

Beyond the Bathroom: Home Spa & Wellness White Paper

Sauna, Steam, Cold Plunge, Soaking Tubs, Fire and Water: What the Research Says, and What It Takes to Build Them to Last

A Report on Home Spas and Wellness Spaces, Indoors and Out

Written by Bryan Blair, Senior Industry Specialist

Published: Fall 2026

Target Audience: Homeowners planning a home spa or wellness space, and the architects, designers and trade professionals who build them

1. Executive Summary

Wellness has moved out of the bathroom and into the rest of the house: a sauna in the spare room, a steam room off the primary suite, a cold plunge by the pool, a fire-and-water bowl in the backyard. Wellness real estate is the fastest-growing part of the global wellness economy. It was worth \$548 billion in 2024, up from \$225 billion in 2019, and is forecast to reach \$1.1 trillion by 2029 ([Global Wellness Institute](#)). One home sauna maker reports that California is now its biggest market, ahead of Florida and Texas, and that buyers want recovery, sleep and longevity, not warmth ([Peak Saunas](#)).

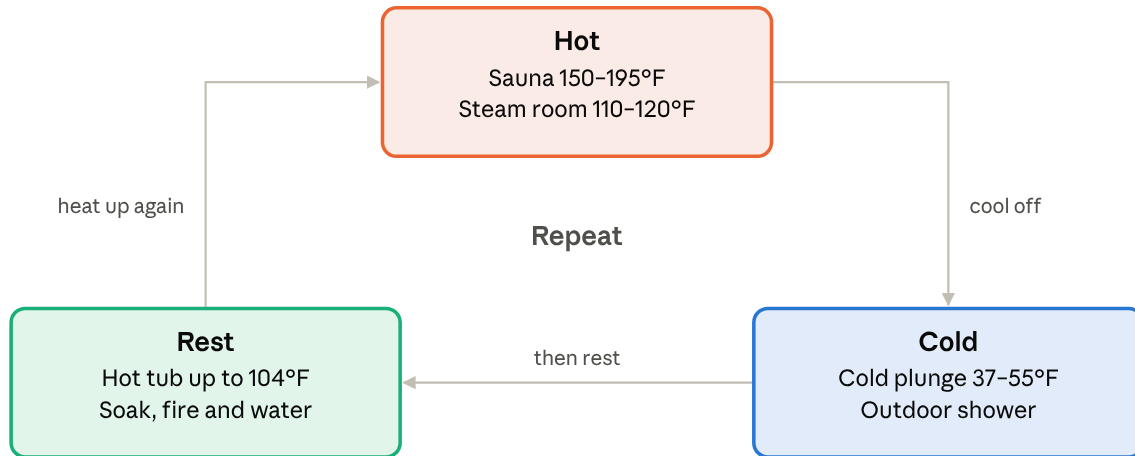
This report makes four arguments:

- **The new idea is a circuit, not a single feature.** Heat, cold, rest, repeat: sauna or steam, then a cold plunge or outdoor shower, then a quiet seat by fire or water. Plan the whole circuit at once, even if you build it in stages, so every gas line, drain, water line and circuit goes in before the stone and tile.
- **The health research is promising, but it is not a prescription.** Large studies link regular sauna and hot-bath use with lower heart disease risk, and cold water with less stress and better sleep. Most of that research is observational or short term. Anyone with a heart condition, high blood pressure or a pregnancy should talk to a doctor first.
- **Every one of these features is hot, wet, heavy, or all three.** A sauna runs 150 to 195°F. A steam room pushes vapor into every crack. A 66-gallon soaking tub holds about 550 pounds of water before anyone gets in. These spaces fail the way showers fail: at the details nobody sees.

- **One licensed team should plan the whole job.** Tile, stone, plumbing, gas, carpentry and waterproofing in one plan, with a licensed electrician brought in early for heaters, generators and pumps.

The short version: plan the whole circuit, check the health questions with your doctor, and build the hidden parts like they matter, because they do.

Hot, cold, rest, repeat: the home spa circuit



The home spa circuit · 3 stops

Heat up in the sauna or steam room, cool off in a cold plunge or outdoor shower, then rest by the hot tub, a fire or the sound of water, and start again.

