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## How a Korean Spa Can Keep You Lean, Rejuvenated and Sexy

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"How do you de-stress, maintain your energy with a super-busy schedule, and stay so lean?" my clients often ask me among their routine medical questions.

I'm going to let you in on my little secret: I visit a Korean spa every month.

Spas have become a lifelong habit for me: more necessity than luxury. That I live so close to Koreatown in Los Angeles, where I can choose among numerous fabulous spas, certainly helps.

As a child living in Korea, my mom often took me to a spa every week to get scrubbed and soaked. In those days we didn't have bathtubs or showers. Far from simply

being a way to rejuvenate and unwind, a spa provided our primary source of hygiene and cleanliness.

I fondly remember the communal aspect of my childhood spa visits. Much like you would spend time with friends and family at a restaurant or bar, our cleaning ritual became a way to socialize and spend the day with loved ones.

Are you familiar with the [Olympic Spa](#) on Olympic Boulevard? From that place you can get a vivid sense of my cozy childhood spa in Korea. If you don't know the Olympic Spa, it contains one primary room in the spa's center where women soak in the herb tub and the hot/cold tubs, or just hang out while they enjoy scrubbing and massaging.

Today I appreciate how the West openly embraces Korean spas. Friends breathlessly describe their Korean spa experience and "getting the scrub of her life," which always carries me back to childhood spa memories. They become sold on the Korea spa experience and now frequent them every month to rejuvenate and relieve stress.

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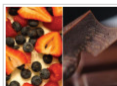
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Fortunately, there's plenty of science to validate their visits. A study in the journal *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*, for instance, showed saunas could help remove heavy metals and chemical xenobiotics.

To get these detoxification benefits, you'll need to schedule a longer session. The researchers in this study concluded that "saunas are safe and effective and should be used more frequently to benefit [your] health."

Let's not forget too Korean spas lower cortisol levels to help you reduce stress and lose weight. According to Dr. Jacob Teitelbaum, stress can stall your metabolism to a grinding halt and make those skinny jeans become unbearably tight.

My current favorite spa is *Crystal Spa* on 6th Street. Crystal juxtaposes a traditional Korean spa with an ultra-modern design. I ran into my acupressure therapist here last week. "Where have you been?" she eagerly asked me. "Haven't seen you in a few months."

I replied that my spa choice depends with whom I go. For instance, last month I took my mom, who loves the spacious, uncrowded ambiance of *Century Spa* on Olympic Boulevard.

I love Century Spa's newly renovated sauna rooms (including their Gold Sauna Room) with high ceilings. You'll find the rooms here a good bit toasty than other spas. Want a spacious spa where you'll really sweat? Visit Century Spa. They provide numerous personal services like scrub and massage, acupressure, and facials.

The time before I took my mom, I went with a group of girlfriends to *Hancock Spa*, also on Olympic Boulevard. Whereas Century Spa provides a modern interior, Hancock provides a very simple, traditional ambiance. Water is their hallmark touch: Hancock uses negative ionized water, which makes your hair and skin twice as soft.

Speaking of special water, did you know that Koreatown houses a true hot spring spa? No kidding: You'll find it at the *Beverly Hot Spring Spa* on Beverly Boulevard. If you're looking to soak in mineral water without making a trip to the desert, check it out.

Occasionally you might want to share your Korean spa experience with the whole family. For those occasions, you may try *Wi Spa* on Wilshire Blvd. This state-of-the-art facility includes something for everyone, including children and older folks.

And guys, you can also enjoy the Korean spa experience. Pay a visit to Century Spa, Crystal Spa, Beverly Hot Springs, and Wi Spa.

You may require several trips before you really start relaxing into a Korean Spa experience. Getting naked can initially be uncomfortable, but that's what Korean spas are about. People here get naked and do their thing -- it's very natural. But if full nudity makes you squeamish, most spas offer plenty of towels and robes to cover up.

Are you curious about the jade, charcoal, salt, and clay far-infrared saunas? Don't be shy about asking your spa host to explain the numerous benefits of these different spa rooms, since I find spas don't always provide adequate information outside the rooms.

All these rooms help you detoxify and relax the body even more than traditional steam and dry saunas. Unlike traditional saunas, for instance, the far-infrared room can penetrate deep inside layers of your body to release the toxins stored in your fat tissue.

A literature review in the journal *Canadian Family Physician* showed among its benefits, far-infrared saunas may help normalize blood pressure, relieve chronic pain, help heal chronic fatigue syndrome, and even promote weight loss. Sign me up!

I hope I've convinced you to visit a Korean spa and check out their wide array of services, a few of which you're sure to love. If you're looking to experience a traditional service, try the scrub and massage. Speak up if the scrubbing or massage is too sensitive for your skin.

Wherever you go, tell them Grace sent you, and be sure to say hello if you run into me during your next spa date.

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