

# Barrel Saunas

**Standard Barrel**  
**Canopy Barrel**  
**Grandview Barrel**  
**Rustic Barrel**  
**Huntington Barrel**

## Installation & Owner's Manual

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# Read entire manual through to the end before proceeding with the assembly.

## CHECK YOUR BOXES

Be sure to immediately check your boxes against your shipping list and bill of lading. Examine for any damage and notify 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.

When installing a sauna, special electrical requirements will necessitate the hiring of an electrician. The costs of this can vary greatly depending on a number of factors. These may include how far away from your electrical service box you locate your sauna, what part of the country you live in, the cost of materials, and other factors. We always recommend that you get quotes from **2 or 3 different licensed electricians** before you begin installation in order to get the best possible service.

## 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 session. 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 concrete pad or wood deck is always best for outdoor installations, but if you put your sauna directly on the ground, be sure that the cradle supports are resting on cinder blocks or other similar structures to prevent it from settling into the ground. Regardless of where you set your sauna, be sure that the surface you use is both firm and level. Verify that both the inlet and outlet vents in the sauna will remain unobstructed.

## STAVE SELECTION

While Almost Heaven Saunas uses only high grade lumber, slight blemishes in the wood may be present, 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: either adjustable or open (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" and 3/16" drill bit
- Utility knife
- Level

## INSTALLATION VIDEO

You are encouraged to watch our 8 minute online installation video prior to assembly of your Barrel Sauna. It will help give you an overview of what is necessary for a proper installation and make assembly even easier for you!

## A Word About Barrel Saunas

This manual is designed to be used for all Almost Heaven Barrel Saunas. While there are various sizes, features and product names for our various Barrel Saunas, the information is applicable to each.

The overall procedures are the same for all Barrel Saunas even though specific details may vary. The sauna kits are designed for ease of assembly by the homeowner, and every effort has been made to make the assembly information as clear and concise as possible.

To watch a demonstration of how the Barrel Sauna is assembled visit our YouTube channel.

**Your Almost Heaven Barrel is designed for outdoor use. The lumber is naturally resistant to the elements. Rain and sun will not damage the wood, although natural weathering and coloring of the wood will occur over time.**

**Properly assembled, you should not experience water *dripping* into the sauna. However, you will experience water seepage, especially on the top and sides of the sauna. This is because of the porous characteristics of the wood and due to the ball-and-socket profile design of the staves.**

**Water seepage WILL NOT hurt the sauna and in most cases will dry quickly in the hot, dry environment when the sauna is in use. If you wish to keep your sauna completely dry at all times, then you should place it under a covering or structure with a roof.**

This manual and the installation video that is included with your sauna give detailed instructions for proper assembly, and you are encouraged to review this material in detail before you begin assembly of your Almost Heaven Barrel Sauna.

If you have any questions about assembly, please contact us at:

Office 888.355.3050

E-mail [sales@almostheaven.com](mailto:sales@almostheaven.com)

Thank you again for your purchase of an Almost Heaven Sauna! We appreciate your business and wish you many years of enjoyment with your new sauna.

## 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, and a slight slope will not be a problem. However, if the slope is more pronounced, it is suggested that you use shims to make the sauna level. Failure to do this can result in wall sections out of plumb, a poor fit, and/or your sauna functioning poorly. If your installation is in an exceptionally windy area, you may want to take extra precaution to be sure the door does not accidentally blow open in wind gusts. In most situations, however, this will not be a problem.

## 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 one or more holes drilled in it for water drainage. As you examine the staves, you will notice that each end has a croze (notch) on its inside face. The croze is the square cut groove into which the sauna end panels fit.

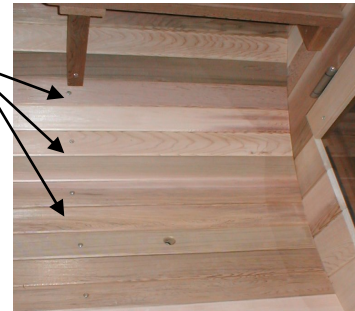
Begin the assembly by placing the cradle bases on the ground according to the Cradle Placement Guide on the following page. Identify your specific Barrel Sauna model and be sure the cradle bases are parallel to each other. Keeping everything level and square is very important to insure proper assembly and function.

Place the drain stave exactly in the center of the cradle base to provide good drainage. Insert 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 (groove) 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 using one screw per board into each cradle base, counter-sinking the screws into the stave.



