

spa

101

Your Guide to Total Leisure



Sometimes when a girl's gotta relax, there's just nothing better than a little soaking, a little soothing and a whole lot of tranquility. Can't find it in your tub? Maybe it's time you checked out some of the delightful treatments (and treats) available at a spa near you...

You're a girl on the go—meetings, deadlines, social engagements and other assorted responsibilities. With the schedules women keep nowadays, it's amazing to find a free minute to relax.

Being productive is great, but without some down time, you're headed for the breakdown lane, fast. "Time for relaxation is no longer a luxury," says author Judith Lazarus, in her book *The Spa Sourcebook*. "With cellular phones, faxes and pagers, modern technology makes us accountable to work and family 24-hours a day. We have little opportunity for recuperation and rejuvenation." So true—and so damaging! Enter: The Spa.

Spas are like hidden comfort

coves: Only they're not really so hidden anymore. The International SPA Association reports that, in 2000, approximately 17 million women in the U.S. visited a spa to get ready for summer. That's a lot of backrubs and pedicures. But the truth is, we don't just deserve it—we *need* it.

"When you're feeling frazzled, a spa visit offers a wealth of beauty, relaxation and detoxifying treatments," says Lazarus. "A little pampering goes a long way toward countering the complications of life."

Spas have a variety of treatments—and many offer special packages. If you're

going to spa splurge, why not *really* splurge? Here's everything you can put on your relaxation agenda...



Spa decor tends to include soft, serene lighting, clean, uncluttered surfaces and soothing white and brown colors, like Chicago's Spa Space, located at 161 North Canal Street.



soothing showers/baths

Some spas also offer unique bathing or showering options to help you cleanse and relax! The cleansing treats range from traditional showers (to refresh yourself or remove any oil or lotion used during a massage) to communal spa baths (think giant hot tubs) to saunas (de-stress with dry heat) to steambaths (which clean and rejuvenate the skin).



mouthwatering massages

Although the techniques may differ—every spa likes to put its own twist on the age-old rubdown—there are some standard massages most spas will offer.

• **Swedish Massage**—Spa Space in Chicago calls this “the gold standard of stress reduction and relaxation therapy”—and it must be, since most spas offer it! The Swedish massage involves muscle kneading and a gentle (but still firm!) touch, so it's also a good first-time massage.

• **Deep Tissue Massage**—Often focusing on specific areas of sore or painful muscle, the Deep Tissue massage feels exactly how it sounds: It's a thorough relaxation workout. Like John Mellencamp said (back when he was sandwiching a “Cougar” into his name), it hurts so good.

• **Aromatherapy Massage**—Incorporates a number of sweetly scented oils (they're rubbed into your skin during the massage) with scents that relieve tension. The massage itself relieves anxiety, too—it's recommended for over-worked muscles.

• **Reflexology Massage**—It may be a 4,000 year old healing practice, but Reflexology will still make your hands and feet feel good as new! Pressure applied to specific points of the body is said to remove energy blocks and make your whole physique feel better—as well as relieve stress.

Still haven't found quite what you're looking for? Other spa treatments may include sports-themed massages (which target muscle soreness and/or specific muscle groups used in certain sports), stone massages (in which warm stones are used), water massages that involve bathing... you name it. Check with your local spa to see what it offers!



bountiful beauty services

You have the power to make things pretty calm. Maybe you're looking for something a little more cosmetic—no problem! Some spas also offer hair, nail and beauty services, as well. A classification, if you will:

• **Manicures**—If you've never gotten a manicure, you may be surprised at how fabulous it makes your hands feel—and look! The manicurist will massage cuticles, soak and put lotion on hands and apply two-three coats of polish for a styling look! (For the latest in hot summer nail looks, see *Fashion at Your Fingertips* in this very issue of *EW!*)

• **Pedicures**—Same goes, just for the toes! Pedicures are a summer-must-have before you break out the sandals. Nail technicians will use a pumice stone to buff dead skin from your feet, trim your toenails and make them look ultra-nice with two-three coats of whatever nail color you choose.

