



ROB LICHT CUSTOM SAUNAS

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24 BALD HILL RD, BROOKTONDALE NY 14817 • A DIVISION OF ROB LICHT STUDIO, LLC
CUSTOM BUILT FINNISH STYLE WOODBURNING, ELECTRIC, AND MOBILE SAUNAS

Using and Maintaining your Electric Sauna

Starting the sauna

Your heater will either have controls on the outside wall or on the unit itself. The controls have a one hour timer and a heat setting knob or digital panel. See specific instructions provided with each model. Both the timer and the heat control have to be turned on.

Generally you should let it heat up for one-half hour, using the highest setting at first then turning it down as you see how hot it gets. The upper vent should be opened at least half way initially to circulate the hot air but can be closed as it heats up to help the sauna reach a higher temperature. The unique wall construction provides some breathability and ventilation. In addition, opening and closing of the door allows some air to exchange. The sauna should never feel airless and stuffy- the controlled circulation of air is essential to the true sauna feeling.

You will want a bucket of water for the sauna, to splash on yourself or pour on the rocks. Make sure it and the ladle are wooden or at least have wooden handles: any metal will get very hot in the sauna (including jewelry, eyeglasses, etc.). Do not put oils or scents on the rocks. You should not use candles in the sauna- they will melt without even lighting them! The under bench lighting is controlled with a switch outside the door.

Taking the sauna

If you are expecting a lot of people, let the rocks get really hot before getting in the sauna. You'll want this reserve of heat to maintain the temperature as people come and go.

How hot is hot enough? 160° F. (72°C.) is a good starting point, US Code limits heaters to 194°F (94° C.) which is pretty darn hot. In Finland, many go even hotter. Usually the sauna is done in rounds: two or three ten to twenty minute



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sessions with a cool down in between. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids in between. Listen to your body and don't overdo it!

The high point of the sauna is the *löyly*- pouring water over the rocks to make steam. Start with a ladle full (about one cup). Be careful of the hot steam as you pour!

Be careful to not get water all over the unit- pour the water directly on the rocks. The elements are stainless steel and are meant to take the water. If you have a drain in the floor, feel free to splash water on yourself or the benches if they are too hot.

Bathing

Traditionally, the last phase to the sauna experience is washing up. If your sauna has a drain you can bathe in it. You can scrub your skin really clean with a wet loofah or brush as you sit on the lowest bench or bathing stool. You will never feel cleaner because your pores are fully open when you are hot. If you are lucky enough to have a birch tree nearby you can make a *vitah* from the branches and gently thrash yourself with them to really stimulate your skin (you can buy them online too). You can rinse off with a bucketful of warm or cool water in the sauna or take a shower.

Cleanup

The sauna is really a bathhouse; it is important to keep it clean. After every sauna you should scrub and rinse off the benches with water, (if you have a floor drain) or wipe them down with a wet towel. Open the windows and door to let it air out, hang up all the towels and leave the buckets to drain. Every couple of saunas you should sweep out the sauna (removing the duck boards), and clean out the floor drain (the cover lifts off. The benches may lift out or slide back for easier cleaning. For outdoor units, the floor drain will have a bell trap, which can withstand freezing. If it is frozen and not draining, pour some hot water down it or pry the cover off and pull the ice out. If your sauna does not have a floor drain, avoid using excess water to clean although small amounts should evaporate quickly.



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Yearly maintenance

With the exception of the floor, door pull and thresholds, none of the surfaces are treated. I recommend yearly cleaning of the wood with warm water and mild soap—or a light sanding —but in no case should you ever use any chemicals. Every year or two you may want to re-treat the floors. I use water-based *Valspar* or *Thompson's* concrete and wood sealer on the cement.

The electric unit should require little maintenance. Do not fire it with the rocks removed, which would cause it to over-heat. The rocks do slowly break down from the heat—once a year the rocks should be carefully removed, the unit should be vacuumed clean and the rocks carefully re-installed, packed loosely around the elements. Eventually new rocks might be added.

The electric light should be replaced with no larger than a 60 watt bulb; the water tight cover should be securely replaced. Appliance bulbs are more durable in the heat.

Troubleshooting

If for any reason the unit does overheat there are one or two thermal shut-off switches on the side bottom of the unit. After determining what the problem was, these can be reset by pushing them in until you hear a click. Tampering with the wall sensor or obstructing the intake air vent may cause the unit to overheat. If adjustments are needed, please call me.

WARNINGS

- Direct body contact with the sauna stove or heater, sauna rocks, steam, stove pipe, heat shields and/or other metal objects in the sauna may cause serious injury; this includes metal jewelry worn in the sauna, which can get very hot and can burn the skin.

- Prolonged exposure to the high temperature in a sauna may cause your body to overheat. Limit yourself to a maximum of fifteen (15) minutes at a time and allow



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your body to cool down to normal body temperature in between sauna rounds. Overexposure to high temperatures can be dangerous to your health. Exit immediately if nauseous, uncomfortable, dizzy or sleepy.

- Check with a doctor before using sauna if pregnant, diabetic, in poor health and/or under medical care.
- Do not use the sauna if you have recently consumed drugs, alcohol, or medications.
- The area outside the sauna, including any steps or decking, may become wet or icy and very slippery, care should be taken when entering or exiting the sauna to avoid slipping and falling.