough cushioning to relieve foot, leg, and low back stress. Wraps, scrubs, and many other spa treatments can be performed in a carpeted dry room. For wet rooms, drainage mats along with floor drains are best. If mats are pulled up frequently for cleaning, small interlocking mats are lighter than one big mat. Mats should have beveled edges to reduce tripping hazards. If you need permission from a manager, director, or owner to purchase floor mats, enlist the aid of fellow therapists on staff to convince them these mats are necessary.
#5 Exercise between treatments.	After an hour or more of performing precise, contained movements, spa therapists benefit by some larger movements between treatments or at the end of the day. Just a minute of jumping jacks or jogging in place will stimulate circulation, invigorate muscles, and combat fatigue (Figure 3–21).
#6 Stretch between treatments.	Spa therapists' muscles and joints can become stiff during a full day's work, and it is important to occasionally stretch them out. You can use the treatment table as a prop for these stretches (Figures 3–22 through 3–24).
#7 Truly relax.	While between treatments or at the end of the day, use progressive relaxation, visualization, meditation, or similar techniques to deepen rest and hasten recuperation from long days of work. Even a short (20 minutes) nap, if possible, may help with energy levels.
#8 Get back in touch with nature during the day.	Even the most beautiful spa room can feel claustrophobic after a time. Take the opportunity to step outside for a moment whenever possible, breathe some fresh air, step on the Earth, and gaze at the sky.
#9 Consider giving your body a break.	During days off, consider not doing private clients. Even though you may lose some income in the near term, you may extend your career in the long run.
#10 Eat right.	Light meals or snacks taken throughout the day while working in the spa will improve energy levels and performance.

TABLE 3–4 Spa Therapist Self-Care Rules.



FIGURES 3-21, 3-22, 3-23, 3-24 It is important for spa therapists to occasionally stretch muscles and joints that are stiff from a long day's work.



SPA CAUTION

You Need a Break

What should you do when management at the spa where you work offers insufficient breaks? What if all the therapists you work alongside grumble and complain? What if one of your colleagues, or more than one, comes down with a repetitive stress disorder? This is a tricky problem. As an employee who has accepted the conditions of employment offered by an employer, you are bound to follow the rules or suffer the consequences. On the other hand, if you risk the chance of injury, is it worth it to keep your job? Complaining to an outside authority will do little good because the spa is probably not breaking any laws. You can complain to members of the local massage community and attempt to lower the spa's reputation, but this is counterproductive if you want to continue working there. The best advice is to ask about the length and quantity of breaks before you accept a job. If it is possible, ask current employees how they feel about the spa's policies on this topic. If you accept a certain set of rules, only to complain about them later, you are not being fair to yourself or your employer. Check about break times and similar policies that will affect your health *before* accepting a job offer.

Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation (COMTA)

an organization that grants credit and recognition for massage education institutions that maintain certain standards



SPA TIP

Body Mechanics for the Spa Therapist

As a general rule, therapists should use the same body mechanics while performing spa treatments that they use for massage treatments. However, treatment-specific body mechanics apply to several spa modalities, and these will be discussed along with the protocol for each treatment in the following chapters.

The successful spa therapist ideally maximizes the advantages inherent to spa work while also following the self-care rules. In this manner, the choice to follow the path of spa therapy may actually extend the number of years a therapist can perform his or her art. Some therapists choose to practice spa therapy later in their careers, when they realize the toll that massage is taking on their bodies. Other therapists alternate back and forth between performing straight massage therapy and spa therapy, interspersing the two modalities during the week or even during the day. This combination can offer the best of both worlds to both clients and practitioners.

While working as a spa therapist, you will benefit by the ability to self-assess your own level of stress and manage that stress with the appropriate techniques. The **Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation (COMTA)** requires certified massage schools to include a self-care component in their educational offerings. They recommend that students should be able to identify the physiological and psychological effects of stress, and choose appropriate stress reduction techniques to address them. This applies equally to spa therapists. Accordingly, the very first step in using appropriate self-care while on the job at the spa is to become skilled at identifying the causes of stress before they become painful problems. The very best advice you can follow, then, is to “take care of yourself.” While working in a spa, monitor your own state of health and your state of mind consistently. Follow the safety rules and the self-care rules, but then if you still notice stress creeping into your work life, take immediate action. Ask for help from a coworker or supervisor.

LIABILITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT FOR THE SPA THERAPIST

As spas become more popular, they are also more frequently targeted for lawsuits. This is unfortunate but unavoidable, an inevitable result of spas' skyrocketing popularity. The richer spas get, the more people are likely to target them, and the more vulnerable they are to other types of losses such as those caused

SPA PROFILE

Save Your Hands!

Lauriann Greene and Rick Goggins

Like many massage therapists, Lauriann Greene experienced job-related injuries that made it difficult for her to work. But her case was more troubling than most, with an earlier onset. “I became injured while I was still in massage school,” she recalls. “I was able to pass my state boards and get my license, but I was too injured to be able to continue my career as a hands-on massage therapist. Instead, I decided to do specialized research to understand why massage therapists get injured as a result of the work they do. I started giving workshops on injury prevention and self-care across the U.S. and Canada, and I used my training as an MT and the experience of working with hundreds of MTs in these workshops to write *Save Your Hands! Injury Prevention for Massage Therapists*, a comprehensive self-care guide for massage therapists. In my own life, I wish there had been information like this available to me while I was a student that could have helped me prevent my own injury. So I learned the hard way how important self-care and injury prevention really is.”

Over the years, Lauriann’s book has been successful in helping many therapists avoid injury, which prompted her to write a new edition. *Save Your Hands!* was first published in 1995, and the second edition, co-authored with Rick Goggins, CPE, LMP, has been greatly expanded to include extensive information about ergonomics, which is an essential component of injury prevention and self-care. Rick Goggins has been an ergonomist for over 15 years. He also attended massage school in order to learn more about the musculoskeletal system. Shortly after graduating, he began working with Lauriann on a survey of massage therapists’ musculoskeletal health issues. “I had experienced some upper extremity symptoms during massage school myself,” states Rick, “but recognizing them for what they were and getting the appropriate treatment right away kept me from having a more serious condition.

I had read *Save Your Hands!* during this time, so of course I was interested in working with Lauriann. After we wrote an article on the survey results (which found a high rate of symptoms and injury among experienced MTs), Lauriann asked if I would be interested in working with her on the second edition of the book. It seemed like a natural fit for my experience, so I agreed.”

Lauriann and Rick agree on several key points that can help those therapists who work in spas enjoy longer and more productive careers. “Therapists need to establish clear expectations when they go to work for someone else,” says Lauriann, “how many massages are reasonable in one day, what is the length of breaks between sessions, are deep tissue sessions alternated with lighter treatments, etc. Good treatment room ergonomics, self-care, body mechanics, conditioning exercises, etc. are critical in high workload situations, but even they may not be enough if therapists regularly exceed their capabilities, become fatigued and increase the likelihood of injury.”

Ergonomist Goggins echoes these concerns.

“Drainage mats and good footwear (non-slip soles) are important for working on slippery wet room floors,” he says. “Good mats can also help with fatigue from standing all day. Spas need to use the right kind of tile in treatment rooms with a lot of water. Glazed tile can become too slippery. Floor drains in key areas can also help to prevent a lot of standing water. In addition, wet linens should be handled carefully, and not wadded up and thrown into one large, heavy basket. Small bundles of linens placed into several smaller baskets or mesh bags can lighten the load for lifting. Next to lifting, spending long periods of time bent over at the waist is one of the main causes of low back injury. When possible, therapists should place a hand down for support. A folded up towel on the edge of the hydro tub could form a chest support for short periods of bending over.”

(Continued)

SPA PROFILE

Save Your Hands! continued

Lauriann points out that spas may present opportunities for self-care that can be more difficult to find in other massage therapy work. “It is always helpful when you can incorporate a number of different modalities into any one treatment session,” she says. “Different techniques and modalities allow the therapist to use different parts of the body to perform the treatment, and to build periods of recovery into their sessions to allow them to rest. Some techniques such as body wraps do give practitioners an opportunity to rest once the client is fully wrapped. Some spas may require therapists to do some form of hands-on massage, such as face or foot massage, during these treatments. This massage should be done while seated (as a break from standing) and with a very light touch.”

