

**AMERICAN SPASPTALITY**

**A Continuing Education Course for Massage**

**Therapists by**

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## INTRODUCTION

Why write a continuing education course for massage therapists about spas? According to the International SPA Association (ISPA, [www.experienceispa.com](http://www.experienceispa.com)), spas in the United States alone are a \$12.3 billion dollar industry, and according to a report released by the Global Spa Summit (*USA Day Spa Market 2010*, [www.globalspasummit.org](http://www.globalspasummit.org)), half of all spa treatment revenue in the United States comes from massage services. We're talking about *a lot* of massages (and massage therapists) here.

A kinship exists between spas and massage: The history of the modern spa can be traced back to ancient times, much like massage. In addition, like massage, spas have gone through many metamorphoses over the centuries, and regional variations can be seen on different continents. Recent trends in spa culture and massage culture co-exist as well, and the futures of both will be molded by science, technology, and the human quest for health, peace, and happiness.

It is my hope that this continuing education course will inform and entertain you with its coverage of all things spa-related, from the rich history of the wellness industry, to the services that make up the offerings at our country's best-known spas. I invite you to join me on my journey of appreciation and exploration in the land of *American Spaspiration*.

Sincerely,

Andrea Lipomi, LMT

[www.ConfidentMassage.com](http://www.ConfidentMassage.com)

## HISTORY

Usually the best place to start a journey is at the beginning. An overview of the history of what we now refer to as *spas* will help us to understand how the industry has developed over the years, and can give us historical inspiration in our current practice of massage therapy.

First, we need to understand the meaning of the word “spa”. ISPA, a leading global spa organization, offers this definition:

“Spas are places devoted to overall well-being through a variety of professional services that encourage the renewal of mind, body and spirit.”

This description allows for countless different business models to be implemented under the “spa” umbrella, from the individual massage therapist working out of a small office with a focus on wellness, to the multi-million-dollar destination spas found throughout the U.S. This open-minded approach to labeling what constitutes a “spa” is a breath of fresh air, even though it is a departure from older definitions, as early spas were centered around water-based health practices.

It is said that the letters ‘S’ ‘P’ ‘A’ were written on the walls of ancient Roman public baths. This acronym is assumed to stand for “Salus Per Aquam” (“health through water”) or a similar variation with a similar translation. Another possible origin of the word “spa” could be from a form of the Latin verb *spargere*, meaning “to pour forth”. English-speaking folk were introduced to the word “spa” through the old Belgian word *espa*, meaning “spring” or “fountain”, which became *spaw* to the English. The Belgian town of *Spa* was thusly named for its hot mineral waters. Even though there may not be an obvious, single origin for the modern word “spa”, we can see that versions of the word have been linked with “taking the waters” for a long time.

It’s also important to note that in this course we refer to “spas” as places, but that the word “spa” can also act as a verb. For instance: “She knew how to spa like no other.” In this example, it means the subject is immersing herself in the wellness-based spa experience like a pro! On occasions when “spa” is used to describe something (i.e. “spa robe” or “spa pedicure”) it typically indicates an elevated level of pampering and/or luxury.

Spa-like references can be found throughout antiquity. Early Mesopotamian civilization employed the use of social bathing rituals and herbal massage techniques over 4,000 years ago. Ancient Egyptians worshipped the Nile’s life-sustaining waters, and priests ritually washed themselves with clean water between their services. Early Egyptians are also credited with developing bath additives including herbs and milk - they were the ancient beneficiaries of milk’s skin-softening properties. In the Christian Bible, both the Old Testament and New Testament refer to bathing in the Jordan for religious and healing purposes. Numerous other

thermal baths and pools are referenced in the New Testament as well. Ancient Minoans installed the first indoor plumbing systems in their complexes on Crete to run spigots, bathing fountains and flush toilets, and the ancient Greek poet Homer mentions his hero's bathing habits in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Early evidence of spa-like facilities in the Americas can be found in the form of Mayan and Aztec sweat bath house ruins found in Central America and Mexico dating back almost 3,500 years ago. In the Indian Vedic texts dating back to 1200 B.C.E. – 800 B.C.E., purification baths for health are described in detail. Vedic texts from this time also describe massage and meditation. Early spa culture in China is evidenced by the presence of the Imperial Baths, dating back to 619 C.E. – 901 C.E. These baths were built over a thermal spring, complete with bathhouses, for the emperors and their officials to enjoy relaxation and bathing. Approximately 1,000 years prior to the origination of the Imperial Baths, the foundation of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) was described in *The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine*, which included massage. Japanese samurai soaked in *onsen* (hot springs), and *ryokan* (inns) were built around the *onsen* beginning in the twelfth century. Many of these *onsen* are still in use today. (*SPA: A Comprehensive Introduction*, Educational Institute, 2009)

