

Robotic massage, binaural beats—these hotels offer high-tech wellness

All-natural treatments like aromatherapy and mud facials used to be all the rage. But now, top hotels around the world are offering something decidedly different.

By Jen Rose Smith

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Natural treatments and products have long been wellness buzzwords—think of aromatherapy sessions using plant-derived ingredients, or skin-smoothing immersions in mineral-rich volcanic mud. But now, a different approach is on the rise.

“What’s becoming more common is a model where everything is scientifically calibrated,” says Amy Larocca, author of the recent book *How to Be Well: Navigating Our Self-Care Epidemic, One Dubious Cure at a Time*, a skeptic’s take on wellness culture in the United States.

On a visit to the Manhattan health club Remedy Place, Larocca noticed treatments ranging from oxygen-rich hyperbaric chambers to clamshell-like light beds glowing red. “It’s a sort of high-tech experience, one that infiltrates the world of biohacking into the world of spas,” she says.

Now, such space-age wellness treatments are also appearing at hotels around the world, where guests can schedule treatments like robotic massage, intravenous nutrient drips, and cryotherapy facials.

“We’re seeing more guests turn to technology as a tool for self-care,” says Ara Patterson, the vice president of food, beverage, spa at Equinox Hotels, whose New York City spa is a leader in the high-tech wellness world. Even when tech doesn’t replace traditional treatments, Patterson noted, it can be a powerful supplement. “[It’s] the alchemy of high tech and high touch,” she says.

While some wellness treatments—high-tech or otherwise—can be fun and relaxing, Anne Chapas, a board-certified dermatologist in New York City, and a fellow at the American Academy of Dermatology, says it’s important to

be cautious. Take marketing language with a grain of salt, Chapas says, keeping in mind that some claims of benefits may not be vetted. And, be realistic about results.

“If you want something transformative, wait until you get home and meet with someone who’s going to work with you in the long term,” she says. Chapas also suggests steering clear of anything that could negatively impact your trip. “If you do any chemical peels, or things that are going to make your skin more sensitive, then you really shouldn’t do that on a sunny vacation,” she says.

Curious to try one of the space-age treatments trending around the world? Here’s how five hotels around the world are merging wellness with tech.

Euphoria Retreat, Greece

The tech: Cellular repair nanotech

Don’t be fooled by the spectacular forested backdrop of this wellness resort in Greece’s Peloponnese Islands. Guests here come not just for nature, but also for access to high-tech wellness interventions, like NanoVi, a device that purports to repair cells and slow aging.

Attendees at this summer’s Wellbeing Festival can try the tech, along with red-light therapy and metabolic testing analyzing your body’s oxygen and calorie use. “Biohacking is just finding technological or scientific ways to help the organism function,” says Euphoria Retreat founder Marina Efraimoglou, of the approach.

The rest of the year, the retreat offers themed programs interweaving tech and tradition. At Immunity Reset retreats, for example, travelers might follow acupuncture—an ancient, UNESCO-recognized practice originating in China—with ozone therapy, intravenous treatment, and scans intended to detect heavy metals and minerals. They might not be as different as they seem, says Efraimoglou: “Acupuncture is technology, too.”