



Barrel Saunas

Standard Barrel

Canopy Barrel

Ellipse Barrel

Installation & Owner's Manual



Revised January 3, 2011

CHECK YOUR BOXES

Be sure to immediately check your boxes against your shipping list and bill of lading. Examine for any damage and report it to the shipping company immediately. Notify your dealer or Almost Heaven Saunas if there needs to be a repair or replacement of damaged or missing materials.

ELECTRICAL REQUIREMENTS

All electrical wiring must be performed by **A QUALIFIED LICENSED ELECTRICIAN**. Because of the heat involved in the sauna, it is required that you use copper wire with 90°C insulation. Do not use aluminum wire to make the connection. Consult with an electrician so you can determine the requirements for your particular situation. All wiring must conform to all national, state and local codes and regulations.

LOCATING THE SAUNA

Because the customary sauna experience involves a heating-cooling-resting regimen, it is important to plan ahead before installing your sauna. Our method of construction affords the widest number of possible choices because an Almost Heaven Sauna room can be placed in either an indoor or outdoor setting.

You will probably shower during or after each sauna bath, so consider having a shower installed nearby. Besides the shower, you may want to have a lounging area set aside for relaxing after your sauna bath. Make sure the floor or ground is level and can support the weight of the sauna (which can exceed 1,000 lbs. when filled with people). A reinforced concrete pad or wood deck is always best for outdoor installations, and be sure that the surface you use is both level and firm. Verify that both the inlet and outlet vents will remain unobstructed. For indoor installations be sure that both vents open into the same room or space.

STAVE SELECTION

While Almost Heaven Saunas use only high-grade, clear lumber, there will still be variations in the appearance of the lumber. Grain, color and slight blemishes in the wood will vary, and while these are of a cosmetic nature only, you may want to select where you place the different staves. For example, you may want to place a stave with a blemish on the floor of the sauna beneath the benches, etc.

BASIC TOOLS

You should have the following tools:

- Wrench-adjustable, box, open end (10mm, 3/4", 1/2" and 7/16")
- Cordless drill for driving screws
- Rubber Mallet
- Claw hammer
- Sandpaper – 120 Grit
- Screwdrivers (Phillips and Flathead)
- Framing Square
- 5/16" drill bit Pencil
- Utility knife
- Level
- 3/16" drill bit



To help speed up the installation, substitute deep well socket wrenches for the 3/4", 1/2", and 7/16" wrenches and a reversible power drill for the screwdrivers.



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FIRST CONSIDERATIONS

When you begin the initial layout for assembly, it is very important to check your floor or deck to see if it is level. Most garage floors, basement floors, and decks are sloped for drainage. If this is the case in your installation, it is suggested that you use shims to make the sauna level. Failure to do this can result in unplumbed panels, poor fit and or poor function of your sauna.

OUTDOOR INSTALLATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Take caution to prevent the wind from catching and breaking the glass door.
- Do not install boards with knots on the top of the sauna where water could accumulate and freeze, causing the board to split.

ROOM ASSEMBLY

Before beginning the assembly, unpack all of the staves and identify the drain stave, which will be the first one used. It has a hole cut into its center. As you examine the staves, you will notice that each end has a croze on its inside face. The croze is the square cut groove into which the sauna end panels fit. **(See Figure 1)**

Begin the assembly by placing the cradle bases on the floor or foundation. **(See Figure 1)**. Anchor bolt holes are provided in the cradles for mounting to the deck if you are in a windy location. You can bolt the sauna to the pad once the sauna assembly is completed.

Place a cradle base at each end of the sauna so that it is 4 inches in from the end of the stave. This will facilitate proper placement of the stainless steel bands. For the 8' models, the third cradle section should be placed in the center (do not block the drain hole). Be sure the cradle bases are parallel to each other. Keeping everything level and square is very important to insure proper assembly and function.

Place the drain stave exactly in the center of the cradle base to provide good drainage. Lay out additional staves on each side of the drain stave to each end of the cradle base. **Using a framing square, make sure that all the staves are square to the cradle and that the croze is lined up on all pieces.** Use a rubber mallet to gently tap the staves together and then screw every other bottom stave to the base with 2 inch stainless steel torque screws as shown in **Figure 1** using one screw per board into each cradle base.