• **Waxing**—You can rid yourself of all kinds of unwanted hair with just a little bit of wax. Upper lip hair, excess eyebrow fluff, bikini area overgrowth—you name it, your local spa can take care of it in a few quick, generally painless moments.



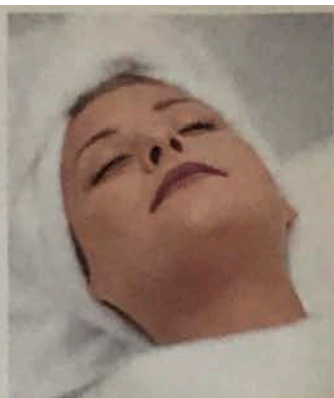
bodacious body wraps

Beautify your bod! If a scrub or wrap is what you're after, then a spa is the place where you want to be. Who knew you could look so good getting serene?

After applying some sort of skin treatment, your body will be wrapped in a material—warm sheets, plastic, blankets—it all depends on the spa. The wrapping warms the body and opens the pores to cleanse, detox and moisturize, according to *The Spa Sourcebook*. Spa skin pleasures differ from salon to salon, but may include the following:

• **Seaweed Body Wraps**—You don't need to be near the ocean to take advantage of some beach beauty aids! Many spas offer a seaweed-based body wrap that is said to stimulate a sluggish metabolism (no kidding), increase circulation, detoxify the body of impurities and reduce the appearance of cellulite (we told you it was good!).

• **Herbal Body Wrap**—This means that the sheets (or other material) used to cover you are soaked in tea and/or plant extracts. Very relaxing, and the wrap should help moisturize your skin and detoxify the body.



fantastic facials

Don't forget to invigorate your face when you're clearing your head! Look for a spa that advertises facials that have been developed with dermatologists—it's a good thing, since everyone's skin is very different. Facial services from salon to salon are as varied as the faces that wander into them, but can help keep skin healthy and youthful (there's a reason many celebs say they get facials once or twice a week!). Here are a few to look for.

• **Exfoliation**—Stripping your skin of dead cells is key to helping it maintain its luster.

• **Deep cleansing**—If you have an acne-prone complexion, you may need to detoxify with some deep cleaning. This can include the use of anything from sponges to steamers.

• **Pore cleaning**—If you're just looking for a little freshening up, you want a light facial that involves cleansing the pores.

SPA TIPS As wonderful and unique as spas are, you may have some questions regarding your first visit.

• Is nudity required?

There will most likely be naked people, yes, but no, you do not have to be one of them. This goes for the hot tub/steam room area as well as individual massage and therapy treatments. The general rule of thumb is to simply obey your own comfort zone.

• How do I know if I should schedule an hour or a half hour massage at the spa?

Many spas tell clients the general rule of thumb is an hour massage is a full-body massage and a half-hour massage tends to focus more on a specific muscle group or area of the body.

• How much should I tip?

According to *The Spa Sourcebook*, spa tipping is similar to any other personal service gratuity: 10-15 percent is appropriate.

DIY (DO-IT-YOURSELF) SPA

If you insist you just don't have the time to make it to a spa, there are some do-it-yourself home remedies you can employ:

• **Want to freshen up your skin?** Just break open a Vitamin E capsule and spread the contents on your face before bedtime, according to the book, *Home Spa: Pamper Yourself Naturally* (\$14.95, Sterling Publishing).

• **Victim of dry, damaged hair ends?** Try treating hair with olive oil from the kitchen cabinet. *Home Spa: Pamper Yourself Naturally* suggests you rub it onto the ends and wrap hair in a towel for five minutes before shampooing.

• **Don't underestimate the power of a good bath.** The book *Home Spa: Pamper Yourself From Head To Toe* (\$24.95, Carlton Books) suggests a good robe and slippers, scented candles and an array of bath salts and soaps.

• **Vaseline, the moisturizing jelly maker, has a Spa in a Jar kit** that makes it easy to soothe at home. The kit supplies oils, sea salts and everything else to create the recipes included (a facial rub, body scrub and exfoliator). Available at stores nationwide.

Vaseline's new Spa in a Jar product packs some serious soothing into your petroleum jelly.