2. What the Health Research Says

The strongest evidence is for regular, traditional heat: sauna and hot-water bathing. The evidence for steam and cold is thinner and mostly short term. Almost all of it shows an association, not proof that the heat or cold caused the benefit.

Practice	What the studies found	How strong	Source
Traditional sauna, 176–212°F, 10–20% humidity, 5–20 minutes	2,315 Finnish men followed about 20 years. Four to seven sessions a week was linked to 48% lower risk of fatal heart disease than once a week, and about 65% lower risk of dementia	Long-term but observational; men only	Netherlands Heart Journal ; Mayo Clinic Proceedings review
Soaking in a hot tub or bath	30,076 Japanese adults followed about 20 years. Near-daily bathing was linked to 28% lower cardiovascular disease and 26% lower stroke risk than twice a week or less. Water temperature made no clear difference	Long-term but observational	Heart, 2020
Steam room, 104–122°F, near 100% humidity	Short-lived relief for congestion. Lung, skin and blood-pressure benefits are not established	Limited	News-Medical, 2026
Cold plunge or cold shower, 45–59°F	Review of 11 trials and 3,177 people: less stress 12 hours later, better sleep and quality of life, and 29% fewer sick days for cold-shower users. Inflammation rose right after the plunge	Randomized but short term; few women	PLOS One, 2025

Practice	What the studies found	How strong	Source
Heat and cold together	Danish winter swimmers who alternated sauna and cold water handled cold better and made more body heat when chilled	Very small: 8 men vs 8 controls	University of Copenhagen, 2021

Most of the sauna research comes from traditional Finnish saunas. The Mayo Clinic Proceedings review says plainly that it did not evaluate infrared or steam rooms.

Who should be careful

Talk to a doctor before using heat or cold if any of these apply:

- **Heart conditions.** Recent heart attack, unstable angina, uncontrolled high blood pressure, severe aortic stenosis, or dizziness on standing ([Mayo Clinic Proceedings review](#)).
- **Heart rhythm or circulation problems with cold.** Cold water triggers a jolt of adrenaline that spikes heart rate and blood pressure. Harvard Health cautions people with atrial fibrillation, Raynaud's, peripheral artery disease or any heart disease history ([Harvard Health](#)).
- **Pregnancy.** The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission warns against water above 102°F in the first three months ([CPSC](#)).
- **Alcohol and drowsy medications.** Heat plus alcohol raises heart risk and can cause drowsiness and drowning in a tub ([CPSC](#)).
- **Diabetes.** Heat can speed up insulin absorption ([News-Medical](#)).
- **Fever or acute illness.** Skip the session.

Hot tubs should never run above 104°F, and 100°F is considered safe for healthy adults ([CPSC](#)).

The author's view. I'm a tile setter, not a doctor. My job is to build the room so it is safe to use: a sauna door that opens out and never locks, a bench that won't burn you, a steam head placed away from your feet, a floor that isn't slick, and a plunge with a cover. The health decisions belong to you and your doctor.

3. Heat: Saunas and Steam Rooms

A sauna and a steam room are opposite rooms. A sauna is very hot, mostly dry and built of wood. A steam room is cooler, completely wet and built of tile and stone. Build one with the other's materials and it fails.

	Traditional sauna	Steam room
Air temperature	150–195°F	110–120°F
Humidity	Dry, 10–20%, with bursts of steam from water ladled on the stones	Near 100%
Walls and ceiling	Wood, with a taped foil vapor barrier behind it	Tile or stone over cement board and a vapor-tight membrane; ceiling sloped 2 inches per foot
Floor	Tile or stone under a removable wood duckboard, with a tile cove at the walls	Mortar bed sloped 1/4 inch per foot to the drain, flood-tested before tile
Heat source	Electric, wood-burning or combination heater	Steam generator sized to the room
Power	Dedicated 240V circuit for an electric heater	Dedicated circuit for the generator
Biggest risk	Wrong materials in the hot room: glue, varnish, exposed metal	Vapor driving through a membrane seam into the framing

Saunas: traditional, infrared, indoor and outdoor

Traditional (Finnish) saunas heat the air with a stove full of rocks. Water on the rocks makes a wave of steam the Finns call *löyly*. This is the type behind almost all of the health research in Section 2.