Countersunk
Stainless

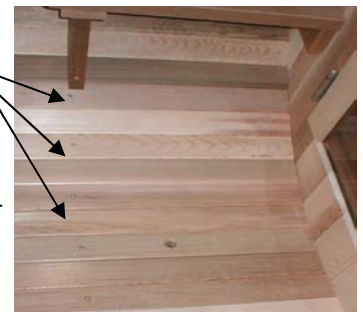


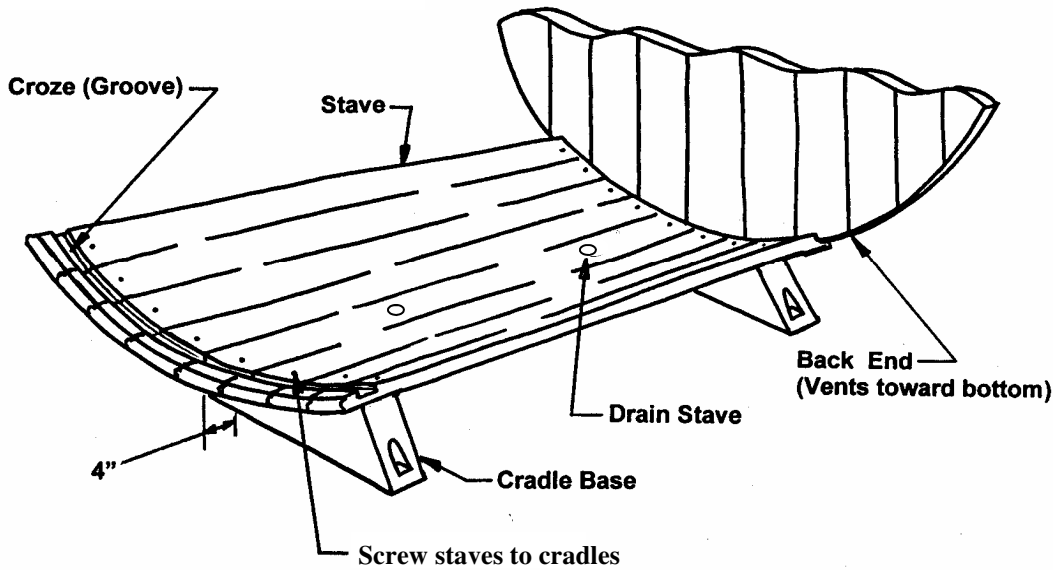
Figure 1

At this point, uncrate the front and back ends and place them in the croze on each end of the assembly **(See Figure 1)**. Use a level to be sure that the vertical boards on the end assembly are perfectly vertical, and that the horizontal brace boards holding the vertical boards together are facing the inside of the sauna. Using your level, check the horizontal boards on the insides of both ends to be sure that you have the panels plumb. The vent hole is to be on the BOTTOM on the back (heater) end, and at the TOP on the door end of the sauna.

Note for Canopy Barrel:

The croze cut-out for the front wall section on the Canopy Barrel is located 24" back from the front edge of the sauna.

Figure 1—Base Assembly



With the bottom staves screwed to the cradle bases, and the front and back ends placed into the croze, begin alternately placing staves up the sides of sauna. Tap each board firmly to the next with a rubber mallet, and hammer a nail every 3 boards to keep them from falling out. The nails will be hidden by the bands, but the fewer nails you use now, the easier it will be if you ever need to dismantle and move the sauna. You should stop using nails half-way up the sides.

When you come to the point of closing the assembly you will find that the space left over may not be equal to a whole stave. We have provided a final stave set cut into various widths, (**See Figure 2**). If necessary, use the correct combination of pieces to provide the tightest fit. Install by tilting out the adjacent staves, placing the final stave, and pushing back into place. It is important that you use as many staves and fillers as you can prior to tightening the stainless bands in order to create as tight a seal as possible. Since the bands, when tightened, will draw the staves to the end sections, it is best to have enough staves in place so that those from approximately the 10 o'clock to 2 o'clock positions are actually spread away from the end sections prior to tightening the bands. It will seem like you have too many staves in place, but this is good as the bands will then draw them down and tight to the end sections for the best possible seal.

