

This month's Featured Article:

## Designing the Ultimate Facial

The treatment you've just got to have. By Bella Schneider



Every spa needs the Ultimate Facial on their menu. It's a longer, luxurious and pampering facial that produces immediate, visible results and provides for a very special experience.

It's the spa's Cadillac treatment, reflecting its philosophy of care, love and respect for its clients. The Ultimate Facial sets the tone of the spa's services by pampering regular clients and also works as a luxurious introduction for new clients who have chosen it, prompting their return. This facial is touted to the press—you offer them the experience, they love it, they shout its wonders in print and other media, and they bring new clients in the door every time they mention it.

So, do you have a facial you can say provides the ultimate experience in your spa? Do you have a public relations facial to flaunt to the press? If not, allow me to help you design that facial.

### Creating the dream facial

The Ultimate Facial is not a seven to eight step monthly cleansing treatment, nor is it a therapeutic facial with a particular focus. It is a lengthier facial with many upgrades that incorporates abundant relaxation but also visible skin enhancement. This is your menu's ultimate treatment oriented facial with several exfoliations, muscle toning, minor extractions, customized masks and plenty of massage. It shows immediate results while emphasizing a unique and rich experience, sending clients out raving about your spa and your care, and calling back for more.

The treatment takes 75 to 90 minutes, or a time frame that is longer than what is usually allotted for a basic facial. (Note that the average facial in the United States lasts one hour.) It includes all the comfort nuances. For instance a grouping of candles is lit in the room to enhance ambiance and special, more luxurious linens and blankets should be used. Think ultimate as the driver of your creative process when designing this facial.

## Pricing and marketing

The price range may be \$175 to \$295, maybe more. At my spas, the Ultimate Facial starts at \$195, as it is customized for the individual client. It goes up from there. Whatever you charge, I suggest you charge the highest price in your marketplace and at least double the price of a regular facial. If your highest priced facial or treatment is \$100, you must charge \$200 or more for this facial, accordingly with the design of the treatment. Then, your clients will see it for what it is, The ultimate, as they should. However, don't just create it, get everything together, set the price, put it on your menu and start waiting for appointments. First, you must train your front desk staff who perform your bookings to sell this facial for what it is—the best of the best anywhere. I suggest you allow them to experience the true facial. Then, design a script for them to follow and turn them loose. Their love of the experience will come through in their voice, and they will sell, sell, sell this service.

Second, you must market it to your clients, and to the media. Call in a professional photographer or take a high-resolution digital picture that reflects the relaxation and care the treatment provides and use it in your marketing. Design a postcard and/or an e-blast describing the Ultimate Facial, and then send it out to your current clientele. E-mail the picture with a press release to your area media and invite specific media persons to experience it. Once your very best esthetician performs this facial on them they will write about it profusely. What more effective publicity is there?



Use medium sized beauty globes to gently massage the face.

Then, market this facial directly to your employees—all of them. First train the estheticians to perform it, explaining its benefits to them and to the other spa employees: relaxation, treatment, client return, and results. Give all employees the experience through a limited time gift certificate. The estheticians get the experience of performing the service, and the employees get the ultimate experience and become sold on the unique nature of the facial. Getting your employees excited about the Ultimate Facial is the best marketing technique you can employ, as they talk up what they love in the spa. And this facial should be the one you want them to love most!

Lastly, include this facial in your spa marketing for packages offering it as the Ultimate Facial experience. Write the description dripping with relaxation and luxury, as well as stating its immediate results, and you will be rewarded with gift purchases galore.

I suggest you include a free kit of product samples with the facial as your only compromise to the price. I don't recommend discounting this service, ever. Market it well, and they will come!

## Those little extra touches

Every facial can be upgraded with more in-depth treatments, even the Ultimate Facial. For example, to take this facial to a complete head to toe experience and to further the results, offer a lymphatic drainage treatment with a compression unit as an excellent upgrade. A simultaneous foot reflexology session takes the treatment to new heights. An eye treatment is another potential add-on technique. Use a specific eye ampoule serum and/or mask and perform a specialty massage. Treatments for the hands and chest can also be developed as little extra touches. Many add-on services can be offered and are limited only to your skill and imagination in their design.

## Introduction to spa services

This extended and luxurious facial introduces your client to many of your spa modalities while providing a beautiful finish to the face. But one of its very best aspects is the opportunity it presents to introduce clients to treatments you perform that can enhance and treat their skin. When clients ask about the treatment and its obvious results, you, the wise and well-trained esthetician will take the opportunity to recommend an appropriate custom treatment program. The program may include an alpha hydroxy acid and microdermabrasion exfoliation series for hyperpigmentation and aging, light emitting diode (LED) and ultrasound for rosacea and sensitivity, lymphatic drainage and microcurrent for aging skin and laxity and beta hydroxy acids and LED for acne, as well as many other modalities and combinations of treatments you know will be of benefit to the client. The pleased and relaxed client will be prepared to commit to a program designed for him or her, as you have proven yourself in a relaxing and nourishing setting to be an expert in your field.

Yes, the Ultimate Facial takes time to create and add to the menu. Consider, however, the rewards it will bring you, your estheticians and your spa if it is well

designed, mastered by your staff and properly marketed. The rewards will include a higher income for everyone and an enhanced reputation for your spa.



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