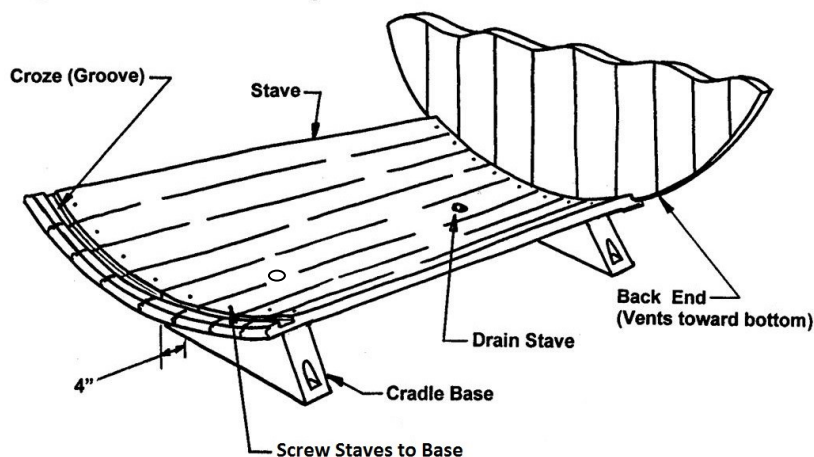
With the drain stave in the center, insert additional staves to the end of each cradle base.

Countersink  
Stainless Steel  
Screws when  
attaching staves  
to cradle  
supports.



Screw staves to cradles

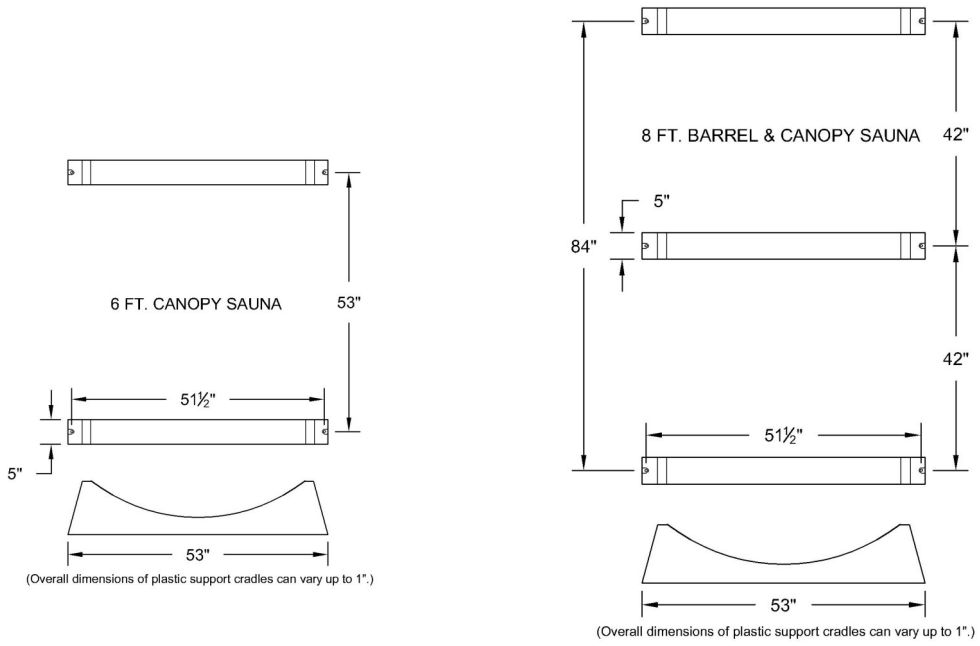
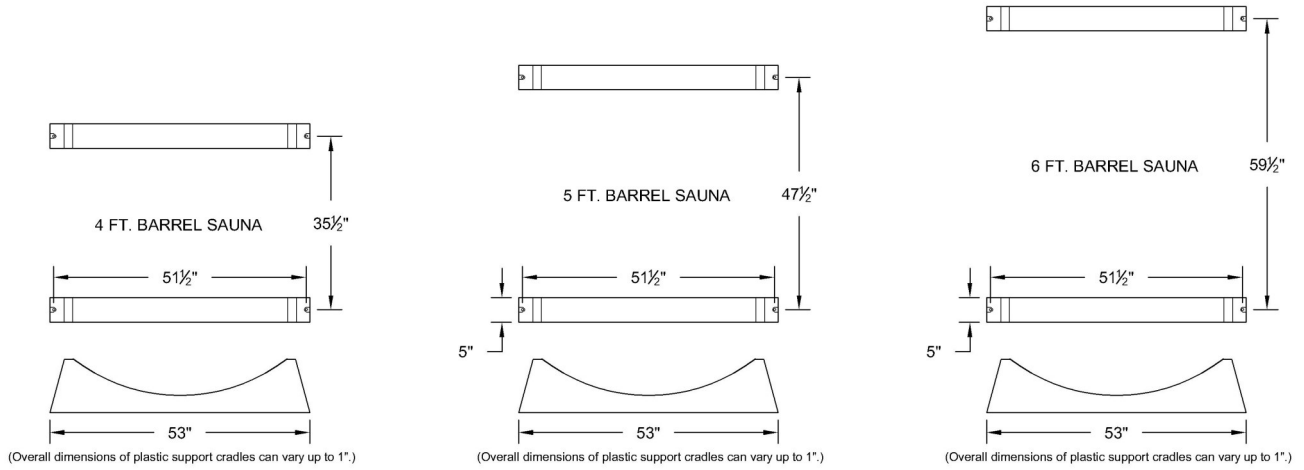
Figure 1 – Base Assembly