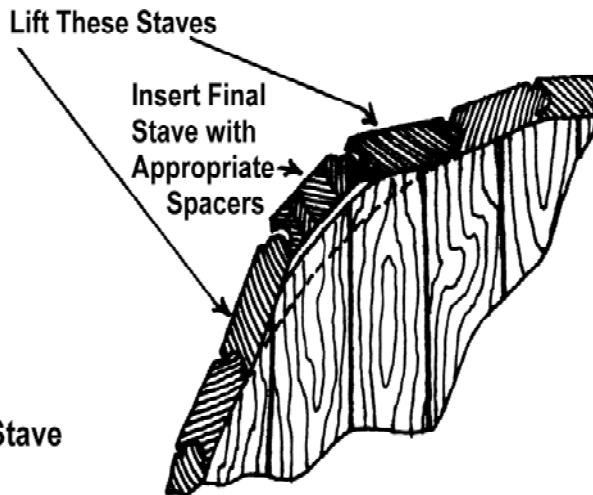


Figure 2 - Final Stave

NOTE: While your Barrel Sauna is designed for outdoor use, it is important to build the sauna in accordance with these instructions to minimize water seepage into the sauna. Properly installed, water will not drip into the sauna. However, over time water may seep between the staves due to the porous nature of softwood. This will not hurt the sauna and will quickly evaporate once the sauna heater is turned on. If full water proofing is desired, shingles or other roofing material can be installed on the top section of the Barrel Sauna.

BAND ASSEMBLY

Each of the Band Assemblies are made of the following components:

- (1) Stainless Steel Bands with brackets
- (2) 1/2" Nuts
- (2) Black vinyl caps
- (1) 4-3/4" Threaded Rod

Place bands with pre-assembled brackets around sauna, spaced evenly apart. The two end bands should cover the nails you used to hold the staves in place during assembly. Insert threaded rod through the bracket. Tighten nuts evenly so that the bands are of equal tension. Before tightening nuts, check to make sure bands are still even. Tighten nuts and install black vinyl thread protectors. (**See Figure 3**) You may place the brackets at the same level or vary them at different heights depending on your styling preference.

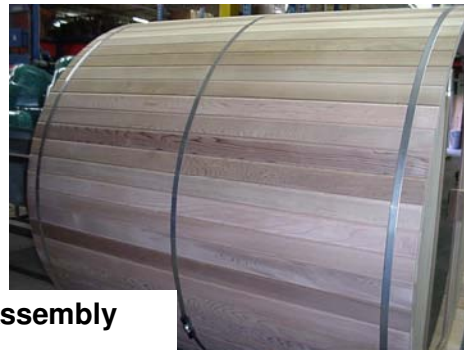


Figure 3 - Band Assembly

Note for Canopy Barrel:

Position one band each around where the two wall end sections attach. Place the third band equal distance between these two bands. Place the fourth band 3" back from the front of the sauna around the exterior sitting area.

DOOR HANDLE/TOWEL BAR

The door handle/towel bar assembly will consist of the following components:

- (2) Door handles
- (2) Short round spacers
- (2) Long round spacers
- (1) Binding nut
- (1) Long machine screw
- (2) Wood screws

Locate the single hole in the glass door. Push the long machine screw through one of the pre-drilled handles, through a long round spacer, through the glass, through another long round spacer and then through the other pre-drilled handle. Turn the long machine screw into the binding nut but don't fully tighten. With a level, position each of the handles so that they are horizontal and then screw the end of the handles into the hinge board that is attached to the glass door with the wood screws. Now tighten the long machine screw into the binding nut. TAKE CARE THAT YOU DO NOT OVER TIGHTEN THE SCREW AND BINDING NUT OR ALLOW THE WOOD SCREWS TO HIT THE GLASS. BROKEN GLASS IS NOT COVERED UNDER WARRANTY.



Door Handle Assembly



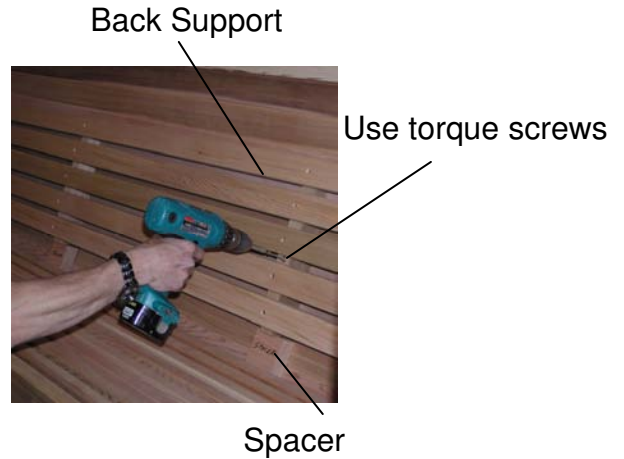
Door Handle Assembly

SEATS & SUPPORTS

Each barrel sauna includes two pre-assembled benches. Lay the benches on the lower cleats mounted on each end wall section. Position the benches so that the pre-drilled holes cover the cleat and screw the bench into place. Install center supports (on 6' and 8' models) as shown in illustration. Be sure to sink screw heads below the surface so you will not burn yourself while using sauna. **(See Figure 5)**. The Ellipse Sauna includes two contoured back supports. Place the spacers against the installed bench seats and screw the back supports to the sauna walls. **(See Figure 5A)**