But what should spa therapists do if they start to notice the beginning of injuries creeping in, yet they still need to keep working hard to keep their job? “The key is for spa therapists to adopt good injury prevention practices in the first place so that injury doesn’t interrupt their work life,” states Lauriann. “If injury does happen despite your best efforts, early, effective treatment is absolutely essential. Once you’re injured, you will have to make adaptations to your work, reduce your workload or take some time off to allow the injury to heal, otherwise you can end up with a chronic injury that can be debilitating.

All the more reason to prevent injury before it ever happens!”

The work that Rick and Lauriann do through their books and workshops focuses on a multifaceted approach to preventing injury. “Since there are many different aspects of a massage therapist’s work and life that contribute to injury,” states Rick, “using one single method to prevent injury, like just using good body mechanics, is rarely effective. Spa therapists can most effectively avoid injury by applying the principles of ergonomics and good body mechanics to their work, developing the physical conditioning necessary to do their work, avoiding certain techniques and adapting others to cause less stress, avoiding unhealthy attitudes about work, applying injury prevention principles to life outside of work, and maintaining their general health. All of these topics are covered in the second edition of *Save Your Hands: The Complete Guide to Injury Prevention and Ergonomics for Manual Therapists*.”

Through their writings, workshops, ergonomic evaluations, and their consulting work at schools and spas, Rick and Lauriann continue to spread the gospel of injury prevention for massage therapists, a topic that is especially relevant for those therapists who work long hours in spas everywhere. Therapists seeking more information can visit the Web site at <http://www.saveyourhands.com>.

risk management

the technique of assessing, minimizing, and preventing accidental loss to a (spa) business through the use of insurance and safety measures

tort liabilities

the responsibility for compensation a (spa) business potentially has for any injury suffered by a client while under the spa’s care or while on the spa’s property

by natural disasters. When spa owners, managers, therapists, and other personnel attempt to minimize the chance of losses to the business and to formulate a plan for dealing with them when they arise, they are engaging in a process called **risk management**. Some spas have a risk management program in place, while others operate day to day, hoping that disaster will not strike. It is best, of course, to understand what can be done to minimize risk and what plan of action should be followed in the event of a crisis.

The risk management issues faced by spa businesses can be broken down into three main categories: employment issues, sexual harassment issues, and **tort liabilities** issues.

1. Employment issues

These include wrongful firing, breach of contract, partnership problems, discrimination, overwork, immigration, licensing, and more.

Employment lawsuits can flow in either direction. Some are instigated by disgruntled employees who feel the spa is mistreating them. Others are filed by employers who feel they have been wronged by therapists or other employees.

2. **Sexual harassment issues**

These issues arise most commonly when a spa therapist is accused of harassing a client. Of course, there are other types of sexual harassment cases, including cases when clients are accused of making inappropriate advances toward therapists, and when one employee accuses another of harassment.

3. **Tort liabilities issues**

These issues are not limited to spas alone, but the very nature of the spa environment exacerbates the potential problems, due primarily to the use of heat (sauna, steam, hydrotherapy), water, and complicated equipment, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. Included in this category are slips, falls, burns caused by hot rocks, baths or showers, product liability, allergic reactions, faulty equipment, improper use of equipment, and more.

Each individual who works at a spa of any size, from large resort spas to therapist-owned day spas, should take a proactive approach when it comes to avoiding potential problems, whether they be employee issues, sexual harassment issues, or tort liability issues. While working as a spa therapist, you will be part of a team whose every member needs to understand and comply with a set of self-imposed guidelines that help spa businesses avoid lawsuits and complaints whenever possible and respond to them appropriately when they do occur. In order to most effectively fulfill this role, all spa therapists should be prepared to take certain actions, listed below. Spa owners need to be prepared to take action as well and to work with lawyers and other professionals to create the spa's risk management program.