Infrared saunas warm the body with heat panels at a lower air temperature. They are popular, easy to place and often plug in, but they have far less research behind them.

Custom indoor saunas are cut to fit a spare room, closet, garage corner or primary suite. Common choices:

- **Wood:** clear cedar, Alaskan yellow cedar, Nordic spruce, hemlock, aspen or dark thermo-wood. Benches in abachi, aspen or basswood, which stay cool to sit on.
- **Benches:** one to three tiers, straight, L or U, with floating benches, backrests and loungers.
- **Lights:** heat-rated and kept low, such as LED under benches or a fiber-optic star ceiling.
- **Heater:** electric, wood-burning, or a combination heater that adds steam, run from a dial, a panel or a phone.
- **Extras:** salt walls, aromatherapy, built-in sound, and accessible layouts with wider doors and grab bars.

Backyard saunas such as barrel saunas arrive ready-made. They need a solid, level base of concrete, pavers or stone, and an electric model needs a 240V, 40- to 45-amp circuit ([Almost Heaven](#)).

A sauna built to last has:

- A foil vapor barrier behind the wood, with every seam taped
- Hidden stainless fasteners, so no hot metal touches skin
- Clear, knot-free bench boards with rounded edges
- No putty, glue, paint or varnish in the hot room
- Wood that settles in the room before install, with room to move
- Vents placed for fresh air
- A door that opens outward and never locks

Field note from the author. People are surprised when I tell them there is no tile inside a real sauna. At sauna temperatures, tile gets hot enough to burn you, and wood stays comfortable to touch. The one exception is the floor, which is the coolest part of the room. That is where tile or stone belongs, with a cove where it meets the wall so the room mops out clean.

Steam rooms: a shower that never stops pushing

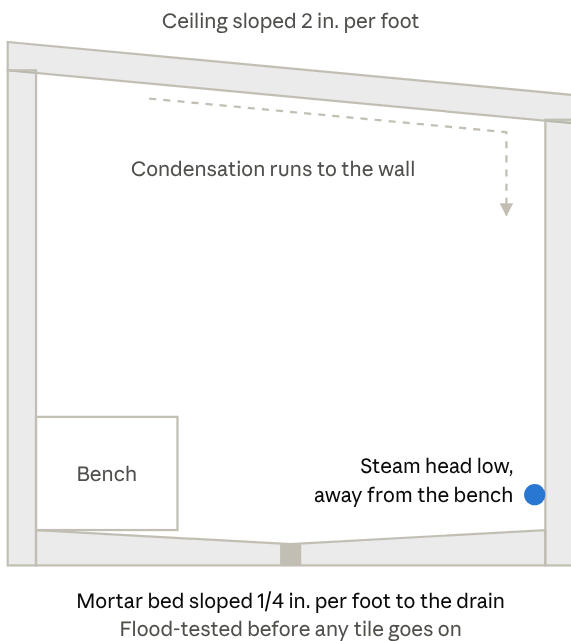
A steam shower is a regular shower closed in to the ceiling with a steam generator added. A steam room is built only for steam. Either way, steam is harder on a building than any shower. Hot vapor is driven into the walls under pressure, and it finds every pinhole, seam and screw.

The Tile Council of North America method for a steam room (SR614) calls for:

- **A continuous, vapor-tight waterproof membrane.** If the membrane lets through more than 0.5 perms of vapor and the room is used continuously, a second vapor retarder is required behind it ([International Masonry Institute](#)).
- **A sloped ceiling**, 2 inches per foot, so condensation runs to the walls instead of dripping on the bather.
- **A pre-sloped mortar-bed floor** at 1/4 inch per foot, with a shower pan membrane and a two-stage drain.
- **Stiff walls.** Steel studs at least 20 gauge, no more than 16 inches apart.

