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LIA Lifestyle Instruction Aid

abc4. Spa-ah Lingo
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Sources: Spa Finders magazine, Dictionary of Natural Healing, by Deborah R. Mitchell, and other sources. The Arizona Republic

Don't sweat over the unfamiliar terminology used in day-spa brochures or by spa personnel. Here are some of the more common terms, treatments and therapies you will encounter:

Aromatherapy:

The use of scents-primarily from essential oils distilled from plants, flowers and herbs-to soothe, calm, stimulate or reenergize. Used during massages, facials, body treatments and water therapies.

Ayurvedic:

Treatments based on a system of folk healing from India. A combination of herbs and oils is used in various massage, facial and meditation treatments designed to bring the body and mind into balance.

Craniosacral work:

A gentle acupressure massage focussing primarily on the head, but often reaching down into the neck and shoulders.

Body wrap:

Herbs, seaweed, mud or other nutrient-rich substances are applied to the body, which is then wrapped in a cocoon of plastic, warm wet linens and/or a blanket for 30 or more minutes. As the body heats up, the skin absorbs nutrients from whatever concoction has been applied. Eventually, the body begins to perspire-expelling internal impurities.

Facial:

A pore-cleansing and skin nourishing face treatment often customized by an esthetician for the skin needs of a given client. Most facials include a skin analysis, a cleansing ritual, a steam treatment to open pores, blemish extraction, an exfoliation treatment, a light face, neck and shoulder massage, a face mask and a moisture treatment.

Exfoliation:

A treatment that removes dead skin cells, smooths the skin and increases circulation. Body

glows, salt scrubs, loofah rubs and body polishes are all exfoliating treatments. Typically, a granular substance (often mineral salts mixed with essential oils) is applied to the skin, then rubbed off with a loofah sponge or dry brush.

Hydrotherapy:

This refers to a variety of water treatments, including massages with underwater jet massage, therapeutic showers, steam rooms and mineral baths. Treatments in high-tech hydrotherapy tubs designed with upward of 50 underwater massaging jets; can include the use of mud, mineral salts or essential oils.

Massage:

The manipulation of muscles to improve circulation, ease muscle aches, improve flexibility and relax the body. Toxins are released from muscles during massage, so drinking plenty of water after the procedure, is recommended to help flush these impurities from the body.

Swedish massage:

Gentle manipulation of the muscles using long, connective strokes and various oils. Ideal for relaxation.

Therapeutic massage:

A combination of Swedish and deep-tissue massage. Ideal for increasing circulation and relieving stress.

Sports massage:

An invigorating deep-tissue massage designed to loosen and ready the muscles for exercise. Ideal for increasing flexibility.

Hot-rock massage:

Also referred to as a “la stone” massage. Smooth stones are heated and used as an extension of the massage therapist's hands to manipulate muscles.

Maternity massage:

Gentle muscle manipulation. At some spas, a special cutout belly pillow, allows a mother to-be, to lie face down while having her back massaged. When the pillow is not available or a woman is in the later stages of her pregnancy, she can lie on her side for a back massage.

Mud treatments:

Mineral-rich Dead Sea and Moor MUDs are known for their detoxifying and exfoliating properties. Used in facial, body-wrap and hydrotherapy treatments.

Paraffin:

A heated wax, infused with moisturizing oils, used to rehydrate the skin. Though the entire body can be painted with paraffin, this treatment most often is administered only to the hands or feet. Once dipped into warm (not hot) paraffin, the hands or feet are wrapped in plastic and cloth.

Reflexology:

An ancient Chinese technique using pressure-point massage to restore the flow of energy throughout the body. Though usually administered to the feet, it can also be performed on the hands and/or ears.

Seaweed treatments:

Known for their nutrients, minerals, vitamins, and proteins, seaweed concoctions are used to nourish and re-mineralize the skin and body. Commonly used in facial and body-wrap treatments.

Shiatsu:

A massage technique developed in Japan in which pressure is applied to specific points on the body to stimulate and release blockages along the body's energy pathways.

Swiss shower:

A shower stall designed with high-powered water jets that can be directed at various parts of the body to create an invigoration massage. Also called a Scotch shower.

Vichy shower:

A multi-jet shower suspended over a wet body-treatment table. Varied water pressure and temperature are used to invigorate the skin while rinsing away mud, seaweed, salts or oils that have been applied to the body.