

# The Esthetician's Role in **WEIGHT** Management

by pat lam

Body therapies in today's spas offer a plethora of staple body treatments and even some more exotic ones. Typical body treatments include modalities such as water therapy, electrical equipment and different forms of body massage. (See **Body Therapies**.)

All these treatments propose to reduce stress and induce a sense of wellness by reducing formation of free radicals, the molecules that age the skin and body. These effects are on a short-term basis, but they can transfer to long-term benefits simply by incorporating advice on positive lifestyle changes to help reduce high health risks of aging diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, osteoporosis and arthritis.

## Wellness

According to James Meschino, DC, a wellness health practitioner in Toronto, **wellness** can be defined as the *active pursuit of both mental and physical health*. In other words, one cannot achieve the state of wellness unless actively participating in healthy living that includes a nutritious diet, regular physical activity, stress management and other positive lifestyle behaviors. Today's society actively is seeking wellness and preventive care, especially the aging baby boomers, many of whom are well-educated and possess more disposable income. Advanced technologies in medical, sanitary and health care have contributed toward greater longevity among humans. The ubiquitous media's report on wellness also has spilled over to the educated youth who also has become very interested in pursuing the wellness ethic. Yet, despite all this information, why is there an obesity epidemic throughout the world, especially in North America? If we are treating our clients with "wellness," how can we keep them "well" if they are overweight and obese? Can these body therapies actually improve the health of our clients or are they just fluff? Can the esthetician intervene in this area of treatment and help promote weight management?

Overweight individuals often look and act so much older than their chronological age. Not only does the face appear distorted, but the body also lacks mobility and agility like the elderly. With weight loss, individuals can look so much younger that they may be unrecognizable at first. A study by Galuska et al<sup>1</sup> suggests that people are more likely to change their lifestyle behaviors if under the guidance of a health care practitioner than those who do not receive any advice. Can

This article is based on the author's presentation at the *Face & Body 2002 Spa & Healthy Aging Conference and Exhibition* in Santa Clara, California, in September.

Skin care professionals should seek additional training before offering any new services dealing with nutrition, fitness or supplements.



*Pat Lam has been an educator in the health and beauty field for the past 25 years. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Toronto, and is vice president of Skin Care Consultants and vice principal of the internationally known Lam School of Advanced Esthetics in Toronto. She is a CIDESCO international examiner and a CIDESCO gold medal winner for stress therapy. Author of **Practical Nutrition for the Health and Beauty Professional**, she is certified in all areas of fitness including aerobic instruction and personal training. She recently became board certified as an anti-aging health practitioner by the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine (A4M).*



