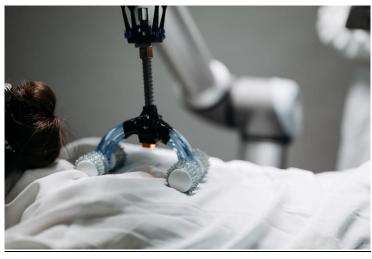# How AI is Transforming Hotel Spa & Wellness Operations

Source: Pexels (2021)

Background

In today's rapidly evolving hospitality landscape, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a powerful tool, enabling hotels to streamline operations and tailor services to meet the ever-changing needs of their guests. Notably, recent developments have led to an increasing trend of hotels and resorts investing in AI to enhance their spa and wellness operations.

In partnership with robot massage startup Aescape, the Lotte New York Palace debuted the world's first fully automated AI massage experience at its ila Only Spa in summer 2024 (Elite Traveler, 2024). Featuring two metal arms and seven precision-crafted attachments, the machine simulates the techniques of a skilled therapist (Aescape, n.d.). Guests are provided with a tablet, allowing them to easily adjust the position, pressure, or pause the massage at any time. This innovation is said to be ideal for introverts who wish to enjoy a massage without the need to communicate with a therapist frequently (Conde Nast Traveler, 2024). With the Aescape robot massage, hotels can also extend their spa operating hours and offer massages at midnight or in the early morning, times when human therapists are typically unavailable (Travel Weekly, 2024).

However, despite these technological advancements, many believe that person-to-person interaction remains at the heart of spa, wellness, and hospitality services (Hotel Technology News, 2025). For this reason, some hotels are incorporating AI to complement the work of human therapists. For instance, Sensei Lanai, a Four Seasons Resort in Hawaii, utilizes AI sensors to help practitioners identify sources of bodily tension and tailor treatment programs for their clients (Hospitalitynet, 2025). As a result, AI-powered thermal body mapping and massage not only promote more informed decision-making for therapists but also enable more personalized care for customers. In addition to enhancing the treatment process, the adoption of AI can help practitioners reduce administrative tasks such as scheduling and processing guest portfolios, thereby relieving their workload and allowing them to focus more on service delivery (Hotel Technology News, 2025).

Challenges

While the introduction of AI enhances guest experiences in spa and wellness settings, it also carries underlying risks of machine malfunctions and system failures, which can lead to service disruptions

or even major safety issues. For example, although the Aescape robot massage is designed for guests to enjoy the service independently, there is a significant risk that the machine cannot be stopped if the control tablet malfunctions, as there is no human therapist present to intervene. This could endanger guests and potentially lead to lawsuits against the hotel.

Discussion Questions

1. Would you prefer the increased privacy and autonomy offered by a robot-delivered massage or the traditional massage experience provided by a human therapist? Why?

2. What are the potential benefits and drawbacks of incorporating AI in spa and wellness services in terms of guest experience and operational efficiency?

3. What safety measures should hotels implement to mitigate the risks associated with machine malfunctions and system failures in AI-driven spa services?

4. How might the integration of AI in spa and wellness services impact the traditional role of human therapists in the hospitality industry? Do you think human therapists will be fully replaced by robots in the future?

References

Aescape. (n.d.). Massage Reimagined. Retrieved from https://www.aescape.com/technology

Conde Nast Traveler. (2024). The Newest Hotel Spa Offering? Massages By Robots. Retrieved from https://www.cntraveler.com/story/massage-robot-aescape-ai

Elite Traveler. (2024). Lotte New York Palace Introduces Aescape Robot Massages. Retrieved from https://elitetraveler.com/travel/hotel-news/lotte-new-york-palace-robot-massages

Hotel Technology News. (2025). How AI is Transforming Hotel Wellness Facilities and Improving Staff Operations Across All Stages of the Guest Journey. Retrieved from https://hoteltechnologynews.com/2025/01/how-ai-is-transforming-hotel-wellness-facilities-and-improving-staff-operations-across-all-stages-of-the-guest-journey/

Pexels (2021). Robot Massaging a Womans Back. Retrieved from https://www.pexels.com/photo/woman-lying-on-a-massage-table-and-getting-treated-by-a-robot-8439072/

Travel Weekly. (2024). A robot masseuse? New technology could prove handy for hotel spas. Retrieved from https://www.travelweekly.com/Travel-News/Hotel-News/Aescape-robot-massage

Keywords

- Hotel
- Spa and Wellness
- Artificial intelligence (AI)
- Robot Massage
- Guest experience
- Safety risks