

wellbeing

FUTURE *gazing*

What will spas of the future look like? To celebrate the 10th anniversary of One Spa in Edinburgh, futurologist Dr Ian Yeoman predicts eight top trends for 2021



1. I'M YOUNG AGAIN

Everyone is searching for the next non-surgical treatment for ageing skin, but imagine by 2021 if the ultimate treatment was reversing the ageing process and just getting younger. This may seem like science fiction, but in fact, in 2010 Harvard University medical scientists discovered how to slow down and reverse the ageing process in mice. This anti-ageing therapy could have a dramatic impact on the health and wellbeing of an ageing population and those consumers will pay a premium for such a product.

2. SELF-DIAGNOSIS AND SELF-REPAIRING SPORTSWEAR

Sports clothing will be impregnated with electro-responsive fabrics which will be able to monitor our health including our stress levels, pulse rate and blood count, according to futurist Dr Ian Pearson. And once a fault has been found, a cut or bruise for example, how about if the sportswear acted like medicine repairing that bruise or cut for you? Today, nanotechnology is incorporated into sports apparel to enable professional athletes to help heal minor scrapes. Agion antimicrobial technology is already used in shoes to keep them clean and help prevent athlete's foot. Nanotechnology could allow shirts to be made of fabric that can destroy airborne germs and pollutants. Such fabrics have already been created by Professor Juan Hinestroza of Cornell University who used nutrient-releasing patches on clothing during a sports match to replace the minerals lost by the body during sweating.

3. YOUR PERSONAL DO-EVERYTHING EXERCISE GYM

In 2021, spa goers won't need a range of different gym equipment whether it's the rowing machine, cross trainer or weights. This is because exercise machines will be able to reconfigure themselves into any form to be the ultimate multi-gym because of the concept of claytronics. Claytronics combines nanorobots and computer science to create tangible 3D objects that a user can interact with — more commonly called programmable matter — or your very own personalised gym machine.

4. MIRROR, MIRROR

By 2021 advances in medical technology will allow spa users to look into a mirror, and computer-aided diagnoses will advise them on appropriate health and beauty treatments, project facial tones and patterns and advice on topics from hair colour to lipstick and mascara. How? Research scientists at Harvard

University and MIT have developed a prototype mirror with a webcam able to diagnose and advise.

5. I-ROBOT PERSONAL TRAINER

The development of cyborg-style professional personal trainers is the field of futurist Ray Kurzweil who believes exponential improvements in technology will see the emerging of optical or quantum computers. These in turn could lead to the development of personal robots with their own emotions offering expert advice and able to make intelligent decisions as well as being a personal computer for analysis and performance.

6. ON THE BEACH IN BALI WHILE STILL IN YOUR URBAN SPA

In 2021, spa goers will wear special glasses to configure augmented reality overlays; instead of running on a treadmill they will be running the marathon in New York, or having their spa treatment in Bali instead of Birmingham. The glass panels found in a spa or gym will be able to recreate any environment. Ambient sounds and smells will be used to create a full dimensional experience with augmented visuals.

7. NANOTECHNOLOGY

According to the Future Foundation, nanotechnology is not a new discipline, merely one at the cutting edge of the possible. There are already a number of commercial applications including using nanoparticles of zinc oxide and titanium oxide in sunscreen to make the lotion invisible rather than the typical white cream. Research into producing electrochromic false nails is being undertaken which can change to any colour that the wearer chooses. These nails are formed by a number of different layers, sandwiched between which are transparent oxides; electrochromic polymers to create various colours; ion-storing polymers to maintain them; and an electrolyte which enables the layers to combine together to create the effect.

8. TREATMENTS TAILORED FOR THE EMERGING MARKETS

The influence of emerging markets will affect spas in two key areas. There will be those travelling from Asia and China who will seek treatments with strong Eastern and Asian influences and for example, an increased menu of authentic Ayurvedic treatments. However Spa Finder believes an explosion of outbound Asian tourism will also result in a new tourism demographic seeking luxury and Westernised spa experiences rather than Eastern treatments. Spas will have to cater to both of these markets. ●

Nanotechnology is incorporated into sports apparel to enable athletes to heal minor scrapes