Actions spa therapists can take to improve risk management in the spa:

- Study all guidelines, standard operating procedures, employee manuals, equipment instruction manuals, and job descriptions carefully prior to or at the commencement of employment in the spa. Too often, these materials are not read thoroughly enough.
- Follow these guidelines conscientiously during your everyday work at the spa.
- When an incident of any kind occurs, report it to supervisors immediately (see example of an incident report in Chapter 18).
- Volunteer for advanced training on all spa equipment, even if you are not typically responsible for using it to administer treatments.
- Willingly attend all employee meetings and ask questions about any risk management issues about which you may be uncertain.
- If it is allowed by spa management, practice safe and proper use of equipment and facilities during off hours with coworkers to become more familiar and comfortable with them.
- Learn CPR and other life-saving techniques that might be needed in an emergency situation.



SPA CAUTION

Providing spa services without a signed intake form may create unnecessary liability for the spa. In some spas, if a client refuses to fill out an intake form, it is the right of the therapist to refuse service. Therapists need to confirm this with spa management prior to refusing service, however.

THERAPEUTIC DAY SPA INTAKE FORM

Therapeutic Day Spa
1234 Main Street
Any Town, NY 02101

Name: _____ Birthday: ____/____/____ Wedding Anniversary ____/____/____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone: Home _____ Work _____ Mobile _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ E-Mail Address: _____

How did you hear about our spa? _____

The following information is needed to ensure your well-being while enjoying spa services. All information will be kept confidential.

- ☐ Yes ☐ No Do you bruise easily?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Have you been in an accident or suffered any injuries in the past 2 years?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Do you have tension, soreness, or sensitivity to pressure?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Do you have any allergies?
To what? _____
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Have you had surgery in the past 5 years?
Please explain _____
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Do you have other medical conditions or take any medication we should know about?
Please explain _____
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Are you currently applying any topical medications that might affect your skin?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Are you pregnant or trying to become pregnant?

Please circle any of the following conditions listed below that apply to you:

Contact Lens	Chronic Fatigue	Osteoporosis Arthritis
Rheumatism	Headache/Migraines	Anxiety Attacks
Epilepsy/Seizures	Fibromyalgia	Allergies
Numbness/Chronic Pain	Blood Clots	Claustrophobia
High Blood Pressure	Tuberculosis	Kidney or Liver Disease
Diabetes	Asthmas	Varicose Veins
HIV/AIDS	Lymphoma	Cardiac Problems
Herpes	Hepatitis	Skin Irritation
Cancer	Bursitis or Gout	Tendonitis
Joint Sprain or Dislocation	Ulcers	Neck Pain or Back Pain

What is your goal for this session? (circle the one most applicable)

Sooth Aching Muscles Stress Reduction General Health Enhance Sport Training Injury Recovery

What type or pressure do you prefer? (choose one or more)

Very Deep Deep Firm Light Not Sure

FIGURE 3-25 Spas without a comprehensive intake form run a higher risk for liability (courtesy Natural Resources Spa Consulting, Inc.). (Continued)

Please describe any particular issues you are having with your body such as pain, stiffness or injury that your therapist should be aware of. Do you have any areas that need more work? _____

I understand that the massage and spa treatments I receive are provided for the purpose of relaxation, well being and relief of muscular tension. If I experience any pain or discomfort during this session, I will immediately inform the practitioner so that the pressure and/or technique may be adjusted to my level of comfort. I understand that if I forego the opportunity to communicate my needs with the practitioner and continue the treatment, I am liable for payment of the scheduled appointment.

Because massage/bodywork, esthetic services and spa treatments should not be performed under certain medical conditions, I affirm that I have stated all my known medical conditions and answered all the questions honestly. I agree to keep the practitioner updated as to any changes in my medical profile and understand that there shall be no liability on the practitioner's part or Therapeutic Day Spa's part should I fail to do so.

I also understand that any illicit or sexually suggestive remarks or advances made by me will result in immediate termination of the session, and I will be liable for payment of the scheduled appointment.

Client Signature

X _____ Date _____

FIGURE 3-25 Spas without a comprehensive intake form run a higher risk for liability (courtesy Natural Resources Spa Consulting, Inc.).