Classical Greeks and Romans are most often credited with planting the seeds that grew into the large-scale spas of modern day. Spas served as a place for the Greeks to socialize and improve their health, and large spa complexes were erected, featuring bathing and cleansing facilities, areas for sleeping/dreaming (a very important aspect of ancient Greek culture), gyms, tracks, libraries, and amphitheaters. Massage was recommended for athletes, and Greek physicians wrote about the benefits of massage in conjunction with exercise.

The Romans took the social aspect of the historical spa to a new level. More complex arrangements of thermal baths and rooms were used, featuring different temperatures and levels of humidity. These groupings of buildings were called a *thermae*, and the Romans erected them not only in what we now know as Italy, but wherever the Roman armies travelled and conquered, as evidenced in Bath, England. Larger *thermae* included the extensive features of the Greek spas, plus art galleries and sports stadiums. Massage was offered at these Roman baths, and incorporated the use of friction, cupping, and brushing.

In the sixth century C.E., modifications to the Roman baths could be seen to the east in Constantinople. Islamic influence resulted in less emphasis on the active components of the Roman bathing experience, and increased focus on massage and body scrubs. The “Turkish bath” or *hammam* also included a place to socialize, and was set up with separate accommodations for men and women.

We don't often associate spa culture with the Middle Ages, but European thermal springs were in use during this time, spanning across several countries including Germany, England, and Belgium. In the 1500's, monks operated a thermal pool in Switzerland where influential Renaissance men would meet and talk, and a spa directory was compiled in Italy. The 1400's and 1500's also brought a series of crackdowns on the European thermal springs, with Christianity's

influence and conflict between Protestants and Catholics. This included the banning of nude bathing, as it was considered to be immoral and dirty.

The 1600's through the 1800's saw increased popularity in French spa towns, and well-to-do Britons used English spas to improve their health. The Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary also enjoyed spa town success during this time. In massage news, the 1800's brought the techniques of Swedish physiologist Per Henrik Ling and Dutch doctor Johan Mezgner to Europe.

In the New World, the 1600's brought European colonists to Native American springs, and the 1800's welcomed in a new era of appreciation for the health benefits of bathing in mineral water and water of various temperatures. Americans without the means to stay at a spa during this time would soak in mineral water pools that sprung up off the beaten path, believing that "taking the waters" would relieve health conditions such as neuralgia. In 1880, the American Medical Association Committee on Sanitaria and Springs published a report that discussed over 600 springs and mineral water pools known to exist in the United States at that time. (*SPA: A Comprehensive Introduction*, Educational Institute, 2009)

The late 1800's and the first half of the 1900's brought the United States much in the way of research regarding hydrotherapy (the use of water to aid in health.) Things changed in the mid-1900's, when spas began to be less frequently associated with disease treatment, and resort spas focusing on general wellness began to take shape. With European spas depending more and more upon tourist dollars to keep things going (as government subsidies dwindled), the modern-day American spa categories – day, resort, and destination – were one step closer to actualization.

## **TYPES OF AMERICAN SPAS**

The United States is home to spas in three major categories: Day spas, where clients come to enjoy a service or a spa day without the option to stay at the facility overnight; resort spas, found at hotels and resorts nationwide; and destination spas, settings where spa-goers are immersed in the spa lifestyle for days at a time. Less prominent spa categories include: Medical spas, similar to day spas, where medical professionals oversee minor esthetic, cosmetic, and wellness services; residential spas, integrated with condominiums or housing communities so that residents can enjoy the spa lifestyle without the need to travel; club spas, found at fitness facilities; cruise ship spas; mineral/hot springs spas that utilize local spring water in their hydrotherapy treatments; and mobile spas that bring the spa experience to clients' homes. The future will no doubt bring new categories and choices to the American spa junkie as the benefits of stress reduction become increasingly sought-after. Here, we'll explore the major spa categories above, plus hot springs spas, as they boast rich historical significance in the United States while remaining relevant today.

