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Crafting Intentional Wellness Retreats

IN OUR BUSY lives, it's often the small daily rituals that make the biggest difference.

A few months ago, I started a new morning ritual. It wasn't actually intentional, contrary to the title of this article; I was curious about the hype around lymphatic drainage. Now, to begin my day, I spend a few minutes using a Gua Sha brush. It's simple and quick, but the soft bristles, gentle motion and quiet time help me feel more focused. These quiet few minutes remind me that wellness doesn't require big changes. It often starts with small daily habits that help us slow down and reconnect with ourselves.

Our days often begin with a barrage of emails, messages and notifications clamoring for our attention. Work and obligations now spill into our homes, trailing us on illuminated

As designers, architects and trade professionals, we have the chance to create more than just beautiful spaces. We can design environments that support the rituals, routines and experiences that improve a person's well-being.

When designing for the wellness experience, the conversation often starts with products, but it should focus on lifestyle first.

- How do you start your mornings?
- What helps you unwind after a stressful day?
- When do you feel most relaxed?
- What routines are most important to you?

The answers to these questions show us ways to create spaces that do much more than look good. In truth, we need to think beyond specs and square footage. We need to understand how clients want to feel in their space.

Some people focus on hydrotherapy and recovery. Others care more about mindfulness, nutrition, better sleep or aging in place. Many want a mix of all these things.

This has led to new products and technologies that make life more comfortable and support healthier habits. Still, the products are only part of the story. What really matters is how all of these things can improve the overall experience.

Using natural materials, organic textures and design elements inspired by nature can help people feel more connected to the outdoors and create a calm atmosphere. All of these products and materials work together to turn ordinary rooms into spaces that help people relax and recharge.

“Clients want spaces that support their health, reduce stress and create meaningful moments every day within their own home.”

screens. As our calendars fill, those rare pockets of quiet become even more elusive. And despite all of us being so connected to the world, many of us feel distant from nature, from grounding routines and sometimes even from our own sense of self.

I believe this is why wellness has become so important in today's home design: homeowners now seek spaces that do more than look gorgeous. They want rooms that nudge them to slow down, recharge and restore balance in daily life.

THE SEARCH FOR SANCTUARY

For years, people turned to places outside of their homes to recharge. Luxury resorts, spas, wellness retreats and boutique fitness studios offered a break from daily stress.

Today, homeowners are increasingly asking a different question: How can I create that same feeling every day?

This question is changing how we design kitchens and bathrooms. The focus is less on excess and more on purpose. Clients want spaces that support their health, reduce stress and create meaningful moments every day within their own home. They want spaces that fit their lifestyles and help them to feel healthier, calmer and more grounded.

The best wellness spaces aren't always the largest or most expensive. They're designed to match how people want to live and the lifestyle they aim to embody in their personal spaces.

The best wellness designs support goals through carefully planned layouts, through the use of thoughtfully selected materials such as natural stone, wood and clay tiles; layered circadian lighting systems, and restorative water features such as rain showers and soaking tubs. Bespoke touches help turn everyday rooms into personal sanctuaries.

THE FOUNDATION OF WATER

Few things are so intricately tethered to wellness as water. Throughout history and across cultures, water has been linked to healing, renewal and reflection. Even today, hearing flowing water, taking a warm shower or soaking in a tub can help us relax.

Dr. Masaru Emoto has suggested that water may be influenced by human emotion and intention, though a 2015 study found no scientific evidence to support this effect. For designers, the main point isn't whether water can hold emotion, but how strongly people respond to it. Whether it's an elaborate shower, steam room, soaking tub, filtered drinking water or a wellness bath, water remains one of the best ways to create relaxing experiences at home.

CREATING PERSONAL RETREATS

Wellness design in the home isn't about impressing guests. It's personal. Homeowners want spaces that show who they are, how they live and what helps them feel their best.

BEYOND A TREND

While some design trends come and go, wellness speaks to something basic: our balance.

The growing interest in wellness-focused spaces elicits a cultural shift. People are thinking more about how they spend their time, where they put their energy and how their environment affects their health and mood.

People no longer see the home as simply a place to live. More and more, it's a place to recover, recharge and reconnect.

This change is a big opportunity for our industry. Now is the perfect time for designers and industry professionals to lead wellness conversations with clients. By sharing inspiring case studies, offering complimentary wellness-focused consultations or asking meaningful questions about lifestyle during the initial design process, you can position yourself as a trusted guide in this movement. By learning a client's lifestyle, aspirations and challenges, you can move beyond aesthetics to create environments that authentically support their lives.

In today's overstimulating world, real luxury is the deliberate creation of space. It means designing environments that help us slow down, take a breath and recenter. That intentional pause is the ultimate feature of wellness by design. ■

Lacy Martinez is LIXIL's national account manager for Winsupply and has 24 years of experience in the residential decorative plumbing industry. She has worked in local, regional and national roles, giving her a broad view of the kitchen and bath business. Martinez also serves on the Board of Directors for the Decorative Plumbing + Hardware Association (DPHA).

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