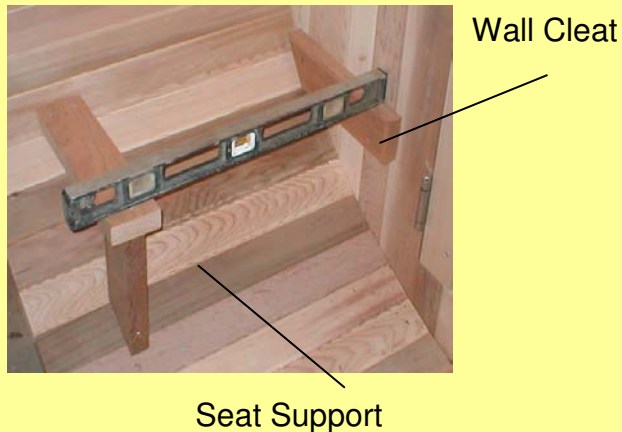
Figure 5 - Seat Installation



**Figure 5A - Back Support Installation
(Ellipse Sauna only)**

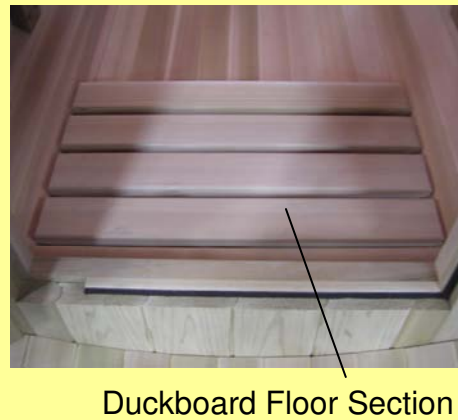
Note for Canopy Barrel:

Assemble the exterior benches as shown below in the same way you assembled the interior seats and trim. You will attach an exterior seat wall cleat to the sauna wall, using a level to insure that the seat is level.



Note for Ellipse Barrel

The Ellipse Barrel Sauna has duckboard flooring sections. Place the first section at the door and work back toward the heater.



HEATER

Mount the heater as shown in the manufacturer's instructions. The heater should be positioned between the seats on the back end wall and no lower than 6-1/2 inches from the floor. The lower the heater is, the hotter the temperature will be at the benches. All the necessary hardware is supplied with the heater. Do not attempt to wire the heater yourself. Contact a licensed electrician in accordance with your local electrical codes.

NOTE: Use the 1/4" x 1-1/4" Stainless Steel Lags provided for mounting the heater.

HEATER FENCE ASSEMBLY AND INSTALLATION

The Heater Fence is necessary to ensure that bathers in the sauna do not accidentally contact parts of the heater that would burn them. It consists of four precut, vertically notched posts and six horizontal rails that must be assembled before it is installed to the wall adjacent to the heater.