## DAY SPAS

The beginnings of the day spa concept date back to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, when Elizabeth Arden (born Florence Nightingale Graham) opened the first Red Door salon in New York City in 1910. By the 1930's, Elizabeth Arden was known internationally, and her Red Door salons were located in the majority of the fashion capitals around the world. She focused on cutting-edge skin care, emphasizing the importance of nutrition, fitness, and a scientific approach to healthy skin.

Massage and body treatments became popular in day spa settings thanks, in part, to Noel de Caprio and her day spa, Noelle Spa for Beauty and Wellness, that she founded in Stamford, Connecticut in 1972. Widely regarded as the first facility of its kind to offer massage, facials, body wraps and water therapy treatments – in addition to hair and nail services - in the United States, Noel de Caprio will be long remembered for her contributions to the spa industry and the “day spa” concept that she pioneered. (*SPA: A Comprehensive Introduction*, Educational Institute, 2009)

Since the 1970's, day spas have enjoyed a dramatic increase in popularity. Americans tend to lack the time resources necessary to indulge in a spa getaway or vacation, instead opting to make shorter, more frequent visits to local day spas to fill their need for pampering. According to ISPA, in 2010 79% of spa businesses were day spas.

American day spas can be found in large cities and small towns. They may employ dozens of technicians, or, in the case of smaller facilities, services may be administered by just one or two trained professionals. Basic massages and facials are day spa necessities, with body scrubs and wraps rounding out the list of expected day spa menu services. Waxing and faux tanning are also typical day spa offerings. Day spas with integrated salons are very popular and offer one-stop shopping for clients looking for a full day of pampering. In addition to hair services, the salon components of these establishments typically offer pedicures and natural nail manicures, and many offer artificial nail services as well.

Regardless of a day spa facility's size, spa industry stalwarts prefer to see the incorporation of some form(s) of hydrotherapy into the treatment menu at any business labeling itself a “spa”. Whereas the ancient spas utilized natural spring water, modern day spas typically use tap water in various forms. A few examples of day spa hydrotherapy components include: steamed towels, steam canopies, Vichy showers, Swiss showers, and ice packs. We will explore hydrotherapy in greater detail in an upcoming chapter.

Day spas tend to be open five or six days per week, and some are open every day. Typical day spa hours are in the neighborhood of 9:00 am – 7:00 pm, and in smaller markets, treatments may

be available by appointment only. Regional markets, competition, and business needs will influence a day spa's hours.

Day spa treatment menu offerings run the gamut from basic to exotic. Here are some examples of massages and body treatments from day spas that span the United States:

Muscle Meltdown Massage – a Swedish massage with heat packs

European Royalty Rose Mud Wrap – includes a scalp and foot massage

Organic Sea Polish – with Dead Sea salts and a Vichy shower rinse

Nourishing Power Recovery Therapy Wrap – a hydrating body wrap with essential oils

Chakra Aromatherapy Massage – includes dry brushing prior to massage

Body Brushing – a dry brush service where the client is given the brush to use at home

Romantic Getaway – includes a massage lesson and a couples massage

Back Treatment – a facial for the back, designed to exfoliate and clear up acne

## RESORT SPAS

The term “hotel spa” is often used interchangeably with “resort spa”. To get technical about it, dictionary.com defines *hotel* as “a commercial establishment offering lodging to travelers and sometimes to permanent residents, and often having restaurants, meeting rooms, stores, etc., that are available to the general public,” and *resort* as “a place to which people frequently or generally go for relaxation or pleasure, especially one providing rest and recreation facilities for vacationers.” For example, I am a massage therapist at a resort spa in Las Vegas, Nevada. The property is considered a “resort” because it offers swimming pools, cabanas, gambling, several dining options, etc. In this chapter, I use the term “resort spa”, although “hotel spa” would also suffice in most cases.

