



# alpine saunas™

## Outdoor Sauna User & Maintenance Guide

Harvia Heater Edition



# Startup

Please read through this entire document before using or powering the Sauna.

## Installing the Sauna Stones

**WARNING:** Never use the heater without stones loaded as it may cause a fire. Use only Harvia branded sauna stones. Use of incorrect sauna stones and/or heater use without stones may cause issues and will not be covered by warranty.

## Preparing the Stones

It is recommended that all stones should be rinsed to remove any stains or dust before loading into the heater. Doing so will help to prevent unpleasant odors or smoke burning off during the first few uses.

## Loading the Stones

The sauna stones need to be placed and stacked carefully between the heater's elements. Load carefully and in a way that they do not block air circulation through the heater.

Larger stones that won't fit between the heating elements must not be forced in and should be discarded or broken into smaller pieces. Stone pieces smaller than 35mm in diameter (and/or crumble) should be discarded as they can restrict airflow and cause overheating leading to element damage.

Load the sauna stones from bottom to top ensuring that they cover the elements.

Match diagram below:



**INCORRECT**



Overloaded stones, causing ventilation and overheating issues.

**INCORRECT**



Not enough stones, causing ventilation and overheating issues.

**CORRECT**



Sauna stones stacked with gaps between, allowing sufficient air flow. Stones covering the top of the elements.

After successfully loading the stones, sweep the sauna and wipe down the benches with a damp cloth to remove any dust.

# Turning on the Heater

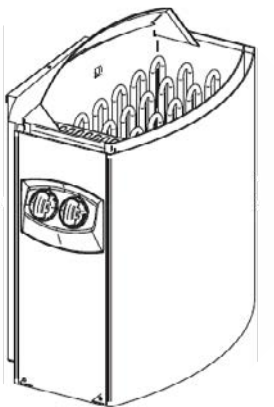
**CAUTION:** Smoke and odor may form when heating up for the first time. This is due to work materials being present on the elements from the manufacturing process. Any fumes will evaporate quickly but you should ventilate thoroughly before using the sauna. Follow the 'First Time Startup' process below.

## Heater - First Time Startup

A break-in procedure for the heater must be followed when turning it on for the first time to cure the woodwork and burn off any impurities. Follow these steps:

1. Ensure the sauna stones have been loaded correctly. (Refer to 'Loading the Stones' on the previous page)
2. Turn the temperature control dial to max. (See dial operation below)
3. Set the timer control dial to 1 hour operation time. (See dial operation below)
4. Exit the sauna and leave it to heat for the hour (with the door shut). Do not allow access during this period.
5. After the hour is up, open the door and allow thorough ventilation. Pour cold water onto the rocks slowly.
6. If there is still strong odor or smoke, repeat steps 1 to 4 again.

*Note: When heating up the sauna stones for the first time, they may crackle loudly and even chip / explode slightly - this is normal.*



## Using the Dials

The heater is simple to use. The controls consist of a thermostat dial and a timer dial.

### Thermostat:

Adjust the temperature of the sauna by simply adjusting the thermometer dial between the low and max points. Depending on external conditions, the sauna can reach temperatures of between 60 - 90°C.

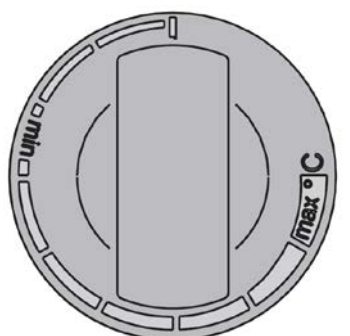
The heater will switch off if it overheats. Troubleshoot the issue and fix (not enough ventilation, incorrect positioning etc) before resetting using the reset button under the thermostat dial.

### Timer:

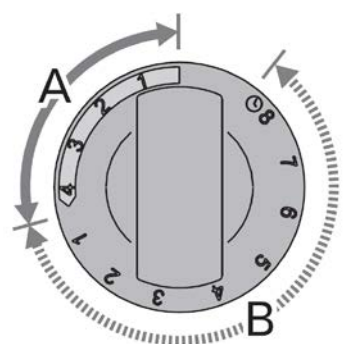
The timer allows you to choose from 1-4 hours operating time (A) or 1-8 hours presetting time (B).

To start the heater up immediately simply select an operating time between 1-4 hours (A).

To delay the heater start up, select a pre-set time between 1-8 hrs (B). When the specific number of hours set is up, the heater will engage and run for 4 hours unless turned off manually.



THERMOSTAT DIAL



TIMER DIAL

# General Use

## Types of Sauna

The sauna can be used in a 'dry' or 'wet' fashion. A dry sauna would involve enjoying the dry heat from the heater without applying any water to the stones. To build humidity and create a wet sauna, allow the heater to heat up the stones and then ladle on small amounts of water directly on top of the stones from your bucket.

## Traditional Use

The sauna as we know it originates in Finland. The typical sauna experience follows the steps below, but you may enjoy your sauna in any way you like!