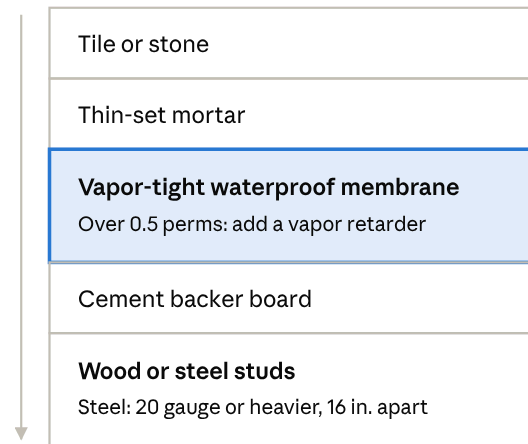
A steam room is built to keep vapor out of the walls

The room, side view



The wall, layer by layer

Steam pushes from the tile toward the framing



TCNA steam room method SR614,
via the International Masonry Institute

Steam room cutaway · room and wall layers

The membrane is the layer that matters most: everything in front of it gets wet, and everything behind it must stay dry.

The generator is sized to the room's volume and wall materials, since stone and tile soak up more heat than glass. Current models such as the [ThermaSol PRO Series III](#) add quick start-up and self-flushing to fight mineral buildup. Place the steam head low on the wall and away from the bench and feet, since steam is a common cause of scald burns.

Popular steam add-ons include aromatherapy, color-changing chromotherapy lights, built-in speakers and a heated stone bench. A heated bench uses a thin electric mat under the tile, so it has to be planned before the bench is built.

Field note from the author. We build steam rooms the old-school way: a fully waterproofed room, a sloped ceiling, and a mortar-bed floor that is flood-tested before any tile goes on. A steam room that leaks does it quietly, inside the wall, every single day it is used.

4. Cold: Plunges, Cold Showers and the Contrast Circuit

Cold is the other half of the circuit: heat up, cool off, rest, and repeat. Home cold plunges typically run 37 to 55°F. The studies in Section 2 used water at 59°F or colder for 3 to 20 minutes, and cold showers of 30 to 90 seconds ([Harvard Health](#)). Start warmer and shorter, and clear it with a doctor first.

Four ways to add cold

Option	What it is	What it needs
Outdoor or spa shower	Real hot and cold water on a tile or stone wall, steps from the sauna	Hot and cold supply, a drain that keeps up, weather-rated stone and setting materials
Plug-in plunge tub	A self-contained tub with its own chiller and filter; some chill to 37°F	A level base, a dedicated GFCI-protected circuit, a hose bib and drain nearby, and air around the chiller
Built-in plunge pool	A small, deep tiled pool with a chiller, inside or out	Structure, waterproofing, plumbing, a permit, and California's pool-safety features (Section 7)
Cold shower setting	A cold rinse at the end of any shower	Nothing new. It is the cheapest cold therapy there is

The cold-shower option is not a joke. In the review of 11 trials, it was the cold-shower group that took 29% fewer sick days ([PLOS One](#)).

What a plunge asks of the house

- **Weight.** Water weighs about 8.3 pounds per gallon. A 100-gallon plunge holds roughly 830 pounds of water before anyone climbs in. On a deck, balcony or upper floor, have the structure checked first.

- **A level, drained pad.** Water will spill every time someone gets in and out. Slope the surround away from the house and the tub.
- **Easy filling and emptying.** A hose bib close by and a place for the water to go make the weekly chore easy.
- **A non-slip surround.** Wet feet, cold hands and a fast heart rate are a bad mix on slick tile. Choose a textured, slip-rated surface.
- **A cover.** It keeps the water clean and cold, and keeps small children out.

The author's view. A plug-in plunge is a good appliance. What it needs from a contractor is a proper home: a level spot, tile or stone around it, water and a drain close by, and a licensed electrician for the circuit. Set one on the lawn with an extension cord and it will not last, and neither will the lawn.

5. Soak and Rest: Tubs, Hot Tubs, Fire and Water

The rest stage of the circuit is where people spend the most time: a deep soak, a hot tub at night, or a seat by a fire with the sound of water. That last part is not just mood. A 2021 study in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* found natural sounds lowered stress and improved mood, and water sounds did the most for positive emotions and overall health ([Carleton University](#)).

Soaking tubs

Japanese-style soaking tubs (*ofuro*) are deep and compact, so you sit with water up to your shoulders. Stone resin tubs hold heat much longer than acrylic. This is the kind of daily hot soak behind the Japanese study in Section 2.