In 1965, La Costa Resort and Spa opened in Carlsbad, California, and the resort spa was born. American resorts did not offer integrated spa amenities to resort guests up until this point, but when the \$3 million La Costa Spa was built, a new standard was set. Large enough to accommodate 150 spa guests, the facility boasted an assortment of pools, steam rooms, saunas, and exercise areas, in addition to a comprehensive spa and salon treatment menu. Headed by Dr. R. Philip Smith, the La Costa Spa was the first in the country to earn an endorsement from the American Medical Association. The La Costa Resort and Spa is still in operation today, having recently undergone extensive renovations. Resort guests can relax and enjoy the spa, swimming pools, golf course, tennis courts, all things horse-related, and “Southern California’s only reflexology path.”

Resort spas became more prevalent in the 1980’s, when they were originally positioned as an amenity for golfers’ wives so that they could pass the time while their husbands spent their day on the links, and the 1990’s saw resort spas hit the mainstream as they became an expected amenity to be enjoyed at any major American resort. Resorts can command a higher nightly room rate when a property can boast an on-site spa, and the spas themselves can be a lucrative feature for the resort. According to ISPA, in 2006 the United States was home to over 1,300 resort/hotel spas.

Many Americans receive their first massage while vacationing at a resort. Some go on to seek out a massage therapist when they return home, while other vacationers view massage as a special indulgence to be enjoyed once or twice per year while they’re vacationing. Guests that book a spa service are typically granted all-day access to the resort spa’s facilities, and spa day passes are often available for purchase in the event that a guest would prefer to use the facilities without scheduling a service. Many resorts include use of a fitness facility with a day pass or spa service purchase. Resort spa hours of operation can range from 6:00 am – 9:00 pm, and hours where services are available may vary based on staffing. Some resort spas are open 7 days per week, including major holidays.

Today, resort spa menu offerings can range from basic massage modalities and skin care services to exotic treats that utilize high-end products (and the corresponding retail products available for purchase.) Some examples of resort spa services are:

Tibetan Sound Massage – Tibetan bowls are struck to produce soothing sounds during this full body massage

Lomi Lomi Massage – Traditional Hawaiian massage modality

Moor Mud Body Wrap – includes a scalp massage and facial massage

Goddess of the Sea – a salt scrub and seaweed wrap treatment

Sand & Foam – a foaming scrub is removed using a Vichy shower

Fountain of Youth – A Shirodhara treatment where warm oil is drizzled on the forehead and scalp

Organic Facial – uses products from a certified organic skin care line

In-Room Personal Training

## DESTINATION SPAS

“Ranches”, “health farms” and “sanitariums” blossomed in the United States between the mid-1800’s and the mid-1900’s. In 1866, the Western Health Reform Institute opened in Battle Creek, Michigan, to be taken over by Dr. John Harvey Kellogg in 1876 and later renamed the Battle Creek Sanitarium. “The San” was a place where patients with the means to do so could stay and engage in health practices recommended by Dr. Kellogg. These included breathing exercises, group exercise classes, phototherapy (light therapy), hydrotherapy, and a vegetarian diet. Dr. Kellogg’s sanitarium saw patient numbers dwindle during the Great Depression, and in 1942 the United States Army took over the buildings and converted them into a hospital for wounded soldiers. Although the Battle Creek Sanitarium fell victim to tough economic times, many of Dr. Kellogg’s ideas were on the cutting edge of what would become today’s destination spa.

Officially, Rancho La Puerta, located near Tecate in Baja California, is considered the first “destination spa”. (*SPA: A Comprehensive Introduction*, Educational Institute, 2009) From its humble beginnings as a health camp in 1940, Rancho La Puerta grew into what it is today: 3,000 acres featuring a labyrinth, reflexology path, spa and salon services, gardens, hiking, gyms, pools, an art studio, a library, and more. Guests of the spa stay in private casitas, and packages are offered in 3, 4 and 7-day blocks of time. In 1958, Deborah Szekely, co-founder of Rancho La Puerta, opened The Golden Door destination spa near San Diego, California. The Golden Door offers accommodations for 40 guests on its 377 acre retreat, complete with gyms, pools, tennis courts, and hiking trails. In addition to this location, today spa junkies can enjoy The Golden Door *resort spa* experience in Arizona, Utah, Florida, and Puerto Rico.

