

SPA ETIQUETTE

The word etiquette as defined in Webster's Dictionary means: "Conventional code of social behavior", but what is the conventional code of spa behavior? And how does one learn this code of behavior if you are a first time spa go-er or a new employee at a spa?

What is spa etiquette?

Spa etiquette is giving each and every client 100% attention, showing them that you honestly care and perform spa services that truly benefit them. Considering the spa experience, the staff should know the following:

- Give a warm greeting
- Explain the service and procedure and allow for the client to ask questions
- Use the proper utensils and personalized products during the service
- Adhere to required draping techniques
- Offer water/juice after treatment
- Close with home routine recommendations
- Send a thank you note

What is client etiquette?

As a spa guest you are expected to:

- Arrive on time or early for your appointment
- Be available to meet with your therapist before each treatment to discuss any questions or concerns you may have, ie. pressure, sensitive areas, questions about specific treatments, etc.
- Undress as much as you feel comfortable with for your treatment (again, you may discuss any concerns with your therapist before your treatment begins)
- Your therapist will keep your body conservatively draped and only expose each area to be worked on
 - For some services such as body scrubs, body wraps and hydrotherapies you will not be draped in order to reap maximum benefits of your treatment (swimsuits are optional in some of these services)
- Allow the therapist to perform each service as reserved and timed
- It is customary to tip
- Relax and enjoy yourself

Do not bring children and leave them unattended, this is very disruptive to other spa goers and unsafe for children.

Know if gratuities are included or not and be prepared according to your experience and desire to tip or not.

Relax, yet respect that the room must be prepared and used for the next client; so know that you must vacate treatment room upon completion of service within a reasonable amount of time.

Give honest feedback to the therapist, owner, receptionist, etc., as operation personnel cares to know if your spa experiences was as expected.

Tipping

As in all services-related businesses it is common practice to tip the person who has done a good job to the satisfaction of the customer. The rule of thumb in day spas is 10%-15% of the cost of service, or about \$10.00 to \$15.00 for a one hour treatment. Spas usually provide an envelope at the front desk when checking out for you to place the gratuity into it with the therapist's name. You do not have to carry money around with you and worry about this while enjoying the spa facilities. Note: Some spas will include tips in their package prices ... this is common practice at Destination Spas that offer complete spa packages. Be sure to read the fine print.

Unacceptable behavior

What client behavior would be considered bad manners? When should a guest be removed from the spa?

Lewd behavior

Inebriated

Demaneing and abusive behavior toward receptionists or therapists.

Guest insisting upon services without an appointment when spa is fully booked. Such behavior does not conform to spa etiquette, but even with such behavior it is important to first fix the person and then the problem. This is a service industry and as such, the motto remains, "customer first." In the above situations, advocate addressing the situation with respect and an agreeable outcome. Remember, its not the one client that needs to be "managed" that is lost, it is the 10 others that they complain to about their experience that are then lost too. Word of mouth is powerful.

Offensive staff conduct

What about staff etiquette? What in the professional opinion is a probationary or firing offense within a spa regarding spa etiquette?

Blatant discrimination such as refusing to give a service to a guest because someone is physically challenged or overweight, or because of medical history listed on client card.

Switching guests from one therapist's docket to another because the therapist doesn't want that particular guest for whatever reason or does want them (often because they know that the guest is a big tipper).

Saying the spa is booked because a therapist wants to go home early!

Pointing out to a guest that gratuities are not included or simply asking for a tip.

Poor personal hygiene-unkempt appearance, body odor, poor dental care, etc.

Personalizing services so that they do not conform to established spa standards and, as a result, causes dissension among guests.

Discussions or comments about employment, staff and spa operation that are negative (either with guests or co-workers)

Continued overuse of product and supplies thus differing guest services as well as drastically affecting bottom line expenses to revenues on behalf of the spa.

The spa operator, director or owner will learn of these things from witnesses, guest complaints or co-workers' reports. Just as one is schooled in proper table manners, constant training and emphasizing protocol from a spa service point of view is vital to the success of the day spa industry.