1. Run the heater until the sauna reaches the desired temperature. This should be somewhere between 60-90°C. If you are new to the sauna, begin with cooler temperatures and build tolerance over future sessions.
2. Take a quick shower or a quick dip in a hot tub or pool.
3. Step into the sauna and enjoy for 5-15 minutes, bringing a towel to sit or lay on. Leave the sauna once you are perspiring freely.
4. Take a plunge in a pool, shower, lake - anything that will cool you down! After that, relax and cool down for 10-20 minutes.
5. Step into the sauna again. During this visit, you may wish to sprinkle small amounts of water onto the stones to create bursts of steam.
6. Continue repeating this process. After your final visit to your sauna, relax for at least 20 minutes. Shower with warm water initially, finishing with cool water to close your skin pores
7. Finish by following the **'Bake & Breathe'** method, which can be found over the page.

# Maintenance

## The Nature of Softwood

While your barrel sauna is designed for outdoor use, the construction plays an important part in keeping it water-tight. 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 should quickly evaporate once the sauna heater is turned on. Timber is a natural product and is designed to move, shrink and grow with the elements. If your sauna has not been constructed correctly, you may find this movement occurs more frequently and on a larger scale.

Inside the sauna, certain areas will eventually darken due to normal use and the effects of perspiration. Excessive water seepage can also cause bleeding of tannin. This can be minimized, but not eliminated. Occasionally scrub down the inside with baking soda and water to remove odor and stains of perspiration. Light sanding can also be effective to help remove the appearance of these stains.

## Treating the Exterior

Cedar is naturally resistant to the elements however Australasian sun is very harsh. Left untreated, the exterior of an outdoor sauna will eventually become silvery-gray in color. Be aware that non-protected wood can crack. We highly recommend that you apply a quality wood oil that contains a U.V inhibitor to the outside surface of the cedar at least once a year. Areas in New Zealand and Australia that see more sunshine may require more frequent oiling to protect the wood.

The cedar is supplied unoiled. As part of the ownership of a natural wood product, you must also be prepared to re-oil the external surfaces of cedar up to every 6 months (frequency will be determined by location and exposure to sunlight).

Only the external facing wooden surfaces need to be oiled. Never oil internal surfaces.

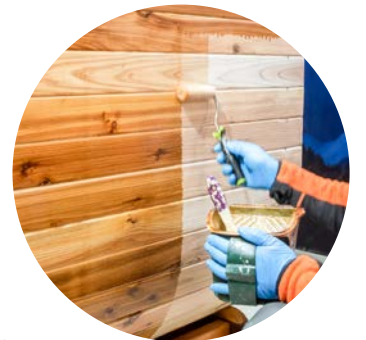
We recommend a 'clear coat timber protectant oil' such as 'CD-50'. Available from hardware stores such as Mitre 10 or Bunnings.

Simply oil using a paintbrush and brush on an even coat. Follow the product application and preparation directions.

To oil all external surfaces you will need a fair amount of product. It is worth just getting up to 10 litres of product as you will need it again to repeat in 6 months' time.

*Note: Be sure to follow the directions when applying oil. Never treat the interior of the sauna and never use varnish or paint on the exterior of the sauna. Some sauna kits may come pre-oiled and therefore will only require the yearly re-application.*

*We recommend CD-50 timber protection oils - available at hardware stores.*



## Internal Maintenance

To avoid transferring sweat and oils to the benches, users should lay a towel down as a barrier between skin and the wood.

### Cleaning Outside:

Clean the outside parts with a cloth or soft brush and bucket of water (do not pressure wash) and then dry down with a clean towel.

### Cleaning Inside:

For quick cleaning, a damp cloth should suffice. After a few uses, the interior can be disinfected using diluted hydrogen peroxide (3%). Prepare the solution outside of the sauna. Never use harsh cleaners as they can damage the wood. A soft brush can be used to scrub lightly where required (the floor may need scrubbing). Wipe off excess water with a dry clean towel and thoroughly ventilate to assist drying.

### Removing Debris:

Avoid bringing dirt and debris inside the sauna. Perhaps lay a foot mat at the entrance for guests to wipe their feet. Cedar is a soft wood that is easy to dent and scratch so use a vacuum to quickly remove any debris.

### Heater:

Pouring water on the stones may leave behind water spots on the stainless steel. These can be removed with a soft scrubbing brush.

# Mould Cause, Prevention & Treatment

## Cause

Mould can be an unsightly find in your traditional outdoor steam sauna, but don't stress! This article will guide you through the cause of mould and mildew growing in your sauna, how to prevent it from happening in the first place, as well as how to treat and clean affected areas if you find mould. Mould can cause numerous health problems, and it can cause accelerated rot and deterioration of the timber, so it's best practice to stop it at the source.

We all know that heat, moisture, and a lack of airflow can create a haven for mould growth. These factors combined with the nature of wood can create an ideal habitat for mould to make your sauna its new home. This is why we promote the **"Bake & Breathe"** method which has been used throughout Europe since the inception of sauna use.

### Bake

After a sauna session, it is advised to keep your sauna heater on for an extra 30 minutes with the door closed which allows your sauna to 'bake' away all that residual moisture and nasty germs which can't survive at high temperatures.