Destination spas differ from resort spas in that the former typically require a minimum stay (Thursday through Monday only, for example.) Destination spas often offer all-inclusive packages – three healthy meals per day, a daily spa treatment, access to hiking trails and classes – while resort spa guests would likely book these activities separately. Books have been written about “spa” cuisine alone, and destination spas strive to offer their guests the finest freshly prepared, organic, locally-grown and nutritionally balanced meals possible. Dining outlets located in a resort may offer some healthy options, but decadent temptations lurk in every resort restaurant menu as well. A resort may offer both smoking and non-smoking rooms, but smokers may have a tough time finding a destination spa that allows one to light up in its accommodations. To sum up their differences, resort spas are a component of a resort, usually on par with shopping, gambling, golfing, or dining, while destination spas are totally focused on wellness-enhancing activities and a wellness-centered lifestyle.

In 2007, ISPA reported that there were 79 destination spas in the United States, making up 0.5% of the total number of American spas.

Some examples of destination spa services and activities include:

Mango Sugar Glo – a gentle exfoliation followed by a moisturizer application

Warm Vanilla Float – a body scrub and wrap on a soft pack bed

Ashiatsu – a deep massage performed using bare feet

Abhyanga – a light, full body, Indian style massage performed by two therapists at the same time

Foot Reflexology – uses thumb pressure on the reflex zones of the feet

Traditional Thai Massage – guests wear comfortable clothing while their massage therapist performs compression and stretches

Neuromuscular Therapy – NMT includes the treatment of trigger points

Stress & Mood Management – a physician uses biofeedback, meditation, and other methods to encourage relaxation

Weight Management Program

Group Walks

Golf Clinic

## HOT SPRINGS SPAS

The United States is home to an estimated 1,800 natural hot springs, 115 of which have been developed into hot springs spas or resorts. Most hot springs are located in the western states. (*Touring California and Nevada Hot Springs*, Bischoff, 2006)

Hot springs are formed when water beneath the earth's surface is heated by hot or molten rock. This water rises (usually along fault lines) and comes to the surface as a hot spring. Water from different hot springs will contain different minerals, and these can give us clues as to the types of rocks the water had passed through on its way to the surface. To be considered thermal water or a hot spring, this water must be a minimum of fourteen degrees hotter than the average temperature of the air at the spring's location. (*Hot Springs and Hot Pools of the Southwest*, Gersh-Young, 2007)

Native Americans used hot springs for countless years before the European settlers came to North America. Initially free and open to all who desired to use them, when land owners began charging people to use the hot springs on their land, Americans saw the birth of the hot springs spa. In time, Victorian comforts took over, and the ruggedness of the primitive hot springs was replaced with the convenience and splendor of the early hot springs resort spa, styled after their European counterparts. The boom in hot springs spas was going strong from the 1880's to the turn of the century, resulting in many developed hot springs, particularly in the eastern states where the American population was heavily concentrated. By the 1950's however, the boom was over and many hot springs spas closed their doors. Today's hot springs devotee is passionate about enjoying the naturally heated mineral waters that percolate from the earth, even if other types of spas have taken over as the popular, mainstream choice for most Americans.

Hot springs pools are typically continually flowing, meaning that "old" water is constantly replaced with "new" water. This eliminates the need for chemical treatment. Hot springs pools do come with a few risks, and the more rustic the pool, the riskier it may be. Bathers should obey posted signs regarding safety and other rules. Hot water should always be tested before entering a pool, and if the bottom of the pool cannot be observed, do not enter, as deeper water may be hotter than water on the pool's surface. Bathers should avoid submerging their heads underwater or getting water in their nose or mouth, as certain hot springs play host to amoebae that can enter the mucous membrane of the nose, causing a meningitis-like illness and death. Primitive pools with mud bottoms may be littered with sharp objects and broken glass, so it may be wise to wear footwear when using these hot springs.

Many primitive hot springs are located in the middle of nowhere, where water flows into a tub or swimming hole, and clothing is optional. These pools are usually located outdoors, without restroom access, miles from gas stations, convenience stores, and paved roads.

There's a world of difference between the rustic swimming hole and the tourist-friendly American hot springs spa. Most developed hot springs spas require bathing suits to be worn in co-ed areas. These spas provide modern amenities and tiled or concrete pools. Hot springs spas can vary greatly in size and available features, though many offer lodging, dining, and spa and salon services on-site.