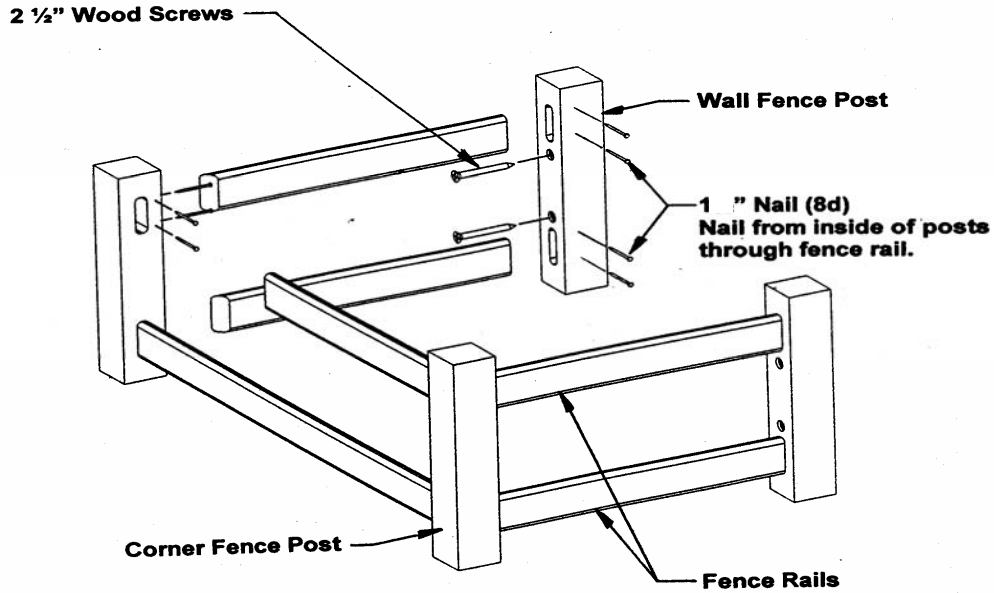


Figure 6 - Heater Fence Assembly

The vertical fence posts have slots cut into them for the rails. The two vertical fence posts that go against the wall have slots on just one face, as well as counter-bored screw holes for attaching them to the sauna wall. The two fence posts that sit away from the wall will have slots cut into two of their faces.

Note the beveled ends on the fence rails that go into the corner posts. The ends of the rails that go into the fence posts that attach to the wall are square. Assemble the fence before attaching it to the wall by placing the rails into the slots in the posts and using the supplied 1" nails as shown in **Figure 6**. You may want to put a small amount of glue into the slots. Be sure to nail at an angle so that the points will not go through the post. Countersink all nails.

Once the fence is assembled, attach it to the wall behind the heater using the supplied wood screws.

LIGHT

Have a licensed electrician mount and wire the light fixture (on a separate circuit) into the electrical box mounted in the sauna's back wall.

Do not install your light switch inside the sauna. Rather, install the switch inline on either the outside of the sauna, in the house or in some other exterior location. If a switch is desired inside the sauna, then it is recommended that you order the special light upgrade from Almost Heaven Saunas that has an integral switch. No special type of light bulb is required, but the heat of the sauna will shorten the life of a normal bulb. An appliance bulb, such as those used in a kitchen oven, will last longer than a standard bulb. Most people prefer subtle, low wattage lighting in the sauna. Do not exceed the wattage recommended by the light's manufacturer.

TREATING THE SAUNA

Western Canadian Red Cedar is naturally resistant to the elements. Left untreated, the exterior of an outdoor sauna will eventually become silvery-gray in color, and it is fine to let the sauna weather naturally in this way. At any point in the future you can pressure wash (low pressure only!) your sauna to bring back most of the original red cedar color.

If you want to retain the rich, natural color of the red cedar, your local paint store can recommend an outdoor stain for red cedar. A clear stain will retain the full natural color of the cedar. Be sure that it has a UV inhibitor in the stain so that it will best resist the effects of sunlight. Be sure to follow the directions from the stain manufacturer for application instructions. Never treat the inside of the sauna, and never use varnish or paint on the exterior of the sauna.

OPERATION

After the sauna has been installed, sweep down the inside to remove any sawdust and wood shavings, and then vacuum completely. Using a damp cloth and warm water, wipe down the entire sauna including the benches to remove any remaining dirt, dust and debris. Rinse off the sauna rocks and install them in the heater in accordance with the heater manufacturer's instructions. Improper placement of heater rocks can result in lower than desired heat temperatures. Turn the heater on to the maximum setting and operate it for about 30 minutes with the door propped open. Then close the door and allow your sauna to come up to the desired temperature.

If the sauna wood has absorbed moisture in storage, the staves may become loose after the intense heat causes the wood to cure. It may be necessary to retighten the stainless steel bands periodically if this occurs. The red cedar will swell, especially if left in the open rain, and this will further tighten the seal of the wood.

The controls of the sauna heater are mounted at the bottom of the heater. The right dial is the temperature setting and the left dial is the combined timer on-off switch. Please refer to the manual that came with your heater for full heater operational instructions

When operating the heater, always begin by turning the timer fully clockwise. The heater should come on as indicated by the light, and operate for one hour and then shut off automatically.

Since you most likely will use your sauna as both a "wet sauna" and a "dry sauna", you should install the sauna rocks that have been included with the heater, following the manufacturers instructions. These stones are necessary if water will be sprinkled on the heater to create the "wet sauna", and they will produce more consistent heating in the dry mode (without the use of water). It is common for a stone to occasionally crack during initial heating. If excess amounts of water are used during sauna, prop door open for 30 minutes after use to let the humidity escape.