Plan for the weight. A 66-gallon tub holds about 550 pounds of water, and a 79-gallon tub about 660 pounds, before the tub and the bather. On an upper floor, check the framing first. A floor-mounted tub filler needs its supply lines run through the floor before the tile goes down.

Hot tubs

A hot tub should never run above 104°F ([CPSC](#)). To make one look built in, face the sides, steps and coping in tile or stone, with waterproofing behind it so water stays out of the frame. A hot tub also needs a dedicated, GFCI-protected circuit and a shutoff within sight of the tub, installed by a licensed electrician. A permitted spa in California also triggers the pool-safety rules in Section 7.

Outdoor showers and pool baths

An outdoor shower is the bridge between the sauna and the plunge, or between the pool and the house. Build it with real hot and cold water, a drain that keeps up, and stone that handles sun and weather. Plan where the water goes before the pad is poured.

A pool or cabana bath keeps wet feet out of the house. Build it like any indoor bath, with a mortar-bed shower and real waterproofing.

Fire and water features

- **Fire-and-water bowls.** Flame on top and water spilling over the rim. A 30-inch copper bowl like the [Outdoor Plus Maya](#) burns 65,000 BTU on natural gas or propane. It needs a gas line, a water line, and a pedestal of tile or stone.
- **Pondless waterfalls.** The sound of a stream with no open pond to clean. Water runs over rock into a hidden basin under the gravel, and the pump plugs into a GFCI outlet.
- **Water walls.** A sheet of water down stone, tile or glass mosaic, indoors in an entry or outside by the spa. Like any fountain, it is a shower that never turns off, so the basin and wall behind it must be fully waterproofed.
- **Gas fire pits.** A large burner such as a 140,000 BTU brass ring needs a gas line sized for its full load. An undersized line gives a weak, lazy flame.
- **Stone fireplaces.** A floor-to-ceiling stone surround, a raised hearth to sit on, and a wood mantel. Around real fire, stone and tile go on noncombustible backing with heat-rated setting materials.

A note on wood fires in Southern California. The South Coast Air Quality Management District bans wood-burning devices in new homes built since March 2009, limits what can be installed elsewhere, and enforces no-burn days from November through February. Its rule covers any permanently installed device that burns wood ([South Coast AQMD Rule 445](#)). Check before you buy a wood-burning fireplace or a wood-fired sauna stove. Gas and electric are the simpler choice here.

6. The Rest of the Wellness Home

The smaller upgrades are what make a wellness space get used every day. Most of them have to be planned before the walls close or the tile goes down. A few, like a smart mirror or a plug-in towel warmer, can go in on the last day if the budget allows.

Upgrade	What it does	Plan it before	Who does it
Heated floors and benches	Warm stone underfoot and under you, from a thin electric mat under the tile	The floor or bench is tiled	Tile setter; thermostat wiring by an electrician
Towel warmer	Warm, dry towels and a little heat in the room	The wall is closed, for hard-wired models	Plumber or tile setter; electrician for hard-wired
Digital shower control	Exact temperature and flow, with presets for each person	The valve is roughed in and waterproofed	Plumber; electrician for the controller
Chromotherapy and mood lighting	Color and dimmable light in the shower, steam room or sauna	The walls are closed	Electrician, with wet- or heat-rated fixtures
Built-in sound	Music or nature sounds inside the steam room or sauna	The walls are closed	Electrician or audio installer, with steam-rated speakers
Aromatherapy	Scented oil released into the steam	The steam generator is installed	Plumber, with the generator
Salt wall	Glowing salt panels in a sauna or rest room	The sauna wall is framed	Carpenter
Whole-house water filter	Takes out disinfectant taste and odor at every tap and shower	The main line is opened	Plumber
Exhaust ventilation	Clears steam and moisture after every use	The ceiling is closed	Electrician or HVAC installer
Grab-bar blocking and a bench	Safe footing and a place to sit, for every age	The waterproofing goes on	Carpenter and tile setter

Two notes on that table:

- **Water filters.** LADWP has switched its system from chlorine to chloramine disinfection ([LADWP](#)). Chloramine is harder to filter than chlorine, so ask for a whole-house system rated to remove it.
- **Salt walls.** They look beautiful. The health claims for salt rooms are not well studied, so buy one for the glow, not the cure.

