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**The Zen Ten
Easy Ways to Green Your Spa**

A spa is a sanctuary of peace, a respite from the stress of the world, and a place to focus on healing and wellness. Enhance this message by showing your customers that you're not only concerned with soul-soothing techniques, but that you have a stylish sense of eco-consciousness as well.

Being green doesn't necessarily mean *spending* all your green—the practice can actually save you money. "Often, it can simply be about changing old habits and looking at your spa with fresh eyes," says Randi Ragan, founder of GreenBliss EcoSpa in Los Angeles. "By incorporating some of these practices, you'll be supporting the health of your clients as well as the planet."



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Ragan suggests the following ways to get started:

- 1. Make an honest and thorough evaluation of your garbage and recycling policies.**
Make sure you're separating your trash components—glass, plastic and paper. Take used appliance batteries to recycling centers. If you serve food, look into ways to donate edible leftovers to homeless shelters and food banks. Or, set up special bins to donate compost to a nearby community garden. Recycle used waiting-room magazines rather than tossing them into the regular trash. Hold training sessions with your staff to raise awareness about where garbage should go and why.
- 2. Use soy and beeswax candles instead of paraffin.**
The latter is a petroleum by-product that burns "dirty." Make sure any scented varieties use 100% essential oils rather than artificial fragrances, which can be toxic for the environment and your guests.
- 3. Cut paper usage.**
It's a simple step with a huge impact. Use cloth instead of paper towels. Email promotions rather than printing fliers. If you must use paper, make sure it's recycled. Set your printer to a double-sided setting, and switch to paper-free billing and invoicing, which most banks and companies now offer.
- 4. Replace all incandescent light bulbs with long-lasting, energy-saving compact fluorescent light.**
Install timers on light switches, so they'll go off automatically if no one is using a room. The energy savings add up.
- 5. Use eco-friendly cleaning supplies.**
Detergents and cleansers that are biodegradable and unscented are better for the planet, kinder to your linens and gentler to your clients' skin.
- 6. Read product labels.**
If you can't switch to organic skin and bodycare products, find out what's in the ones you're using. Natural compounds should outweigh artificial ingredients, preservatives and fragrances.
- 7. Gradually green your linens.**
Completely replacing all of your sheets and towels is a big investment—and could lead to more waste. So as demand requires you to order more, consider purchasing items made from organic cotton, bamboo or a combination of both. If using disposable sheets for body treatments, choose biodegradable versions instead of plastic, which will remain in landfills forever.
- 8. Decrease your water usage.**
You don't have to eliminate your wet rooms to make an impact. Installing aerators on all your faucets decreases the amount of water you use. Adding filters to all your showerheads can also cut the flow and reduce chemical residues.
- 9. Repaint each room with nontoxic products.**
Traditional paint is unhealthy in many respects. It continues to release volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into the air many years after its initial application. Select no-VOC paint instead.

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10. Install green flooring.

Those made from nylon and vinyl may contain toxins that are released into the air. Consider replacing these floors with nontoxic, natural alternatives such as cork, sustainable wood and organic linoleum from the flax plant.



Green Tip of the Month