The amount of ventilation in the sauna can be adjusted by means of the vent located toward the top of the sauna near the door. It is important to have adequate fresh air flowing through the sauna, and this flow can be adjusted with the movable vent cover. If the sauna is located outdoors you should keep the vent closed when the sauna is not in use to prevent insects and rodents from entering the sauna.

ELECTRICAL

Typical wiring requirements for up to 30 feet distance from the breaker box are as follows:

- 4.5kw and 6.0kw heaters require 10-2 w/ground, copper only wire, and 30amp non-GFCI breaker.
- 8.0kw heaters require 8-2 w/ground, copper wire only, and 40amp non-GFCI breaker.

NOTE: All wiring must be done by a licensed electrician according to national and local electrical codes. Be sure to check the instructions on your particular heater to verify electrical requirements as your heater may have been purchased from a different source than Almost Heaven Saunas.

DOOR HINGE ADJUSTMENT

The tension on the sauna door hinges needs to be set in order for the door to close on its own. Look for the small hinge box that is included with your sauna kit. The hinges have been installed on the sauna, but the box contains both the hex wrench and set pins needed to adjust your door tension.

After the sauna is assembled, and with the door closed, take the hex wrench and insert it in the top of the hinge. Once the wrench is fitted into the hex opening, turn the hex wrench clockwise (toward the wood wall and away from the glass) to tighten the hinge tension. You will feel the tension as you tighten. While leaving the hex wrench inserted and the tension held in place, insert the set pin into the hinge as shown. Repeat the process with the other hinge as each hinge must be tightened to the same degrees of tension.



Tighten tension and insert set pin



Once set pin is in place, remove wrench

The door should close gently on its own without slamming shut. If it does not, then repeat the process to each hinge to increase the tension further. Save the hex wrench in case future tightening is needed.

ACCESSORIES

- Mount the thermometer on the opposite wall as the heater and no lower than 6" from the peak of the ceiling.
- A wooden bucket and ladle are provided for you to sprinkle water over the hot sauna rocks.
- Mount the optional robe hook and magazine rack where desired.
- Optional accessory items are available from Almost Heaven Saunas.



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TAKING A SAUNA BATH

The sauna as we know it comes from Finland. Taking a sauna bath induces excessive perspiration, which cleanses the skin. It stimulates circulation and reduces muscular tension. It can also be an excellent relaxational or social activity.

Not to be confused with a steam bath, a sauna is a dry heat bath. The relative humidity rarely exceeds 30% even in a wet sauna. This is because the sauna is made of porous wood and absorbs moisture. This makes higher temperatures more tolerable.

Shown below are the steps that are involved in taking a traditional bath. You may or may not want to adhere to this regimen.

TRADITIONAL STEPS IN TAKING A SAUNA BATH

STEP #1 - Set your heater so that the sauna room achieves the desired temperature, usually between 150° F and 170° F. As a novice, you should begin at the lower end of this range and work your way up to the higher temperatures over several sauna baths.

STEP #2 - Remove all clothing (except maybe your swimsuit), eyeglasses, contact lenses, jewelry, etc. Take a quick shower with warm water and soap, or a quick dip in your hot tub.

STEP #3 - Enter the sauna initially for about 5 to 15 minutes. Bring a towel into the sauna onto which you can sit or lay. Leave the sauna room once you have begun to perspire freely.

STEP #4 - Now you may take a cold plunge in your swimming pool, shower or snow bank. After that, relax and cool down for another 10 to 20 minutes.

STEP #5 - Re-enter the sauna. On this return visit you may wish to sprinkle small amounts of water onto the rocks creating bursts of steam. If the water spills through the heater and onto the floor, you are using too much, although this will not hurt the heater or the sauna.

STEP #6 - After your final visit to the sauna, relax for at least 20 minutes. Shower with soap and warm water. Finish your shower with cooler water to close the pores of your skin. Dress only after you have cooled down completely.

NOTE: Whatever your sauna regimen, it is important that you keep your self hydrated by drinking plenty of water!

MAINTAINING YOUR SAUNA

Inside the sauna, certain areas will eventually darken due to normal use and the effects of perspiration. This can be minimized, but not eliminated. Occasionally scrub down the inside with baking soda and water to remove the odor and stains of perspiration. Light sanding can also be effective but should be kept to a minimum.