For current products, retail prices and our installed prices for heated floors, towel warmers, smart mirrors, digital showers and steam add-ons, see our [Latest Trends and Products](#) page.

7. Building It Right: Hot, Wet and Heavy

Every feature in this report fails the same way a shower fails: at the hidden details. The rules from our [2026 Wet-Area Remodeling White Paper](#) still apply: a solid base, a continuous barrier, and a test before the finish goes on.

Feature	How it fails	How to prevent it
Steam room	Vapor pushes through a membrane seam and rots the framing	Continuous vapor-tight membrane, sloped ceiling, flood-tested mortar-bed floor
Sauna	Moisture behind the wood; finishes and glues that cook in the heat	Taped foil vapor barrier, bare wood, hidden stainless fasteners, maker's heater clearances
Soaking tub or plunge	Weight sags the floor; spills soak the subfloor or patio	Structural check, waterproofed surround sloped away from the tub and the house
Hot tub surround	Water gets behind the stone and into the frame	Waterproofing behind the tile and coping, with a path for water to drain
Fountain or water wall	A slow leak that never stops, into whatever sits below	Floated mortar bed, full waterproofing, flood test before finish

Feature	How it fails	How to prevent it
Fire bowl, fire pit or fireplace	Weak flame from an undersized gas line; heat damage behind the stone	Gas line sized for the burner, noncombustible backing, heat-rated setting materials
Outdoor patio and circuit	Water runs toward the house; damp soil invites termites	Slope every surface away from the foundation; waterproof anything that touches a wall

Power: bring the electrician in on day one

A full home spa can add several new circuits at once:

- A dedicated 240V circuit for an electric sauna heater (a backyard barrel sauna calls for 40 to 45 amps)
- A dedicated circuit for the steam generator
- A dedicated 120V, 15-amp circuit for a plug-in plunge like the [Plunge All-In](#)
- A dedicated GFCI-protected circuit and a shutoff within sight of a hot tub
- Thermostats for heated floors and benches, GFCI outlets for pumps, and low-voltage power for electronic fire ignition

Add those up before anything is framed. Some homes will need a bigger electrical panel, and it is far cheaper to learn that at the planning stage than after the stone is set. All of this work belongs to a licensed C-10 electrician.

Permits and California rules

- **Pools, spas and plunge pools.** When a permit is issued for a new or remodeled pool or spa at a single-family home, California requires at least two of seven drowning-prevention features. The choices include an enclosure that separates the pool from the house, removable mesh fencing, a safety cover, door and window exit alarms, self-closing door latches, and a water-entry alarm ([California Health and Safety Code 115922](#)).
- **Wood fires.** See the South Coast AQMD note in Section 5.
- **Licensing.** In California, anyone doing \$1,000 or more in labor and materials, or work that needs a permit, must hold a contractor's license. Check it at the [CSLB License Check](#), and make sure the license classifications match the work: tile, plumbing, carpentry, electrical.

Five questions to ask before you build

1. What membrane or vapor barrier goes behind the steam room or sauna, and how are the seams and penetrations sealed?
2. Who sizes the heater or steam generator, and is the electrician's circuit in the plan before framing?
3. Will the floor, pan or basin be flood-tested, and will I get dated photos or video of it holding?
4. Can the floor or deck carry the full weight of the tub or plunge, filled, with people in it?
5. Which permits will be pulled, and which pool-safety features will we use?

8. Planning the Circuit, and What It Costs

A home spa can be built all at once or one piece at a time. Either way, plan the whole circuit first, so the gas lines, drains, water lines and electrical circuits for later stages go in before the stone and tile.

The order of work

1. **Decide the whole circuit:** heat, cold, soak and rest, and where each one goes.
2. **Check the health questions** with your doctor (Section 2).
3. **Check the site:** power, gas, water, drainage, and whether the floor or ground can carry the weight.
4. **Choose products and order long-lead items**, such as the sauna, generator, tub or plunge.
5. **Rough in everything hidden:** gas, water, drains, electrical, blocking and framing.
6. **Waterproof and test:** flood-test pans, basins and floors, with photos.
7. **Finish:** tile, stone, wood, fixtures and the electrician's final connections.