### Breathe

Allowing your sauna to 'breathe' is by far the most important measure to promote a healthy environment and minimize mould in your sauna. Once your sauna has 'baked' for 30 minutes, it's best practice to leave the glass door open for a further 30 minutes to promote proper airflow to assist in reducing damp air from the sauna.



## Prevention

As we all know, prevention is better than treatment! If we can prevent moisture and mould from getting settled in your sauna, it will reduce the amount of cleaning and treatment required down the track.

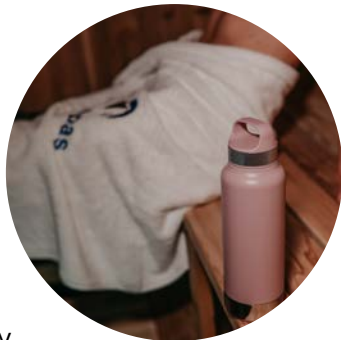
Prevention is as easy as following the **'Bake & Breathe'** method. After each sauna session, continue to run your heater on high for 30 minutes with the door closed (without pouring water over the stones). Then come back and leave your sauna door open for another 30 minutes to promote your sauna to 'breathe'. Doing this after every sauna is by far the most important and effective measure to stop mould in its tracks.

To further assist in prevention, it's advised to **remove all wet or damp items** from the sauna after every use. Allowing wet towels, robes, sauna hats, and the water bucket to sit in the warm sauna encourages mould and mildew growth.

**Use towels** to cover the bench seats and back rests to help keep excess moisture and sweat contained.

**IMPORTANT:** Ensure these towels are removed following use.

**Wipe down 'high traffic' areas** such as the top of bench seats, under bench seats, backrests, floorboards, and under the heater (carefully) after every use to remove any residual water from the sauna. Our aim here is to promote a dry, healthy environment that discourages mould growth.



## Treatment

Treating timber for mould and mildew isn't a scary process and can be done alongside preventative measures to minimize ongoing issues. If mould is present, follow the instructions below to treat the timber.

The interior can be disinfected using diluted hydrogen peroxide (3%). Prepare the solution outside of the sauna. Never use harsh cleaners as they can damage the wood. A soft brush can be used to scrub lightly where required (the floor may need scrubbing). Wipe off excess water with a dry clean towel and thoroughly ventilate to assist drying.

If the mould is in the grain of the timber, try making a paste with baking soda and warm water. Apply this paste to the affected area and use a soft-bristled brush to gently scrub the area. Wipe away the residual paste with a lightly dampened cloth followed by a dry cloth/towel.

If all else has failed, gently sand down the area by hand using fine-grit sandpaper. Do not use an electric sander.

The bottom line is moisture prevention! Regular and consistent prevention will mean you may never need to follow the 'treatment' steps and will only need to focus on enjoying your next sauna!

# Maintenance & Cleaning Schedule

## After Every Use

- ☐ Wipe down all excess moisture and sweat with a dry cloth or towel
- ☐ Remove all damp items from the sauna (Towels, sauna hats, robes, bucket & ladle etc)
- ☐ Bake & Breathe method

## Monthly

- ☐ Wipe down all surfaces thoroughly.
- ☐ On a dry breezy day, run the heater for 1 hour with the door closed, then turn the heater off and leave the door fully open for several hours.
- ☐ Inspect all vents to make sure they are not blocked.
- ☐ Remove any build up of dirt and debris



## Seasonly (Change of season)

- ☐ Clean the outside parts with a cloth or soft brush and bucket of water (do not pressure wash) and then dry down with a clean towel.
- ☐ Ensure the bitumen roofing pieces do not need to be re-secured.
- ☐ Renew and replace the sauna stones once per year.
- ☐ Check the screws and hinges on the door.
- ☐ Check all steel bands are tight and secure.
- ☐ Inspect for potential signs of mould or accelerated deterioration.





## Cautions

- *NEVER USE A SAUNA IF YOU HAVE A SERIOUS ILLNESS, HIGH/LOW BLOOD PRESSURE, HEART CONDITION, RESPIRATORY CONDITION, A CONTAGIOUS DISEASE, INFECTION OR OPEN WOUNDS.*
- *ALWAYS STAY HYDRATED WHILE USING THE SAUNA.*
- *NEVER USE A SAUNA UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS.*
- *NEVER USE A SAUNA IF YOU ARE EXHAUSTED.*
- *DURING OPERATION HEATER WILL BE EXTREMELY HOT - MAY RESULT IN BURNS IF TOUCHED*
- *REMOVE GLASSES, JEWELRY & METALS AS THESE WILL ABSORB HEAT AND CAN CAUSE BURNS*
- *BEWARE - FLOOR MAY BECOME SLIPPERY. MOVE CAREFULLY AROUND SAUNA .*
- *NEVER PLACE ITEMS NEAR OR ON THE SAUNA HEATER - MAY CAUSE FIRE.*
- *ONLY USE FRESH UNCHLORINATED WATER ON THE SAUNA STONES.*

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

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If you need assistance, please get in touch via phone or email.

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For a digital copy of this guide and also the outdoor sauna user guide visit:

<http://alpinespas.co.nz/support/>

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