



Leslie Glover  
is the V.P. of

Aspen Spa Management Corp.

She is the head conceptual designer  
and has worked on many  
Resort and Destination Spas both  
nationally and internationally.

She supervises the staff of  
International Trainers that assume  
the responsibilities of training  
Spa personnel in the latest  
Facial and Body treatments.

The menu of services offered to spas  
include fifteen dry massages,  
ten massages under cascade using a  
vichy shower and the latest in  
Facial treatments incorporating  
lymphatic drainage, stimulation  
of acupuncture points,  
and chromatherapy.

Information:

[www.aspenspamanagement.com](http://www.aspenspamanagement.com)

Tel: 954-229-8353

# LETTING GO... of the Wrap

By Leslie Glover

**I**t is rare to find a service offered on a spa menu in the body treatments category outside of the "wrap". Our knowledge and research is constantly growing and improving yet our treatment menus rarely evolve to reflect these changes. What is the reason? Many times, treatments on spa menus are copied over and over again without being re-evaluated for their inherent therapeutic value. All too often they are not adapted to meet the various demands of different cultures, environments and markets.

Because the skin is the largest organ of the human body, there is a large amount of surface area that can be

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treated, and because skin can absorb nutrients and minerals, it is a superb canvas to use for product osmosis.

Through empirical scientific studies it has been determined that one of the best delivery methods of products is topical application to the skin.

This is commonly understood and agreed upon. The creators of the "wrap" understood this fact, but their logic stopped there. With the intent of increasing product penetration, the wrap creators thought it appropriate to warm the body by wrapping it in a non-breathable material so that the pores would open and the treatment would become more effective. WRONG! Just

## OFTEN TREATMENTS ON SPA MENUS ARE COPIED

think about this logically for a second. When the body temperature rises, perspiration occurs, and pores open slightly, yes-but why-because they are allowing sweat to be released. When sweat is being excreted through the pores, nothing else can enter. For example; think of a tube of toothpaste, when you squeeze the toothpaste, try pushing another product into the tube at the same time; almost impossible.

Not only is the wrap fundamentally incorrect, it is not a pleasant experience for most. Claustrophobia has increased due to stress and is constantly rising worldwide. Wrapping clients so tight that their arms and legs are not free to move is not a fun or relaxing experience, even for those who are not claustrophobic. Let's also consider that many spas in the United States target women between the ages of 35 to 65; generally women in this age range are not looking for any help increasing their body temperature.

I have had many spa experiences in my lifetime; however there is one that stands out among all the rest, you guessed it, the wrap. On a weekend retreat with my mother to a spa in southern California I decided to sign up for a body treatment to help alleviate my dry - at the beach all summer-sun drenched skin. After checking into the spa, I was given my key and sent to the locker room to

change into my robe. I made my way to the lounge where I waited excitedly for my treatment. A young man came to get me, dressed up like a boy scout, and asked me to follow him. He led me into a treatment room that contained a basic massage table, sink and shower.

The young man told me that he would leave the room and come back in a few minutes. No problem I thought, even though he had not given me any directions as to what I should do. Should I get on the table and if so which way should I lay, what should I do with my robe, should I remove my underwear or leave it on? Due to the fact that I am not shy or modest I made my own decision and removed my robe, took my underwear off, and jumped on the plastic covered table in the prone position and pulled the sheet over my naked body.

I heard a knock and the therapist re-entered the room. He uncovered my lower body and took a fist full of some kind of gooey salt based concoction and slapped it on one leg at a time. Then he covered my lower body and proceeded to my upper body. He asked me to turn over and he repeated the same steps on my backside.

Once the product was applied he took one layer of the plastic and another layer of blanket and wrapped me up nice and tight. He told me to relax and he stepped out of

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## THE WRAP IS FUNDAMENTALLY INCORRECT

the room! Leaving me mummified and unable to itch my nose or ask for help if my claustrophobic anxiety got a hold of me.

As I lay there, with the salty concoction on my body I began to feel a slight stinging sensation all over; the salt product was starting to irritate my skin and I was beginning to get uncomfortably hot. I lay there waiting, hoping, praying the young man would return soon and rescue me from this nightmare. After what seemed to be centuries, he returned and began removing the blanket and plastic wrap. After he set me free, he told me to get up off the table and rinse off in the shower then return to the locker room.

Once I peeled myself from the sticky plastic covered table and waddled over to the shower, I began the lengthy process of removing all of the greasy product. As I stood there trying my best to remove the salty residue, I thought to myself, "I can't believe I just paid for this!"

So, why is this treatment of torture not protested by the client? It may be partly because we are living in a society that promotes mediocrity which is causing more and more people to become preconditioned to go with the flow and not think outside the box.

Another reason why wraps go un-protested and remain on service menus may be due to the fact that many new spa goers are made to think they do not have options as clients and are a bit intimidated by the world of spa or may be afraid to try something new.

People are also used to the status quo and continue to offer many treatments just because they have always been around... and people continue requesting these treatments because there are no new alternatives.

Now that we have discussed the problems associated with the wrap, let's discuss an alternative to the wrap which provides efficient and effective results as well as a pleasant holistic experience. One of my personal favorites is the "dynamic envelopment" created by world renowned hotel and spa consultant, Raoul Andrews Sudre, over thirty years ago.

The "dynamic envelopment" is a protocol in which a product is chosen for its specific therapeutic properties such as different types of muds, clays, exfoliants, trace elements, oils, etc... and is applied to the surface area of the skin.

The product, depending on what it is, can be warmed in a warming device, however most products used in a dynamic envelopment do not need more than a slight agitation between the therapist's hands. The product is applied to the body using basic massage techniques following specific trajectories. Massaging the product into the skin stimulates circulation and promotes osmosis, not to mention it feels one hundred percent better than being wrapped up like a mummy. A vichy shower or wet treatment table should be used in order to perform this treatment to ensure optimal guest comfort.

This scenario makes it impossible for the service provider to leave the room during the treatment; allowing the client to feel special, well served, totally pampered and that they are getting the most for what they paid for.

I would ask you to take a good long look at your spa menu; if you see a wrap or another bland treatment that was copied from another menu and not chosen specifically to serve your market and clients then take a step back to evaluate. Challenge yourself to think outside of the box and offer something different, unique and pleasurable for your clients. ■