

Face to Face with Your Fears

So you've got some great ideas on style and on bridging that awkward gap when you see a guy wearing the hoodie of your dreams, but now here comes a major hurdle—your first visit to a spa. Men are flocking to spas like never before. Enrique Ramirez, spa director at Face to Face Day Spa, located in the Flatiron district in New York City, says that 85 percent of his spa's patrons are men. While a spa treatment is supposed to be relaxing, men do not always know how to behave in spas, which can be kind of awkward and embarrassing for them, not to mention really uncomfortable for those around them. Here are 10 tips for guys from the Face to Face Day Spa, with all the information they'll need before heading to the spa:

1. *Have a close shave before a facial.* Although by no means a major requirement, it does make a difference to your facialist. A smooth beard area gives the aesthetician the opportunity to treat any signs of razor burn, ingrown hairs, or neck irritation caused by use of an old razor. To avoid irritation, though, don't shave immediately before heading out for a treatment; give your skin a couple of hours to calm down before going for a facial.
2. *Arrive 10 minutes early to your appointment.* Many spas require that you fill out an intake form before your scheduled treatment; you might be asked about medical conditions, allergies, or treatment preferences. Arriving early gives you enough time to fill out the form and have a stress-free check in. It also gives you time to change, freshen up, or decompress.

3. *I see London, I see France*—at the spa, I may or may not see your underpants. Shy guys have a chance to keep on your tighty whities or go commando during a massage or body treatment. Whatever you choose, it will be fine with your professional spa technician—no need to explain!
4. *Shower before a massage*. Another case for arriving early: Most spas have amazing showers. Getting there early gives you plenty of time to hit the shower, and a squeaky clean scent will make your masseur want to rub instead of run!
5. *The tipping part*: You've been rubbed, massaged, exfoliated, or otherwise pampered within an inch of your life. Be sure to show your appreciation to your spa technician with a 15 to 20 percent tip. Your spa technician will appreciate your generosity and will take extra-special care of your face next time you're in the spa.
6. *Hold the phone!* Spa owners and aestheticians work hard to create a soothing, relaxing, and mellow environment to help soothe your frazzled nerves and tame your tension, and nothing ruins that calm like the annoying and piercing sound of a mobile phone. Show that you're a guy with good manners and shut it off.
7. *Don't apply body lotion before waxing*. Okay, squeamish guys stop reading now, hirsute honeys do continue. Smooth, clean skin will make your back waxing less painful and make it easier to remove the strip wax. Also, it's very important that you inform the technician if you are using Retin-A or Accutane, as this will prevent an awkward moment when your skin is being removed along with your hair.
8. *Keep voices down when entering the spa*. Calm and reflective tones are welcomed! You're not at the Super Bowl.
9. *Be open with your spa technician*. Inform your technician of any bodily, mental, or skin issues or imbalances such as allergies, medications that may affect your skin, torn ligaments, claustrophobia, and so on, so that they can customize your massage, facial, or nail treatment.

- 10.** *Don't work out after a spa treatment.* You've just paid all that money to relax your muscles. Why would you want to then go and tense them up again? Also, sweating before showering off any body oil from the spa treatment can cause clogged pores, leading to breakouts.