

A SMARTER FUTURE

From virtual reality fitness to facials using the latest in laser technology, spas worldwide are embracing a smarter approach to wellness. Words: Elizabeth Bennett

Fancy an hour in a pressurised chamber breathing pure oxygen? Or perhaps strapping on a pair of VR glasses for an immersive workout experience? Welcome to the world of futuristic spas, where boundaries are being pushed and the latest technology is being utilised in the name of health and wellbeing.

Longevity is the big buzzword this year. Experiences claim to offer instant results alongside life-extending benefits, with treatments increasingly leaning on touch-free technology and advances in biohacking research. At Six Senses Ibiza's new RoseBar, a 5,000sq ft wellness space dubbed a one-of-a-kind longevity club, you can book in for a cryotherapy session to help reduce inflammation, an infrared sauna to aid cell renewal or ozone therapy to help support a stronger immune system.

Forget the simple spa check-in, advances in diagnostic testing are paving the way for medical-style consultations and doctor-prescribed treatment programmes. At Aman's new New York property on the corner of Fifth Avenue, their 11th floor Assessment

Studio can generate a detailed diagnostic report based on 93 factors using electromagnetic scanning technology, while at Mandarin Oriental in Geneva, medical sleep clinic CENAS are providing guests with overnight polysomnographic tests to diagnose sleep issues and prescribing subsequent slumber-inducing programmes. Elsewhere, virtual reality is pushing the boundaries of fitness training while facials are incorporating high-tech lasers, LED technology and micro-needling.

"In a post-pandemic world, the appetite is certainly there. We've re-assessed our habits fuelling a new understanding and awareness of lifestyle choices including how we travel," Olivia Houghton, health & wellness lead at strategic foresight consultancy The Future Laboratory, says. Travellers are choosing wellbeing-focused trips more than ever and increasingly they want science-backed, health-focused and results-driven solutions. "People are prioritising prevention and seeking expertise, evidence and certification from their experiences," she adds.

FOUR TREATMENTS TO TRY

Virtual reality fitness

Fitness is becoming gamified with devices that combine stationary fitness equipment with virtual worlds accessed by VR glasses. With ICAROS technology you can fly through the Dolomites, dive into an underwater paradise or fight dragons while you work out. Strap into the horizontally positioned machine, pop on the VR glasses and fly, swim or drive into a parallel universe. Not only does this effectively activate muscles — particularly targeting the torso and upper body — but it's also said to enhance balance, improve coordination and work up a serious sweat. Designed for use in orthopaedic and neurological therapy, as well as rehabilitation, it's great post-injury, but any tech-minded fitness fan will reap benefits. *Available at The Original Mayr, Austria, where a one-week programme costs from £1,875. original-mayr.com*

Hands-free massage

Amid a boom in touch-free tech, health-focused massage treatments are on the up. With Ballancer Pro's touchless compression therapy suit, you lie back and relax while the 24 air pockets gently and systematically work on every area of the body to encourage lymphatic drainage. The lymphatic system forms a part of our immune system and plays a vital role in ensuring our body drains waste products as efficiently as possible. Alongside an immune system boost, you should notice reduced water weight and improved skin tone. *Available at Carillon Miami Wellness Resort, Miami, from £130. carillonhotel.com*

Oxygen and ozone therapy

Oxygen-based treatments can help improve cellular function, reduce inflammation and promote healing to boost circulation and energy levels. The benefits of extra oxygen can be reached via an oxygen chamber with hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) or intravenously with ozone therapy. The former involves wearing an oxygen mask and lying in the specially designed chamber where 93-97% pure oxygen is released and the atmospheric pressure is increased. This forces the blood plasma to carry more oxygen to the tissue than is normally possible, stimulating the regeneration of cells. Ozone therapy is done by drawing blood, mixing it with ozone gas and re-administering it into your bloodstream, increasing the oxygen present in the body. *Both available at Kamalaya Wellness Sanctuary, Thailand, from £95. kamalaya.com*

The high-tech facial

Facials are harnessing the latest laser technology such as BYONIK, the world's first laser guided by pulse. With every heartbeat it works both at a topical and skin cellular level to rejuvenate, repair and heal. This antibacterial red light boosts collagen synthesis, while near infrared light enhances detoxification and skin metabolism, and the application of an hyaluronic acid gel works on hydration. The treatment is suitable for all ages, skin types, conditions and tones, and it leaves skin plumper, brighter and more lifted. *Available with Katie England at NoMad, London, where a 1h30m session costs £450. thenomadhotel.com*

IN FOCUS: TECH-LED BEAUTY BRANDS

Dcypher

Getting the wrong foundation shade is a thing of the past with Dcypher's one-of-a-kind formulas. The AI Skin Tone Scanner captures a 3D measurement of your skin tone via your phone camera, which the AI algorithm uses to calculate a unique recipe. Then it's sent for mixing, with the world-first technology creating your exact shade with meticulous accuracy. dcypher.me

Haeckels

With natural ingredient shortages and sustainable sourcing hard to come by, Haeckels is exploring the field of biotech beauty. Using fermentation processes, it's making nature-identical ingredients in the lab like the Spiraglow range, made from a skin-nourishing algae grown from spirulina while their Rewild Body Block uses Palmless, a lab-grown alternative to palm oil. haeckels.co.uk

Current Body Skin

Utilising clinically-proven technologies, Current Body Skin's high-performance beauty devices give you the dermatologist experience at home. The LED Light Therapy Face Mask, the world's most powerful of its kind, uses a combination of red light waves to accelerate the production of new collagen and near-infrared rays to boost blood circulation. currentbody.com