Because of the natural nature of hot springs, regional differences in facilities are quite prevalent among hot springs spas. Take, for example, the Wiesbaden Hot Springs Spa located among the San Juan Mountains of Ouray, Colorado. The Wiesbaden is home to a lodge containing cozy boarding rooms heated by the underground hot springs via radiators; two massage/facial/dry brushing rooms; a private, beautifully landscaped, clothing-optional hot spring pool available to rent by the hour; a warm, continually flowing swimming pool; and an underground cave containing a hot springs pool where guests can sit and enjoy this natural vapor cave "steam room". The vibe here is comforting, health-oriented, and it's easy to imagine skiers enjoying some R & R here in the midst of the cold, mountain winter. In contrast, the Glen Ivy Hot Springs Spa, located among the Santa Ana Mountain Range in Corona, California, offers nine various outdoor pools with treated water; several hot mineral water baths; separate indoor men's and women's spa facilities; a full menu of spa and salon services; two restaurants serving locally grown food whenever possible; a labyrinth; too many lounge chairs to count, scattered throughout the vast outdoor portion of the spa; "Club Mud", an area where red clay mud is provided for guests to spread on their skin, allowing it to dry and be brushed off, providing a skin-softening exfoliation treatment; a man-made, underground cave where a hydrating body treatment is performed; and classes covering subjects such as yoga, cooking, and more! The landscaping at Glen Ivy Hot Springs Spa is lush, and features a vast array of palm trees and other warm-weather foliage. An old hotel on the property is currently unavailable to guests, but out-of-town spa guests can stay ten miles away in town, and some lucky folks actually live in a housing community adjacent to the spa's property.

Hot springs spa offerings can span the chasm between basic to complex. Here are some examples:

Watsu® - stretching and massage is performed by a massage therapist in a warm pool of water

Under the Oaks – a massage performed outdoors, under majestic oak trees

Hot Stone Reflexology – hot stones are incorporated into a foot reflexology treatment

Glycolic Body Polish – an exfoliating treatment that uses a product containing glycolic acid

Paraffin Body Therapy – a body wrap that soothes and hydrates

Sinus Treatment – steam is applied to the client's face, and pressure-point facial massage is performed using beneficial essential oils

Aqua Yoga

Aqua Aerobics

Tai Chi / Qi Gong

A Botanical Tour of the Spa Grounds

## HYDROTHERAPY

Dictionary.com defines *hydrotherapy* as:

1. the branch of therapeutics that deals with the curative use of water.
2. the treatment of physical disability, injury, or illness by immersion of all or part of the body in water to facilitate movement, promote wound healing, relieve pain, etc., usually under the supervision of a trained therapist.

Most of us were taught the broad brush strokes of hydrotherapy while we were attending massage school. My personal memories include lessons on ice massage and hydrocolator packs. Guests of today's resort, destination, and hot springs spas have basic expectations for their spa facilities and hydrotherapy options. These larger facilities usually have at least one jetted hot tub, a steam room, and a sauna (which more accurately falls under the category of *thermotherapy*, or the therapeutic use of heat, but we'll include saunas here anyway.) Most spas will have these features available in both the men's and women's locker areas, and some may offer co-ed hydrotherapy options too. Spas that set out to impress guests with their unique amenities will include a wider range of hydrotherapy options including, but not limited to: cold plunge tubs, deluge showers, and Turkish hammans.

Spa guests are often unaware of the most effective order in which to perform their self-guided hydrotherapy sequence when provided with multiple amenities. Generally, they should aim to heat, cool, rest, and repeat (usually 2 – 3 times if desired, although there aren't strict rules to follow here.) The following steps demonstrate a common hydrotherapy sequence:

1. Shower
2. Dry off – any water left on the skin will unnecessarily insulate the body
3. Spend 5 – 20 minutes in the sauna, steam room, or hot tub – whichever the guest prefers; can be switched up during each cycle
4. Cool down in a cold plunge pool, cold shower, or ice room for 30 seconds – can be switched up during each cycle
5. Rest for at least 15 minutes and drink fluids
6. Repeat if desired
7. Shower and return to the outside world with a whole new attitude!

Guests should stay hydrated during the heat step of the cycle, and should bring drinking water into the sauna, steam room, or hot tub with them.