Actions spa owners can take to improve risk management in the spa:

- Call the local state bar to find an attorney to work with.
- Establish a relationship with this attorney prior to problematic situations arising. The attorney should conduct a review of the spa and make a site visit to assess potentially dangerous or risky situations that may expose the spa to liability.
- The attorney should also review the client **intake/disclaimer/waiver form** or create one for the spa if it does not already exist (Figure 3-25).
- Post all necessary signage in the spa, such as warnings about hot tub or steam/sauna use.
- Place non-slip mats on the floor and take other safety precautions
- Become familiar with the guidelines issued by OSHA regarding spa workplaces and ensure that all of them are being followed.
- Fully train all staff regarding proper procedures and document their training in order to avoid risk issues.

intake form

a series of questions related to health, allergies, spa experience, and general information (address, birthday, etc.) asked of clients when they first visit the spa; sometimes includes a waiver or disclaimer

disclaimer

statement clients are asked to sign releasing a (spa) business from responsibility for injuries or damages incurred while undergoing specific procedures

waiver

a form clients sometimes sign at spas that relinquishes their right to claim damages caused by certain procedures (see disclaimer)

SPA ROOM SANITATION

Spa treatment rooms, of course, need to be kept spotlessly clean, and beyond the surface appearance, they also need to be as sanitary and germ-free as possible. By their nature, spa rooms can become breeding grounds for unhealthy organisms, including molds and bacteria. The abundance of steam, damp towels, pooled water, organic muds, freshly reconstituted seaweeds, pure oils, and other



SPA ETIQUETTE

You may find a job at a spa and be overjoyed at first, only to find out quickly that the spa owner's or director's vision is not therapeutically aligned with our own. The spa's focus may be on pampering rather than therapy, and they may not even require clients to fill out intake forms prior to their first treatment. What should you do if you feel strongly that clients should fill out such a form, but the spa has no plans to use one? You have four choices:

1. Keep your thoughts to yourself and carry on with your job, thankful you are receiving a paycheck.
2. Keep your thoughts to yourself and start looking for work elsewhere.
3. Politely let the spa owner or director know your feelings, but stay on the job regardless of the outcome.
4. Politely let the spa owner or director know your feelings, and state your intention of leaving if an intake form is not used at the spa.

Each of these options is viable. You have to search your own heart and judge the overall value of working in the spa. How much does it mean to you? Are your coworkers an inspiration to be with? Do you feel your career is being enhanced by working there? Make an informed decision before acting. One action that is never advisable is to confront the owner or director angrily and demand that an intake procedure be instituted. A self-righteous therapist has very little power in such a situation and will most likely end up without a job, having accomplished nothing for the spa's clients.

natural products all combine to make vigilant sanitation procedures an absolute necessity in the spa setting.

In general, all spa equipment, from the smallest brush to the largest hydrotherapy tub, should be sanitized after each and every treatment. Spa equipment manufacturers are well aware of how sensitive spa owners, therapists and clients are to hygiene issues, and they provide the industry with items that are easy to sanitize and maintain. New innovations have made spas safer and more germ-free than ever. For example, new "pipeless" tubs make it possible to offer hydrotherapy treatments without pumping water through pipes where it can potentially stagnate and create breeding grounds for bacteria. The water in these units is circulated through self-contained pumps, creating the bubbling and water pressure found in traditional tubs but without the need for pipes (Figures 3–26 and 3–27).

In larger facilities, the cleanliness and safe functioning of the spa is often the responsibility of employees such as spa technicians or locker room attendants. Even if this is not part of your job description as a spa therapist, however, you can create a "mental checklist" for safety and sanitation to review while on the job. Quickly going over such a list in your mind at the beginning of each shift will help ensure the spa's smooth, safe operation, and it will engender a greater sense of participation on your part. This is especially important when starting to work at a new spa where the facilities and procedures are still unfamiliar. Take a look at the Therapeutic Day Spa Safety & Sanitation Checklist (Figure 3–28) and keep it, or something like it, in mind when you are on the job.



SPA TIP

Spa therapists sometimes mistakenly use the term autoclave when referring to a germicidal cabinet. While autoclaves are used extensively in medical and dental laboratories, medical spas, and nail salons, they are less common in resort spas, day spas, or destination spas, where germicidal cabinets are more widely used.

