



# THE ECO facial

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## *Creative Ways of Greening Your Skin Care Services*

**CONSUMER INTEREST IN WELLNESS,** organic and green products continues to grow. Many spa clients are now shifting away from standard spa treatments. They are looking for services that take their entire well-being into account. By offering eco-friendly products and services, spas can increase their client base and provide a healthier experience for guests and staff.

Purchase raw ingredients and create your own spa recipes for truly unique formulations. Spas can really cut operational costs by figuring out ways to use the same ingredients in several treatments while also establishing a signature brand for the business. For example, if you use detoxifying body clay in your body wraps, then you can also use that for your mani-pedi

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### **First steps**

Client response to eco-friendly services is typically very positive. Clients usually expect spas to run sustainable businesses and offer organic options. Spa owners need to plan ahead for their new eco-friendly business model. Be prepared to present new services, products and operational changes to team members and clients.

Identify what your spa culture is before creating your new eco-friendly menu. Think about what you are trying to build and what your specialty will be. For example, consider anti-aging, wellness or relaxation treatments.

Next, select back bar and retail products that contain natural and healthy ingredients. Choose a few active ingredients to include in your treatments as your signature stock. Your spa may already have an identity. If your name is "Sage Spa," then you know you want to include sage in your signature treatments! If you are focused on anti-aging, you will want to find natural ingredients that pack the most anti-aging potential, such as rose hips, which are high in vitamin C.

treatments. You can also customize with aromatherapy oils or herbs and use them in multiple treatments. The sky is the limit!

To create treatments from raw ingredients, start with the base first. Then, customize according to individual needs. For a scrub, start with an exfoliating agent like sugar, coffee grounds or salt. Then add an emollient like shea butter to spread onto skin, mixed with an essential oil for aromatherapy. You can create several treatments based on just a few ingredients. For instance, with a base of coconut butter, you could add honey for a skin quenching "Cocoa Honey Hydration Wrap," add ground coffee for a "Hot Java Scrub" or add cocoa powder for a moisturizing, delicious smelling facial mask! Body wraps can be highly customized as well. Mud, clay or seaweed could be mixed with a tea made of herbs, powders or active serums. With a simple change of ingredients, the same wrap could be changed to have mineralizing, toning, hydrating or exfoliating effects.

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## PURE INGREDIENTS

**Arnica** is great for body treatments, as it has natural anti-inflammatory properties good for muscle pain and joint stiffness.

**Mustard powder** detoxifies sore muscles with a warming quality.

**Carrot powder** is a natural source of vitamin A that improves skin tone on the body and face.

**Natural caffeine** is good for fluid retention.

**Wild yam powder** is good for eczema, sun damage and improving skin elasticity.

**Honey powder** is a great humectant for dry skin.

**Green tea powder or extract** is anti-aging.

**Bee pollen granules and rice bran powder** are anti-aging and help with acne.

**Rose hips and evening primrose oil** are high in vitamin B, which is good for irritated skin and post-menopausal skin. Combining rose hips powder, primrose oil, crushed herbs, green tea powder and coconut powder creates a rich, antioxidant-packed massage oil or facial mask.

## Create ultimate spa experiences

Set up interactive bars where guests participate in the treatment by choosing their ingredients. If you offer hydrotherapy, create a bath bar. Label the ingredients with a one sentence description and have guests choose, or let them describe symptoms to a therapist who will create the bath. Combine the ingredients in a bath ball or tea bag. You can create an interactive bar with many treatments including scrubs, wraps and mani-pedis. Always have a base prepared and let the guest choose a few ingredients so it does not cut into the treatment time. You could also have them fill out a questionnaire in the waiting room before their treatments.

## Marry two product lines

For those who are in a hurry, you can use a pre-blended professional product line with natural ingredients. Promote your professional spa retail items by including them in your signature facial and body treatments. Natural products will also combine well with your high-tech treatments. If you offer services like microcurrent, microdermabrasion, low-level laser therapy, medical-grade peels or hair removal, then eco-friendly after-care is an effective option. Calm and soothe skin after treatment with products containing aloe, lavender or rice powder. Retail these items at checkout so guests can use them at home.

## Design your signature treatments

Do something for every guest that is unique. You could start every massage with a purifying foot ritual, including an herbal foot soak or exfoliation, using hot towels with an essential oil to cocoon feet after the service. This sets you apart from the spa down the road and adds value. Find small ways to make the client feel special. Allowing them to choose some aspect of their treatment is a great option. They could select from three different herbal options for their spa treatment or the fragrance for a hot towel in their facial.

People who are seeking the natural or organic lifestyle may also be looking at alternative methods of wellness. Guided meditation, visualization, Reiki, sound therapy and hot stone massage are great additions to natural skin care. Consider your location and any traditions native to your area of the country. You may also offer elements from a local native American tribe in your region to bless or set the tone for a treatment with something indigenous.

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### Natural product allergies

As with all skin care offerings, you will need to consider any client contraindications before giving treatments. Because natural skin and body care products contain essential oils, clients who are pregnant or nursing may need to consult with their physician. Spa professionals should also be aware of general product and environmental allergies.

If a client does have an allergic reaction, respond the same way you would with any skin care reaction. Immediately remove the product. Apply a cool compress and perform a gentle scalp or foot massage while you are waiting for the sensation to stop. Look at the affected area and note if the redness or swelling has decreased. Apply a neutral product like shea or coconut butter to calm and soothe the area.

### WAYS TO MAKE YOUR BUSINESS GREEN

1. Turn off the lights when they are not in use.
2. Install energy efficient lighting such as LED bulbs and low-flow faucet aerators.
3. Switch to chlorine-free (PCF) paper products made with recycled content.
4. Use organic cotton supplies and table paper produced from recycled content.
5. Use biodegradable plastic to wrap your spa tables, and use linens for body wraps.
6. Stop selling or providing bottled water. Instead, keep recycled paper cups or reusable containers onhand.



### Involve staff and clients

As with any new changes in operations or procedures, your staff needs to be involved from the beginning. Natural products often have a different means of application, a different consistency and may need to be prepared in a new manner. Technicians need time to get used to the new methods or learn to mix the formulas.

Promote your new eco-friendly spa services and products through all client communication mediums. Let your clients see your new professional products in your retail area and feature interactive displays they can smell and test. Create a beautiful presentation with apothecary jars or mortars and pestles for grinding fresh ingredients. A testing station allows clients to create their own concoctions for home care, with some guidance from your staff.

Offering new eco-friendly treatments as upgrades is a good way to introduce them to your regular clients and integrate them into your menu. Any type of add-on that you create with your mainstream products can also be made with natural ingredients. A great idea for a lip treatment is a sugar and jojoba oil exfoliation. If the client gets a granule in her mouth, it is still an edible treat! When pricing your new treatments, consider the fact that the cost per treatment with natural ingredients you mix yourself will be a lot lower than traditional products. It is up to you to decide whether or not to pass those savings on to your clients or to increase your business revenue. However, be sure to take into account the increased labor that is required to mix the formulas. Offer beautiful packaging for these spa products you mix yourself and retail them as gift items. Investing in those details creates more revenue and builds business through client referrals. ■

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