What it costs, 2026

Retail prices are the maker's or an authorized dealer's listed price, checked October 2026. Installed prices are labor and setting materials from the Valley Tile & Plumbing [price list](#); the product itself is billed separately. Electrical work, framing and glass doors are priced separately.

Feature	Example product	Retail	Installed by Valley Tile (price list item)
Tiled steam room	ThermaSol PRO Series III generator	From \$4,435	\$14,800 tile, waterproofing and steam plumbing (C54-020) + \$1,480 generator install (C36-097)
Backyard barrel sauna	Almost Heaven Kuuma , seats 4–6	\$14,132	\$1,000 heater hookup (C36-101); tile or stone around it quoted on site
Custom indoor sauna	Cut to fit your room	Priced with your design	Install quoted per job (C6-051); heater hookup \$1,000 (C36-101); tile floor from \$13/sq ft (C54-062)
Heated stone bench	WarmlyYours TempZone bench mat + thermostat	\$99 mat + \$259 thermostat	\$1,080 mud-set bench (C54-041) + \$340 to heat it (C54-082)
Cold plunge	Plunge All-In	\$7,990 sale (\$9,990 list)	Quoted per job
Outdoor shower	Your valve, head and stone	Your choice	\$3,360 (C54-026)
Japanese soaking tub	Badeloft stone resin , 66 or 79 gal	\$3,590	\$1,480 (C36-094); floor-mount filler \$550 (C36-092)
Hot tub surround	Your spa, any dealer	Your choice	\$22/sq ft (C54-025)
Pool or cabana bath	Full bath by the pool	Your choice	\$19,200 package (C54-011)
Fire-and-water bowl	Outdoor Plus Maya 30"	\$3,800–\$6,280	\$5,440 (C54-019) + gas line \$18/ft (C36-040)
Pondless waterfall	Aquascape medium kit , 16 ft stream	\$3,055 kit	\$3,850 (C54-022)
Water wall	Built in place	Your stone or tile	\$4,960 (C54-023)

Feature	Example product	Retail	Installed by Valley Tile (price list item)
Gas fire pit	Warming Trends Crossfire , 140,000 BTU	\$649 burner	Gas line \$18/ft (C36-040); stone veneer \$18/sq ft (C54-088)
Stone fireplace	Stone surround, hearth and mantel	Your stone	Surround \$24/sq ft (C54-085); hearth \$30/sq ft (C54-086); wood mantel \$550 (C6-039)

Two example circuits, product plus installation, before electrical work and the materials you pick:

- **Backyard starter:** barrel sauna and outdoor shower, about \$18,492.
- **Indoor steam suite:** tiled steam room with generator, about \$20,715, before framing and the glass door.

Photos, specs and current prices for every item above are on our [Beyond the Bathroom](#) page.

9. Do Your Own Home Research

The best research on your home spa is the research you do in it. Four kinds of research went into this paper, and the last one belongs to you.

Who	What they study	Where it is in this paper
Scientists	Whether regular heat, cold and soaking are linked to better health	Section 2
The tile trade	How to build hot, wet rooms that don't leak or rot, such as the TCNA steam room method	Sections 3 and 7
Valley Tile & Plumbing	Which products are worth installing, their retail price, and what it costs to build them in, checked October 2026	Section 8 and our Beyond the Bathroom page

Who	What they study	Where it is in this paper
You	How you and your family actually use the space, and how you feel	This section

Step 1: Shop your spa on our page

Our [Beyond the Bathroom](#) page lists every feature in this paper: saunas, steam rooms, cold plunges, soaking tubs, fire and water. Each one has the maker’s link and photos, the retail price, and our installed price. Pick what fits your space, then call 818-705-TILE or text us photos of the space.

Step 2: Build it once

We plan the whole circuit with you, bring in the electrician early, waterproof and flood-test every wet area, and build it the way Section 7 describes.

Step 3: Keep a 30-day log

Each day, write down what you did and rate how you slept and how stressed you felt, from 1 (poor) to 5 (great). This is not a medical study. It is your own record of what you enjoy and what seems to help. If you ever feel dizzy, short of breath or have chest pain, stop and call your doctor.