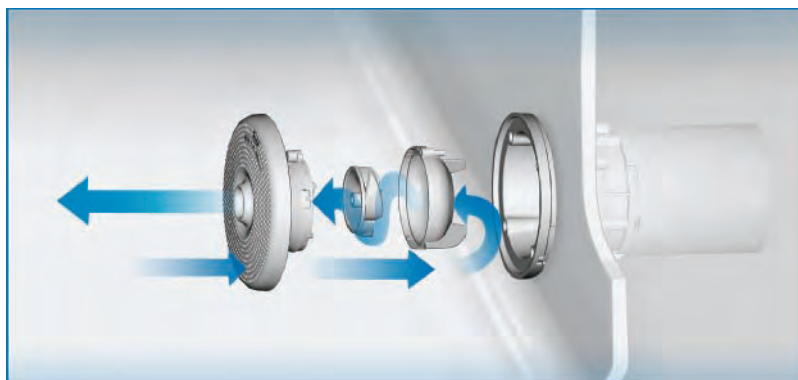


FIGURE 3-26 Spa equipment manufacturers devise new ways to make spa treatments hygienic such as the “pipeless” blower for hydrotherapy tubs and foot baths (courtesy Sanijet).



FIGURE 3-27 Sanijet pumps and blowers are easily removed for cleaning and have no pipes that can become infected with germs (courtesy Sanijet).

Many smaller implements that come into contact with clients, such as hair brushes, skin brushes, and combs, are reused, but they first need to be sterilized. Most spas use a **germicidal solution** for this purpose, dipping these implements into it in order to kill bacteria. Then, once the implements are sterilized, they are often stored in a box on a treatment room countertop. This box, called a **germicidal cabinet**, features an always-on ultraviolet light that provides a clean, germ-free environment for storage. It is important to note that although the cabinet does provide a sterile environment, it does not actually sterilize implements itself. Either a germicidal solution or an **autoclave** is used for actual sterilization. Autoclaves are vessels in which water is heated above its boiling point in order to completely sterilize whatever is put inside them. Tools used in day spas, resort spas, and destination spas are sometimes sterilized this way, but autoclaves are more common in medical spas and nail salons.

An attractive option to sterilizing small spa implements is to give them away as part of a spa treatment. Guests are usually delighted to take something home, and the low per-unit cost of these items can be built into the price of the treatment. Typical items that are given away in this manner include loofah mitts and gloves. Specific suggestions for this technique will be suggested in the treatment protocols for each appropriate modality.



SPA TIP

Most muds and seaweeds wash out of linens. However, the majority of spas feature blue, green, or earth-toned linens in treatment rooms in case any minor staining or discoloring does occur over time. White linens can be bleached, but then the bleached material would come into contact with clients' skin during wraps and other occasions when their pores are open, which is thought to be inappropriate at many facilities.

RESEARCH

Using spa magazines, spa books, or the Internet, research safety and sanitation measures used in spas, athletic clubs, public pools, hot springs, and similar facilities. Choose one measure in particular and write a one-page paper on its purpose, uses, effectiveness, cost, client acceptance, and popularity.

germicidal solution

liquid used to prevent spread of infection through spa implements; inhibits the growth or action of microorganisms

germicidal cabinet

box that uses ultraviolet light to provide a germ-free environment to store brushes, combs, and other implements used in spas

autoclave

device for heating substances above their boiling point, used to sterilize (spa) instruments

Therapeutic Day Spa
1234 Main Street
Any Town, NY 02101

SAFETY & SANITATION CHECKLIST

Keep this checklist, or one like it, in mind even if filling it out is not a part of your spa therapist's job description.

SPA EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Name:

Date:

FACILITY SAFETY CHECKLIST

- ☐ Become familiar with all safety guidelines in Employee Manual.
- ☐ Report anything that appears unsafe to management immediately.
- ☐ Check that all exposed tile/ceramic/stone floors are dry and no areas remain for clients to slip on.
- ☐ Check that temperatures are set to correct levels in the sauna, steam, and whirlpool.
- ☐ Check that all non-skid floor mats are in place wherever needed.
- ☐ Know location and use of emergency medical kit.
- ☐ Direct clients' attention to safety signs and warnings wherever appropriate in spa.

