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selling the

ANTI-AGING MODEL

BY BELLA SCHNEIDER



more and more spas are turning to specialized treatments

ANTI-AGING skin care is a staple in our industry. Today it is an irrefutable treatment philosophy, although it has not always enjoyed such a status. For many years, the priority in skin care was a philosophy stressing relaxation and the cleansing facial. This newer development began as a result of product and technological developments in the 1980s and 1990s. In those early times, an anti-aging treatment was a specialized peel offered only on a few spa menus as a complement to relaxation and cleansing focused facials. But once the media began to tout the benefits of this new and effective skin care tool, clients became savvier and more anti-aging focused. Most relaxation spas added peels, microdermabrasion and results-oriented skin care product lines to their offerings, which resulted in the current emphasis on anti-aging skin care. ➔

Spas that focus on anti-aging perform services unique to this treatment philosophy. It is different than the relaxation spa, with unique products, technology and therapies. Its clients have specific demands, also. They want their skin to be changed and improved in appearance as a result of putting out their money. The services generally are more expensive and the clients come in more often for treatments, not only relaxation. But, note the word spa is still in the mind of these clients and generally remains in the name of the facility. They still want pampering and to be in a spa setting. The spa that provides anti-aging services must merge beauty and pampering with great, results driven treatments.



Synergistic home care expands the results of the professional care and marches the skin towards the planned goal.

The anti-aging menu

The service menu of an anti-aging spa is designed around progressive changes in the skin of the clients, moving them towards younger, more youthful looking faces, hands and bodies. Most services will support the image of the spa's anti-aging focus. Usually their names are functionary, not fantasy names, meaning they say what they do, such as the Anti-Aging Facial, the Purification Facial and the Intensity Body Exfoliation. But the names are general enough that they allow total customization of the procedure to fit the needs of the client, even an upgrade in the service and pricing. In this way, the menu reflects that every client's skin is different, and every service can be customized to individual needs.

The services are usually performed in a series, meaning multiple, time spaced services, and the series will be listed in the menu, though some will be custom designed with multiple modalities. After having the treatment clients begin to see noticeable changes to their skin, with obvious brightening and beauty when they leave the spa. Many become addicted to the "new me" they see after having services in this type of spa.

The facials in an anti-aging spa are usually 60 minutes while treatments, such as microdermabrasion, are 40 minutes, though an Ultimate Facial takes up to an hour and a half (see "Designing the Ultimate Facial," *LNE & Spa*, February 2007).

The menu is usually self explanatory, with brief explanations describing its benefits.

The secret to success in rejuvenation

Many relaxation facials do not include a consultation, as the client is there to relax—that's it. But the secret to a successful anti-aging treatment plan is an accurate and comprehensive consultation during the initial treatment appointment. This appointment is longer than the following appointments or is booked as a consultation. The skin type, condition, Fitzpatrick and Glogau levels are established during the evaluation, and certain recommendations are made to the client based on the analysis performed and the client's goals. They include recommendation of:

- **A custom facial.** Each client's facial for that day is designed according to her needs and goals, as determined during the consultation. The therapist should explain the custom facial that is recommended for that appointment and its technologies, as well as the on-site and home care products. For example, an excellent preseries facial is a preconditioning facial. A preconditioning facial prepares the skin for the corresponding home care and series, such as a facial with enzymes and hydration.

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The consultation is the most important part of the service. An anti-aging therapist's education must first center on the different aspects of the skin evaluation, such as skin typing, Fitzpatrick and Glogau, and then on how to choose and communicate the service, the treatment plan and home care recommendations to the client.

The components of specialized spa treatments

Anti-aging spas have specific treatments, products and technologies. Such spas must offer every form of acid. Over time we have learned that certain skin types, Fitzpatrick and Glogau levels and skin conditions require the use of a variety of acids in order to reach client goals safely. Anti-aging is no longer just about glycolic acid, although it is still an important part of the offerings. Examples of additional acids that are in the toolbox for anti-aging therapists are lactic acid, salicylic acid, wine peel, acetic acid and many others.

An anti-aging spa must also provide supportive technologies. Anti-aging is supported by spa equipment, and more is being developed as the thirst for results grow. Following are some of the fully developed and proven technologies.

- **Microdermabrasion.** Approved for use in the United States in 1997 as a Class I device, microdermabrasion can be used by therapists in their skin care facilities. Except in the states where it has been removed from our hands (erroneously), it has become a staple in anti-aging care. It speeds up the turnover of the epidermal cells and stimulates the rejuvenation of dermal elastin and collagen.

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- **A treatment plan.** Most clients who want to see change in their skin will need progressive care through a series of recommended treatments in order to reach their goals. The therapist must recommend and explain the needed series and the client must understand and buy into the program.
- **Preconditioning of the skin.** To prepare the skin for services and to prevent damage such as hyperpigmentation, the anti-aging client must use the appropriate preparation products for a time before the series, microdermabrasion, peel or other anti-aging treatment. Many product lines offer kits to sell to the clients for pre-care. Most kits include a cleanser, moisturizer, lightener, exfoliant and collagen activating product, and will be used for a time before the services as dictated by the client's Fitzpatrick level.
- **The accompanying home care.** Anti-aging changes will not happen without the accompanying home care during a series. The synergistic home care expands the results of the professional care and marches the skin towards the planned goal. The outcome of lacking home care is poor service results. It's as simple as that. Therapists who meet their highest potential for success and bring their clients to their highest possible results need to sell home care as a part of a comprehensive treatment plan—and a lot of it.

