

McNees points out that 1 in 4 American adults has been to a spa, but adds that the growing spa market is not just for adults. "We have over 4 million teenagers going to spas. It's this captive audience we can teach collectively about healthy living, the importance of exercise, how to handle stress."

A Plethora of Opportunities

According to ISPA, the U.S. spa industry employs more than 230,000 people. About half are full-time employees, and 18% work on a contract basis. ISPA offers a variety of career training tools, including a *Spa Professional Career Guide* and a spa management certification course (see www.experiencespa.com).

Lawrence Biscortini, MA, an international spa consultant who teaches during the winter season at the Golden Door Las Casitas Village resort and spa in Puerto Rico, is enthusiastic about spa careers for fitness professionals. "The spa trends of fusion fitness and cross-training offer more growth and exposure than ever for fitness professionals, who can transcend the boundaries of the classroom, providing more outdoor training and lifestyle training in spas than they could do in a traditional fitness facility. The best spa departments for fitness professionals right now are all departments, because spas are booming. They open their minds, heart and doors to trainers and instructors who have a great attitude and the ability to fuse different talents."

Jeff Kohl, veteran spa expert, former ISPA board member and now a sales and marketing manager with Precor Inc. in Woodinville, Washington, agrees that the outlook is rosy. "I can't count the number of calls I get from spas looking for staff. There's a labor shortage in the industry, across the board. In fact, to meet the need, several major universities are starting to incorporate spa management into their curriculums." Kohl is optimistic

about the industry's future growth, in part because of the aging Baby Boomers, but also because of the 19- to 25-year-old market. "They appreciate taking care of themselves, and I envision it will be a strong market with continuing growth potential."

David-Dorian Ross is the wellness manager for Montage Resort and Spa in Laguna Beach, California, and has consulted for a wide range of world-renowned spas. "There are many different kinds of opportunities. You can work as a fitness or wellness manager.

You can be a permanent full-time staff person who teaches classes, works as a personal trainer or watches the fitness center floor. Another option is to come in on an adjunct or on-call basis to teach classes, offer lifestyle coaching or [do] personal training. There are crossover areas if you're multitalented: you could be a massage therapist and a personal trainer, for example, and build your clientele by cross-referring your guests into both areas."

Ross notes that life coaching is a hot new topic, but cautions that many hotels and spas [do] not really understand it. "I think there will be a lot of growth in this area in spas in the next

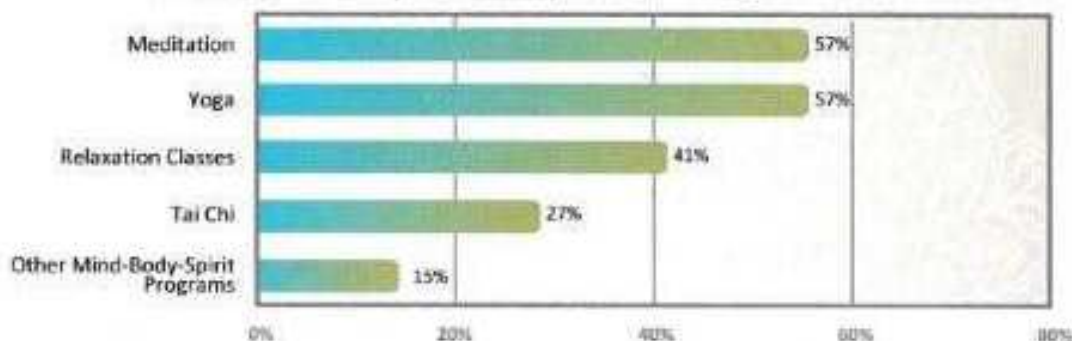
3 years, but [as a coach, you will] have to offer education [about what you do]. You can give in-house programs as a way of introducing yourself. Or you can create internal wellness or fitness programs for spa or hotel employees, to get yourself known."

As Ross sees it, chances for employment abound in all types of spas. "Of course there are wonderful opportunities at destination spas, because guests come with an end goal in mind and are there for a longer period of time. However, [day spas] are very unexplored territory—there are a lot of possibilities for life coaching and offering classes. Resort and hotel spas also have many areas of education and training that could be introduced by a creative fitness professional."

Ross explains that simple spa economics is likely to drive innovation and growth in the industry. "As spas become more com-



Mind, Body and Spirit Programs Offered



Source: IFA 2007, 2007 Spa Industry Study