

EUROPE: UNITED KINGDOM

1. What is currently making news in your country when it comes to wellness or wellbeing?

In the UK wellness practices such as mindfulness are becoming increasingly popular. Studies highlight how they are proven to help people cope with the stresses of everyday life. Eating natural and 'clean' foods is high on the news agenda with bloggers like Deliciously Ella gaining huge traction. People are taking more of an inside out view on their beauty regime and are becoming more conscious about what they put on their skin. Overall there is a growing appetite for products that help people achieve a better, happier way of life.

Source: Spafinder Wellness 365, 2014 Trends Report, Top 10 Global Spa and Wellness Trends Forecast

2. Please provide one sentence that describes what you think are important developments in your country for each of the following:

Spas: Research shows customers visiting spas expect immediate results and personalised treatments. At Aromatherapy Associates, our expert therapists take the time to understand the individual needs of the customer and develop bespoke treatments that deliver triple benefits on the mind, body and skin.

Wellness: It is rewarding to watch trends in technology, beauty and fitness shape our overall wellbeing in a positive way.

Tourism: The UK may not be famous for its weather, but there are lots of wonderful opportunities for tourists to get outdoors and embrace our beautiful landscapes. For example, in London, tourists are encouraged to take advantage of the Mayor of London's Cycle Hire Scheme and London has a wealth of beautiful parks to discover on foot - in fact almost half (47%)* of the capital is green space. Across the UK, there are an array of outdoor activities that boost wellbeing, from stunning walking routes in the Lake District to kayaking in Wales and nature and wildlife tours in the Scottish Highlands.

*Source: Independent

Wellness Living Communities/Real Estate: think 'Garden Cities' - those with more green spaces - offer a healthier, more prosperous and safer environment. Replacing

concrete high-rises with energy-efficient buildings and car-free zones means cleaner air. Bicester in Oxfordshire, Northstowe in Cambridgeshire and Ebbsfleet in Kent are three cities benefiting from the Government's Scheme to boost Garden Cities.

Beauty: More people are adopting a holistic approach to skin care and beauty brands are working on formulas that boost the skin's natural regeneration processes and provide preventative and curative treatment against 'skin neuroageing'. Ageing of nerve cells – neurons – directly affects the communication between nerves and cells like fibroblasts, triggering a decrease in collagen and elastin synthesis. The latest new skincare formulas strive to improve cell communication between nerve endings and fibroblasts, promoting 'fibroageing'.

Fitness: It's hard to fit exercise into our hectic lives but rather than spending hours in the gym, more people are now embracing high-intensity workouts first thing in the morning. I think the first step is to make an effort to walk and stand up more. There is now enormous evidence that simply standing makes huge differences to your health. It is estimated that being on your feet for just three hours a day can extend your life by two years!

Source: WHO

Nutrition: The latest report from the World Health Organisation projects that almost three-quarters of men and two-thirds of women in the UK will be overweight in 15 years. There is no one way to tackle the epidemic, but I personally believe there must be more done to make healthy food affordable, fewer sugars and fats in processed food and clearer nutritional labelling. Educating today's generation so they can make better food choices is essential.

3. How would you describe the state of workplace wellness in your country?

We live in a stressed-out world and there is clear evidence that work-related stressors have a negative impact on both physical and mental wellbeing. We live in a connected world, which means many people never switch off and the working day is no longer 9-5. But setting work-life boundaries is crucial to ensure work related issues don't dominate outside work.

Source: Forbes

4. What has been the general attitude about investing in spa/wellness in your country in 2015? Specific examples?

We are seeing more traditional retail brands entering the spa industry. In the case of Aromatherapy Associates, in order to expand the business, the spa and retail elements of the company work in harmony to increase brand awareness. In today's world, consumers are savvier and looking for well-known, trusted brands, which are available to purchase across different channels. Additional brand visibility enhances trial and this in turn recruits new customers, drives loyalty and aids the growth of the spa business and Aromatherapy Associates' treatments.

5. Whose responsibility is it to create a well world?

I think that everybody – from individuals to corporations and the government – has a role to play. If everyone strives to make a positive difference to the health and wellbeing of their own lives, and to those around them, it will generate a snow ball effect of wellbeing, paying it forward and impacting positively on their communities, our nation and ultimately the world.

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