My favorite indulgence on a rare day off is a trip to the spa! As surgeons, we work hard - really hard - and I have learned during residency that it is also important to rest and restore yourself. Getting a massage, facial, or body wrap in a completely removed and serene setting is my way of “getting away from it all.” Sometimes, I will just treat myself to a quick morning massage, but if I can, I will usually make a little trip out of it. As luck would have it, there are a bounty of spa and massage destinations in the bay area from which to choose.

**VISTA BLUE SPA @ THE MONTEREY PLAZA HOTEL**

This is my number one spa. I used to live in Monterey and would always pass by the incredibly beautiful oceanfront terraces of the Plaza Hotel. It wasn’t until my intern year that I found out there was a spa, too! Take the scenic drive from San Francisco down Highway 1 and valet park at the Plaza Hotel (it’s covered by the spa). The spa itself is located on the roof top deck where you will find a bird’s eye view of the deep blue water of the Monterey Bay, the courtyard with a lovely dolphin fountain, and a small secluded beach below. This is an open-air space with hot tubs overlooking the ocean, deck chairs for lounging or sunbathing, a steam room with fresh towels and strawberry water, and a fireplace for chilly days. They will even bring you lunch a la carte. The deck is shielded from wind, and on sunny days it is just pure bliss. Make a day of it. At night, you have a view of the stars. There is also a boutique, which offers an array of lotions and fragrances, as well as stylish spa shoes. And if you join as a spa member (free), they offer all sorts of discounts. There is an extensive spa brochure with signature treatments such as foot and scalp massage, facials, wraps, scrubs, skin care, nail care, and even a “for men” section. For couples, there is a special bubble bath room with an ocean view. It’s a wonderful place to visit alone, with a partner, or a group of friends. Just go, you won’t regret it.

**WATERCOURSE WAY in PALO ALTO**

An old favorite of mine, this spa is completely unique with private tub rooms combined with steam or sauna and cold plunge wells. It has a tasteful zen vibe and asian-inspired decor. Every time I go, it is like entering a different world of utter relaxation; I have yet to find another place like it. You can book a one hour tub room and combine it with a massage -- deep tissue is my favorite. The therapists are excellent at working with you on problem areas (good for those knots after long surgeries!). You can easily add aromatherapy and hot stones to your massage. They also have holiday treatments, monthly specials and couples massages. Definitely splurge on the rooms that offer steam or sauna options -- my top picks are “Six Dragonflies” which has a lovely wooden tub and warm natural light, and “Nine Bats” which is modern with sleek glassy decor and a tiled hot tub under a “dome of starlight.” I can’t think of a better way to unwind. Nearby Stanford, my alma mater, is a place I love to roam afterward. I like to do a morning treatment, then go shopping next door at Anthropologie, walk through the Stanford Quad, and end with lunch at the Cantor Art Museum Cafe. A perfect day.

**ESALEN INSTITUTE in BIG SUR**

The most dramatic setting of all combined with the best massage of my life was at Esalen. It is a
retreat in a world of its own, with sweeping vistas of the Big Sur coastline and steep cliffs dropping into the ocean. What’s special here are the hot springs which reside on the grounds of Esalen, and are open only to 1) guests participating in a workshop, 2) renegades who show up during the 1am-3am time slot for “public access”, and 3) those who have booked a massage. I recommend the 3rd option. Of note, the baths are clothing optional, so come at your own comfort level! The grounds are large, and you will enter a common changing area with an eco-modern design. There is a large open air shower room with a glass wall looking out at the Pacific Ocean. You really feel one with nature. This leads to a perch with a number of individual claw foot tubs, and a scattered pools on different levels, all filled with the water from the hot springs. This is a place of complete serenity, quietude, and spirituality. You will marvel at an unforgettable view of the immense ocean. You might be brought into an indoor or outdoor space for a massage. With eyes closed you will hear the waves and feel enveloped by and connected with the sea. It is an amazing experience. My masseuse was incredibly in tune and used special “Esalen-style” massage techniques that left me feeling totally rejuvenated. If you are looking for the ultimate massage, Esalen is not to be missed. Afterward, check in to the nearby Ventana Inn for a luxurious escape -- it’s worth the splurge. This is another haven in Big Sur with hundreds of acres of woodlands and its own on-site Spa and Japanese hot baths. Some rooms will have a deck with a private hot tub and distant ocean views -- a mini spa experience in your own room. I celebrated my last two birthdays at the Ventana; you’ll know where to find me next year!

Lean Launchpad Launches for Life Science/Healthcare Entrepreneurs at UCSF

The Entrepreneurship Center at UCSF is offering a unique course for entrepreneurs starting this Fall. Lean Launchpad for Life Science/Healthcare is an exciting new UCSF course taught by acclaimed entrepreneur/educator Steve Blank and a life sciences teaching team for people who have an interest and passion in discovering how an idea can become a real company. This is a team-based, experiential, hands-on opportunity to learn how to build companies in the real world. Class starts on October 1 for 10 weeks and meets in the evening. This class is not about writing a business plan or doing library research. You will be talking to actual customers and partners for your idea and learning the chaos and uncertainty of how a startup actually works. You’ll learn how to use a business model to brainstorm each part of a company and customer development to get out of the classroom and talk to real prospects to see if anyone other than you would want or use your product. Each week will be a new adventure as you test another part of your business model and share this knowledge with the rest of the class. The experience of working with your team will help you learn how to build, manage or interact with others in a venture. You will be assigned a mentor to support and inform you who will interact weekly. Class is organized around a lecture on one of the nine building blocks of a business model, student presentations on “lessons learned” from the week’s interviews and the team’s progression as captured through an online blog/journal/wiki.

The Entrepreneurship Center will be holding an information session and mixer on July 17 to tell you more. If you don’t have a team or are looking for an idea, come to the mixer and find others with whom you can collaborate. Information is also available on our website: cbe.ucsf.edu, and on the links below: http://www.businessmodelgeneration.com(canvas

For more on the Lean Launchpad, go to www.steveblank.com. Steve’s lectures for his tech-oriented class can be found on www.udacity.com.

Contact Stephanie Marrus (Stephanie.Marrus@ucsf.edu) or Kyra Davis at the Entrepreneurship Center for more information.