Temperature-wise, according to *The Complete Book of Water Healing* (Buchman, 2002):

“Very cold” = 32 – 56 degrees Fahrenheit

“Cold” = 56 – 65

“Cool” = 65 -75

“Tepid” = 75 – 92

“Neutral” = 92 – 98

“Warm” to “Hot” = 98 – 104

“Very hot” = 104 and above

Contraindications for heat include:

High blood pressure

CVA or stroke

Acute injuries

Recent bruises

Recent burns, including sunburn

Open wounds

Prosthetics or implants

Rosacea

Areas of inflammation

Phlebitis

Autoimmune disorders

Cardiac insufficiency

Pregnancy

Fever

Skin infections

Edema

Aversion to heat

Diminished sensitivity to temperature

Contraindications for cold include:

Open wounds

Arthritis

CVA or stroke

High blood pressure

Skin infections

Raynaud's Syndrome

Rheumatoid disorders

Diminished sensitivity to temperature

Aversion to cold

*(Massage Therapy Principles and Practice 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Salvo, 2003)*

With the importance of technological advances and interior design elements shaping the spa industry, larger spas (particularly in resort spa-rich areas of the U.S. where competition for tourist dollars is fierce) have placed cutting-edge hydrotherapy, thermotherapy and cryotherapy (the therapeutic use of cold) amenities at the top of their priority lists. In a modern world where master bathrooms come equipped with jetted bathtubs, and infrared saunas come in sizes small enough to fit in the average American home, both new and traditional hydrotherapy, thermotherapy and cryotherapy options can make a spa experience stand out as extraordinary. Here's a glossary to shed some light on what's what:

**Arctic Ice Room** – A chilled room, sometimes containing a crushed ice dispenser so guests may apply ice to their skin.

**Banya** – A traditional Russian steam room. After relaxing in the heat of the banya, the skin is “beaten” with a bundle of branches (leaves intact) called a *venik*. This massages the body and cleanses the skin.

Brine/Salt Water Bath – A bath containing salt, usually sodium chloride. When a salt water bath contains enough salt, the body floats effortlessly.

Caldarium – A hot bath (or a room containing a hot bath.)

Cold Plunge – A pool full of cold water, typically used after a hot session in a sauna, steam room, or hot tub.

Compress – A hot or cold cloth or pad, usually moistened and applied over a specific body part.

Deluge Shower – A shower stall containing a shower head that dispenses a powerful sheet of water, designed to massage the shoulders.

Dry Sauna – A heated room without steam where the humidity ranges between 5% - 15%.

Experience Shower – A shower, typically equipped with several different settings, designed to immerse the user in an “experience” with lighting effects, various water temperatures, and shower nozzle configurations.

Fango Bath – An Italian mud bath. Fango is rich in minerals and is good for the skin.

Finnish Sauna – A heated room where steam can be created by pouring water on hot stones. Traditionally, the skin is sometimes “beaten” with a bundle of birch branches and leaves called a *vihta* to massage the body.

Frigidarium – A cold bath.

Hamam – A Turkish steam bath. While traditionally located in a public bath house, an American hammam is typically utilized by an individual, couple, or group of friends at one time. Body scrubs are often performed on a heated stone slab in the center of the American hammam.

Hot Plunge – A hot pool that can be used by itself, or as part of a hydrotherapy circuit.

Hydrotub – A tub equipped with underwater jets and/or hoses used to massage the body.

Infrared Sauna – A warm room that uses infrared heat to raise the body’s temperature.

Jacuzzi – A brand name for a type of whirlpool bath.

Kneipp Baths/Therapy – Developed in Germany in the mid-1800’s by Pastor Sebastian Kneipp, physical and emotional health is restored through the use of hydrotherapy, herbology, natural foods, bath oils, and exercise.

Laconium – A hot room with relatively low humidity, used for relaxing and allowing the body to heat and produce sweat. A laconium is not quite as hot as a banya or sauna.

Mineral Water Baths – A warm or cool bath used for soaking, containing naturally-occurring mineral salts, elements and gases.

Moor Bath – A bath containing moor mud, commonly sourced from Austria. Moor mud is comprised of thousands of years-worth of decomposing plants, flowers, grasses and herbs. Europeans are fond of moor mud for its healing properties.

Mud Bath – A bath containing volcanic ash, hot spring water, and sometimes peat or clay. A very relaxing treatment.

Parafango – A combination of mud/fango and paraffin wax.