Clients' education

How do you accomplish this on behalf of staff and guests? Guests must be educated as to how they may benefit from their spa experience and what to expect. This can be done either with literature or over the telephone as they make their appointment. Suggestion: always (gently) inquire as to whether or not this is their first spa appointment and if so, would they like to receive a "guest journey journal" or information about services prior to arrival.

Here is an example: A spa derives great pleasure in serving their guests a healthy dose of education as well as special touches throughout a clients' visit. Upon entering the spa and being greeted by the receptionist, the client is introduced to the staff who shake the clients' hand and immediately tour the spa, explain their spa "menu" of the day as well as what to expect, how to prepare and what to wear (or not wear). All treatments begin with a special touch - a scalp massage. Clients are encouraged to share their personal quest so that the spa may adjust future treatments and schedules accordingly. Upon completion clients are always escorted to the door, thanked for their visit and receive educational literature on all of the spas programs.

Do a "test-run"

It is imperative that each and every staff member goes through a typical spa guest journey as well as counseling and training on behalf of the operations defined and expected spa etiquette. Do not assume that clients or staff know what to expect, how to act, or what to do. Here is an example: every single need a client might have and what the experience should be prior to opening the spa component to their chiropractic health center, Management thought of in advance. The training of staff in spa etiquette involves scripts and actual patient experiences. They are even taught how to close a conversation and appointments with patients. The spa believes it is the responsibility of every spa owner to assume that everyone (staff and clients) are new and uninformed as to the spa experience.

Lead by example, train in detail. Guests and staff will follow with impeccable manners.

Adapted from an article by Monica Tuma Brown, a spa professional for over 17 years involved in the development of spa products, programs and education.

Massage Therapy

To receive maximum benefit and relaxation from a massage ...

Arrive a few minutes early. Prior to your massage you will receive a robe to change into. Most people prefer to remove all clothing and jewelry. During your massage, your therapist keeps your entire body draped and only undrapes that portion that is being massaged. If you feel more comfortable leaving your undergarments on, that's fine too.

Once you are with your therapist you will be asked certain questions, such as whether there is anything you like to convey he/she should be aware of. Feel free to express your needs so as to receive specific attention to tense or trouble spots. Your therapist will ask you a few questions to ascertain the most optimum treatment for your sessions.

Relax, this is your time and time for your body (and your mind) to release the worries and stresses of the day. Deep breathing and closing of your eyes will assist in your complete relaxation.

Let your therapist know if you are comfortable or uncomfortable, too warm or too cold or if the massage pressure is too light or too intense.

Trust your massage therapist to move your limbs in whatever position is necessary for and during the massage.

Enjoy the massage and know that you are doing something very good for your body and your mind. You deserve this healthy interlude.

What can it do for you? How often should you have a massage?

Massage therapy increases circulation, thus is nourishing to the entire body.

Massage also promotes the release of by-products such as lactic acid, which is one of the causes of stiff and sore muscles. We recommend one weekly massage for health maintenance and to counteract the effects of daily stress.

Facial

To receive maximum benefit and relaxation from a facial ...

Arrive a few minutes early to allow time to change into a robe (remove all clothing and jewelry from your upper body) and to fill out a client history card. The skin care information allows your esthetician to determine the best spa treatment and home recommendation for you.

Your facial will consist of thorough and deep cleansing to purify, nourish and tonify your skin. A woman can expect all of her makeup to be removed. Both men and women should advise their esthetician as to whether or not they are wearing contact lenses.

Relax completely. A basic facial will take one hour to perform. Close your eyes.

Breathe deeply and take this time to release the worries and the stresses of the day.

Let your esthetician know if you are comfortable or uncomfortable, too warm or too cold, or if a product is very stimulating. Your comfort and care is of the greatest concern and priority.

Enjoy your facial; the results will be visible and lasting.

Why should one have a regular facial and how often?

We recommend regular, monthly facials for optimum skin maintenance and nourishment; twice monthly for specific treatment programs.