FACILITY SANITATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Become familiar with all sanitation guidelines in Employee Manual.
- ☐ Check stock of sanitary wipes, disinfectants and cleaning supplies available for use by spa therapists.
- ☐ Sanitize all surfaces that guests will come into contact with.
- ☐ Check for adequate supply of linens that have been sanitized by proper (hot water) washing.
- ☐ Assure all oils, lotions and body products are stored at appropriate temperature, off of floor in well-sealed containers.
- ☐ Wash all towels, sheets and other spa linens in hot water, not cold, in order to kill more microorganisms.

EQUIPMENT SAFETY CHECKLIST

- ☐ Become familiar with the safe operating procedure for all equipment in Employee Manual and Manufacturers' Manuals.
- ☐ Have grip bars, stepping stools and other aids available near all hydrotherapy equipment.
- ☐ Ensure that all electric plugs and connections for spa equipment are grounded and protected from water.
- ☐ Ensure that clients observe maximum usage of heat exposure

EQUIPMENT SANITATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Wipe down hydrotherapy tub, wet table and other equipment with disinfectant after each use.
- ☐ Check for mold or build-up of product in drains, jets, crevices, beneath mats and other hard-to-reach areas.
- ☐ Assure that all instruments coming into contact with clients are sterilized (by autoclave, etc.).
- ☐ Refrigerate unused portions of open seaweeds, muds and other organic compounds (watch for mold).

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

- ☐ Therapists should keep clothing, jewelry, hair etc., clean and sanitary at all times while at work.
- ☐ Therapists should wash hands with antibacterial soap before each treatment and after eating, smoking and using washroom.
- ☐ Communicate with other spa therapists and employees regarding status of equipment and facilities (are repairs needed? potential sanitation problems noted?)
- ☐ When in doubt, therapists should stop and ask a superior before proceeding with a treatment they have any reason to believe may be harmful to a client or themselves.

FIGURE 3-28 To double-assure safety and sanitation in the spa, keep a checklist such as this in mind when you are on the job.

SPA PROFILE

Skip Williams, Resources and Development

Spas, as you now see, are very complex businesses. Setting up and operating a spa can be so challenging that many spa developers seek the aid of experienced guides or consultants. One such guide is Skip Williams who, along with his partner Zahira J. Coll, runs Resources and Development, a company that focuses on the underlying financial and logistical realities of spa businesses and startups so that their owners can focus on the clients.

Williams began his career as a small business consultant who helped professionals from many industries improve their performance. It was while living in Sonoma, California, as a single parent that he happened upon the spa industry and saw the potential for making a big impact. "At first I had no clue what a spa was," says Williams, "but within two months after I started working with my first spa client in Calistoga, I fell in love with this industry. I found that I could help people discover the potential profits hidden in their spa businesses so they could afford to keep their doors open, serve their clients better and make a positive impact in the world."

Williams now has over 13 years of experience in the management, financial development, and operational fields, working as a spa director, controller, and business project consultant. He has been involved in the development of well over 300 spas throughout the U.S., Canada, and the Caribbean. He has seen over the years that many people who get into the spa industry are not fully prepared for all the complexities involved and the total immersion necessary to be successful. He wrote a book, *The Reluctant Spa Director and the Mission Dream*, which is a story about such a person. It is an educational tool as well as a captivating story. He has also developed some powerful tools, starting with his "Build-a-Spa"

business model and culminating in the "Financial Blueprint" feasibility consulting package that gives spa owners and would-be spa owners the ability to accurately plan every aspect of their project, from budgets to square footage to equipment to staffing and beyond. See Figure 3–29 for a small example of some of the data generated by a Financial Blueprint analysis of a spa business plan.

"My mission in life," states Williams, "is to help those people who have the healer's heart, to keep their business sustainable and profitable in the real world so they can go forth, follow their dreams, and heal that many more people." He has a very practical point of view regarding this healing, one that some massage therapists may find hard to understand at first. "What the massage therapist is doing is an art, but it is not until the spa owner turns this art into a science that a real business has been created. Spa owners can no longer expect to have their service providers (i.e. massage therapists) be their business partners. Instead, spa owners need to take full responsibility for the risks and liabilities of running a business and pay their providers fair living wages and benefits."