Rainfall Shower – A shower head from which many small nozzles release water from above to replicate the sensation of rain falling from the sky.

Rhassoul/Rasul – A steam room in which rhassoul mud treatments are performed. A rhassoul is often decorated in the style of Turkish Ottoman baths, with blue, silver, and gold-tinged tiles.

Russian Bath – See *Banya*

Sauna – See *Dry Sauna & Finnish Sauna*

Scotch Hose – A high pressure hose that massages the client's body using alternating hot and cold water.

Steam Room – A tiled room filled with hot steam.

Sweat Lodge – A traditional Native American hut used for ritual steam baths.

Swiss Shower – A shower utilizing multiple shower heads to create a massaging effect.

Tepidarium – A warm room found in ancient Roman baths.

Thalassotherapy – The therapeutic use of sea water and/or sea water products (seaweed, sand, and algae.)

Vichy Shower – Administered by a service provider, a Vichy shower features several shower heads and is performed while the client lies on a waterproof mat.

## SPA TREATMENTS

The vast majority of day, resort, destination, and hot springs spas are host to a core group of spa services. These include relaxation massages, deep tissue massages, hot stone massages, body scrubs, body wraps and facials. The specifics of each treatment may vary slightly from spa to spa, but we'll go over the basics of these offerings here (with the understanding that customization, including the use of indigenous ingredients, can make even a basic spa service outstanding.)

**Relaxation Massage** – Incorporates some of the basic strokes of Swedish massage into a full-body massage where relaxation is the main goal. Focused work can be done on troubled areas, but relaxation massage rarely incorporates deep tissue techniques or tools. Aromatherapy oils can be added to a relaxation massage to enhance the desired effects.

**Deep Tissue Massage** – A deeper massage that addresses muscle tension and trigger points. A client will usually come in with a specific muscular complaint that they'd like to have worked on. The addition of a topical analgesic can aid in relieving muscular discomfort.

**Hot Stone Massage** – Similar to a relaxation massage in that it soothes the body and mind, hot stone massage uses long, flowing strokes plus the heat from warm, smooth, basalt river rocks to send the recipient into a state of tranquility.

**Body Scrub** – An exfoliation treatment that usually consists of the application of a product with salt, sugar, nut shells, jojoba beads, or another “gritty” component suspended in a gel, cream or liquid base. This product is usually applied to the client's back, legs, arms, hands, feet, shoulders, and sometimes the abdomen. Body scrubs can be rinsed off in a shower or with a Vichy shower, and some products can be removed using steamed towels. Once the client has rinsed away the product, an application of body moisturizer usually completes the service.

**Body Wrap** – A relaxing service that involves the application of a product intended to moisturize, tighten, and/or purify the skin. Product formulations vary greatly, and are often mud, clay, or seaweed-based. Sometimes preceded by a body scrub or dry brushing, a body wrap is usually performed by applying the wrap product to the client's back, legs, arms, abdomen and décolletage (the area near the clavicles) and wrapping the client in sheets, blankets, bandages, or a thermal device. The client will relax in the wrap for approximately 20 minutes. A facial massage or scalp massage may be performed during this time. The product is then removed, usually in a shower. Some body wrap services then include the application of a body moisturizer.

**Facial** – Usually performed by an esthetician (skin care therapist), a facial typically includes steaming, cleansing, assessment, exfoliation, extractions, massage, masking, toning, and moisturizing of the skin of the face, neck, and décolletage. The condition of a client's skin will

determine the specific products used to achieve their goals for the treatment. A facial often includes a hand and arm massage too.

## CONCLUSION

My hope is that *American Spaspitality*, in its straightforward delivery and enthusiasm for spa culture, has kept you entertained and inspired you to explore the delights of the day, resort, destination, and hot springs spas found across the U.S.

I welcome the opportunity to chat about wellness, pampering and bodywork. Should you have any spa or massage-related questions, please feel free to contact me at [ConfidentMassage.com](http://ConfidentMassage.com), or at [facebook.com/alipomi](https://facebook.com/alipomi).

Thanks for sharing in my passion. I'll see you at the spa!

**ALSO BY ANDREA LIPOMI:**

Confident Relaxation Massage: Advice for the Budding Massage Therapist

Available at Smashwords, Amazon, and BN.com