An anti-aging spa must choose a product line that has a variety of masks to address every aspect of the aging skin's condition.



Progressive versus aggressive

Anti-aging spas hold a very important niche in the lifestyles of our clients. They slowly but progressively improve the skin of their clients and are results-oriented. Note: Aggressive and invasive services are not performed in these spas, as their clients prefer progressive to aggressive treatments due to no downtime.

These spas perform the highest level of care that therapists can legally perform in their state, but are not performing medical services—unless a physician is on board... then it is a med spa and nurses/physicians perform that care. Anti-aging services are only performed on the epidermis but can dramatically affect rejuvenation of the dermal layer of the skin. The treatments work by influencing the health and improvement of the epidermis and through the penetration of products over time.

An anti-aging spa or therapist that does not have this device is missing out on a service that anti-aging clients expect to have available.

- **Ultrasound.** This device has a two fold function in an anti-aging facial or treatment. First, it is used in the deep cleansing step of the facial to effectively remove the dirt and debris from the surface of the skin. Then, later in the facial, it is used to enhance the penetration of treatment serums. The ultrasound greatly enhances the results of a facial.
- **LED light.** These light emitting diodes are FDA Class 1 devices that trigger treatment through chromo stimulation of the dermal fibroblasts. Red and near infrared are the diodes that are appropriate for anti-aging, as they stimulate development of collagen and elastin in the dermis. Development of these in the dermal matrix plumps up the skin, reduces fine lines and wrinkles and brings a more youthful appearance to the skin.
- **Microcurrent.** This new technology uses low level electrical current to trigger a myofibril (muscle fiber) reaction that minimally contracts muscles to strengthen and tone them. It enhances production of natural collagen and elastin by increasing blood flow and elevating nourishment and oxygen levels in the dermis. Microcurrent brings more definition to the face to produce a more youthful looking appearance.
- **Body technology.** Clients are seeking anti-aging treatments for the body, also. The two most requested are cellulite treatments and lymphatic drainage. Spas can offer endermologie for the cellulite and compression therapy for lymphatic drainage with an acupuncture body suit. Clients have grown to expect to find cellulite treatments in a spa now.

These technologies are costly, so most therapists or spas accumulate them over time. The order in which they are purchased is the decision of the owner and therapists, but the goal for a spa that wishes to reach its highest potential in the anti-aging community should be to have as many of the proven technologies as financially possible.

Variety is essential

An anti-aging spa must choose a product line that has a variety of masks to address every aspect of the aging skin's condition. It should also have effective products for an effective body exfoliation service, such as a glycolic and lactic (15 percent)

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cream mask to brighten and soften the body's skin. The service can be offered with facials in a multiple treatment or alone.

Also, have a variety of serums available. These products penetrate the skin readily and address targeted skin conditions effectively. Anti-aging skin care lines usually focus on serums due to their capacity to quickly and effectively penetrate the skin.

Be sure to stock plenty of finishing products. Post treatment finishing products treat the eye and the lips. The eye area is delicate and especially subject to aging so it must always be treated during any anti-aging protocol. The lip area is also subject to aging and dehydration and must be treated. Both areas are being addressed effectively with new peptide technologies and accompanying hydration.

Further finishing products rehydrate and seal the skin, leaving it plumped and protected from the elements post facial.

Sun management and supportive training

The best anti-aging products out there always conclude with an SPF. Sun protection is routinely important but when a client is receiving an anti-aging treatment it is even more important, as the skin is even more prone to UV damage. The sun protection products applied after anti-aging treatments should be mineral based, such as with titanium and zinc, and should

be followed with a dusting of mineral makeup to allow the client to leave looking healthy and radiant while being fully protected from the sun.

Anti-aging treatments are among the most in-demand services in skin care. To reach their highest level of success in performing anti-aging skin care, therapists who perform them must be highly trained—far beyond the training from their skin care school—in high level communication skills, in the appropriate products to use according to the needs of their clients and in anti-aging technology.

Waiting lists and high incomes are the rewards for the spa and therapist with an anti-aging treatment focus and the training, products, technology and education to pull it off well. When beauty and pampering are merged with great, results driven treatments, clients show their appreciation with their loyalty and money. ■

Bella Schneider, an esthetician with more than 30 years of experience, is CEO and founder of La Belle Day Spas and Salons in northern California and of 5 Star Formulators, Palo Alto, CA, a worldwide distributor of esthetic products and technology. Due to her passion for the industry she also founded the Center for Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced Esthetics to provide advanced skill and success training to estheticians. To contact 5 Star Formulators, call 888.200.3977 or go to www.5starformulators.com.