Day	Hot: what and minutes	Cold: what and minutes	Rest or soak: minutes	Sleep last night (1-5)	Stress today (1-5)	Notes
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						

Print this page four times, one for each week.

Step 4: Tell us how it works

About 30 days after we finish, we'll call and ask how the space is working: what you use most, what you would change, and how the floors, drains and heater are holding up. With your permission, we'll share what homeowners tell us in the next edition of this paper, never with names or addresses. That is how our builds get better, and how the next family decides what to build.

10. Build the Circuit Once

Home wellness is here to stay, and the research gives people good reason to use these spaces often. They only help if they are safe and they last. The formula has not changed: the newest products on top, proven methods underneath, and a test before every finish.

For homeowners

- Plan the whole circuit, even if you build it in stages.
- Ask your doctor before you start a heat or cold routine.
- Treat every steam room, plunge, tub and water feature as a structural decision, not a finish choice.
- Bring the electrician in at the planning stage, not after the tile.
- Keep dated photos of the waterproofing, flood tests and rough-ins with your home records.

For professionals

- Never build a sauna with steam-room materials, or a steam room with sauna materials.
- Follow the TCNA steam room method: a vapor-tight membrane, a sloped ceiling and a flood-tested floor.
- Coordinate gas, water, drains and circuits before anything is framed.
- Tell clients plainly what the health research does and does not show.

The spaces built now will be used every morning and every night for decades. Build them once, and build them to last.

About the author

Bryan Blair has set tile since 1983 and owns Valley Tile & Plumbing in Northridge, California. He builds traditional mortar-bed showers, steam rooms and wet areas across the San Fernando Valley, Los Angeles and Ventura County. CA Lic. #990845: C-54 Tile, C-

36 Plumbing, C-6 Carpentry. Call 818-705-TILE (8453) or visit valleytileandplumbing.com.

Sources

Research and rules

- [Global Wellness Institute: Build Well to Live Well, June 2025](#)
- [Peak Saunas: Home Sauna Report, 2025–2026](#)
- [Netherlands Heart Journal: Sauna bathing, a warm heart proves beneficial, 2015](#)
- [Laukkanen, Laukkanen and Kunutsor: Health benefits of sauna bathing, Mayo Clinic Proceedings, 2018](#)
- [Ukai et al.: Habitual tub bathing and cardiovascular disease, Heart, 2020](#)
- [Cain et al.: Effects of cold-water immersion on health and wellbeing, PLOS One, 2025](#)
- [University of Copenhagen: Winter swimmers and heat and cold, 2021](#)
- [Harvard Health: Cold plunges, healthy or harmful for your heart?, 2025](#)
- [News-Medical: Steam therapy benefits, 2026](#)
- [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission: Hot tub temperatures](#)
- [Carleton University: Natural sounds and health, PNAS, 2021](#)
- [International Masonry Institute: Steam room detail, TCNA SR614, 2024](#)
- [South Coast AQMD: Rule 445, wood-burning devices](#)
- [California Health and Safety Code 115922: Pool and spa safety](#)
- [LADWP: Chloramination fact sheet, 2021](#)
- [CSLB: License Check](#)

Products (retail prices checked October 2026)

- [ThermaSol: PRO Series III steam generator](#)
- [ThermaSol: Season of Reset, designing the home as a sanctuary](#)
- [Almost Heaven: Kuuma barrel sauna](#)
- [WarmlyYours: TempZone bench mat](#)
- [Plunge: All-In cold plunge](#)
- [Badeloft: Japanese soaking tubs](#)
- [The Torch Guys: Outdoor Plus Maya fire and water bowl](#)
- [Pond Pro Direct: Aquascape pondless waterfall kit](#)
- [Concrete Decor Store: Warming Trends Crossfire burner](#)

Valley Tile & Plumbing

- [Beyond the Bathroom](#)
- [Latest Trends and Products](#)
- [Price list](#)
- [White papers \(Press/Media\)](#)

Product names and trademarks belong to their makers. Valley Tile & Plumbing is not affiliated with them.