Not surprisingly, one of Williams's main focuses now is on helping spa owners come up with appropriate compensation systems. In addition to creating Financial Blueprints for spas, Williams also spends time dealing with the controversial topics of how to pay spa staff, whether to pay commission versus straight wages and whether to hire them as employees versus contractors (see sidebar in Chapter 14, The Spa Hiring Paradox: A Lower Starting Wage Is Good for You). In all of this, he remains steadfastly dedicated to turning spas into viable and realistic businesses. Because, as he says with a smile, "You can't be altruistic if you're out of business."

(Continued)

SPA PROFILE

Skip Williams, Resources and Development continued

"Your Complete Resource for Spa and Hotel Development"



Is Your Dream Spa Viable?

- How Large Will Your Spa Need to Be?
- How Much Money Will Your Spa Make?
- What Services Will Generate The Most Profit?
- How Will You Control Expenses?
- How Much Money Do You Need to Build Your Dream Spa?
- How Do You Create the Ultimate Spa Experience?

Creating a feasibility analysis for a Day Spa, Resort Spa, Med Spa, or a Salon is far more complex than most businesses. Because each Spa has widely different variables such as:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| ▪ Menu Offering of Services | ▪ Types of Compensation Systems |
| ▪ Service Pricing | ▪ Types of Labor |
| ▪ Types of Locations | ▪ Labor Rates |
| ▪ Size | ▪ Hours of Operation |
| ▪ Cost of Construction | ▪ Marketing Experience |
| ▪ Rent Expense | ▪ Marketing Budgets |
| ▪ Ratio of Revenue Production Space vs. Amenity Space | |

The standard form of "Pro Forma" analysis is not adequate, nor can we ascertain much, if any, transferable information from other Spa businesses.

Even if you take the time to account for every little Revenue and Expense detail, a Pro Forma (also called a Projected Profit and Loss Statement) still will not allow you to:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ▪ Compare the Profitability of Services Offered | ▪ Perform a Break-Even Analysis |
| ▪ Calculate the Staffing Requirements | ▪ Analyze the Efficiency of Your Space |
| ▪ Calculate Construction Costs | ▪ Create a Master Purchase List |
| | ▪ Calculate other Setup and Equipment Costs |

The standard Pro Forma simply does not give us a very good view of your "Vision" and is not a very efficient way to analyze your "Concepts". Many Spa Owners never have a clear understanding of where their profit is coming from and what expenses are draining potential from their business. Consequently, they take the risk of adding their Dream to the heap of Spa Failures Statistics.

www.ResourcesAndDevelopment.com – 702-436-0371

FIGURE 3-29 Financial Blueprint readout.

CONCLUSION

Spa facilities can be marble-studded palaces that feature stunning vistas of the world's most beautiful environments, or they can be humble windowless rooms in a corporate office park. Spa equipment can be high-tech and cost tens of thousands of dollars like computerized hydrotherapy tubs, or it can be simple and inexpensive like the small ice chests used to keep towels and products warm. Regardless of whether they cost millions or just a few dollars, spa facilities and

the equipment in them are all dedicated to one main purpose: the health, well-being, and enjoyment of the clients. To ensure that clients have the best possible experience while at the spa, therapists need to place a strong emphasis on safety and sanitation, and they need to be sure of their ability to use every piece of equipment in its proper fashion. There is no substitute for training and ongoing practice to make therapists confident and efficient. Also, by knowing how a large array of spa equipment works, what goes into creating and installing it, and what its benefits are, spa therapists become more well-rounded and well-informed professionals, even if they do not end up using this equipment themselves on a daily basis.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the main differences between a wet room and a dry room?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of a wet room versus a dry room?
3. What piece of equipment is the centerpiece for any successful spa dry room?
4. The equipment used in spa wet rooms or wet areas can be broken down into four main categories. What are they? Give examples of each type.
5. What are some general guidelines for dealing with all the laundry generated in a spa treatment area?
6. What risk factors do spas pose that are not found in such abundance in other environments where massage therapists work? What problems may arise because of them?
7. Therapists who perform spa treatments hold two key advantages regarding self-care, as compared to those who perform massage therapy alone. What are they?
8. Why is it a good idea to keep your spa treatment room (and your practical spa classroom) neat and organized?
9. What are the three main categories of risk management issues faced by spa businesses?
10. When should spa equipment, from the smallest brush to the largest hydrotherapy tub, be sanitized? What are some of the implements used for sanitizing in the spa?