Position the front and back ends in the croze on each end of the base assembly (See Figure 1). Use a level to be sure that the vertical boards on the door end and back end are level 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 metal vents are to be on the BOTTOM on the back (heater) end, and the vent holes on the TOP on the door end of the sauna.

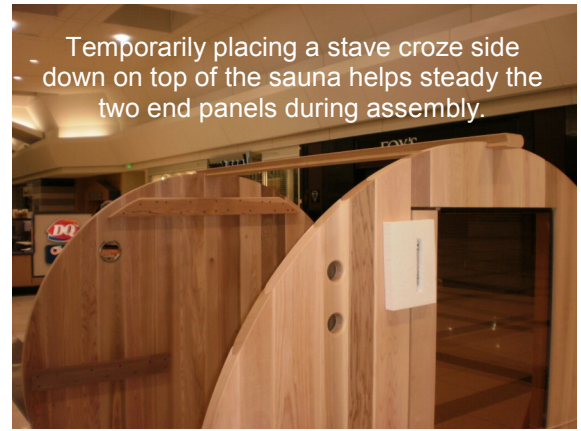
# Cradle Placement Guide



**Note:** For the 8' Grandview Sauna, a fourth cradle is added. The two center cradles are to be evenly spaced between the end cradles.



Now that you have the front and end pieces placed in the croze, begin alternately placing staves up the side of the sauna. Tap each board firmly to the next with a rubber mallet, and hammer a nail through the stave and into the end pieces every 2-3 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.



Temporarily placing a stave croze side down on top of the sauna helps steady the two end panels during assembly.

When you come to the point of closing the room, you will find that the space left over may not be equal to a whole stave. We have provided a set of "filler staves" cut into various widths, (See Figure 2). Use the necessary combination of filler staves to provide the tightest fit. Install by tilting out the adjacent staves, inserting the filler staves, 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.

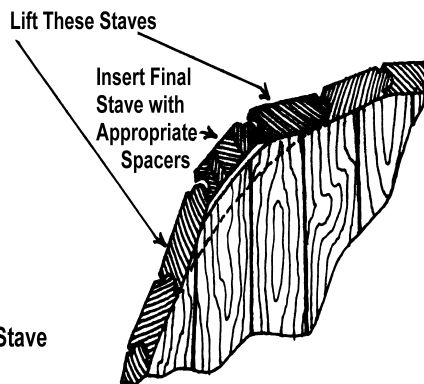


Figure 2 - Final Stave

**NOTE:** It is helpful to tie a loose rope or strap around the barrel while placing the filler staves in place. This will prevent the other staves from falling out when spreading them apart to insert the final staves. It is important to get as many staves and final staves as possible around the barrel ends in order to create the best seal possible!

- Summary**
- 1) Place the end sections in the croze, insuring vertical boards are plumb
  - 2) Place staves around ends, tapping them with a rubber mallet before nailing
  - 3) Stop nailing at the half-way point

**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 portion 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 spaced evenly. 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.



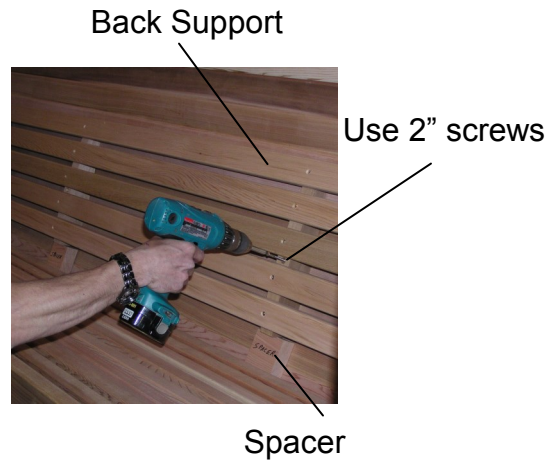
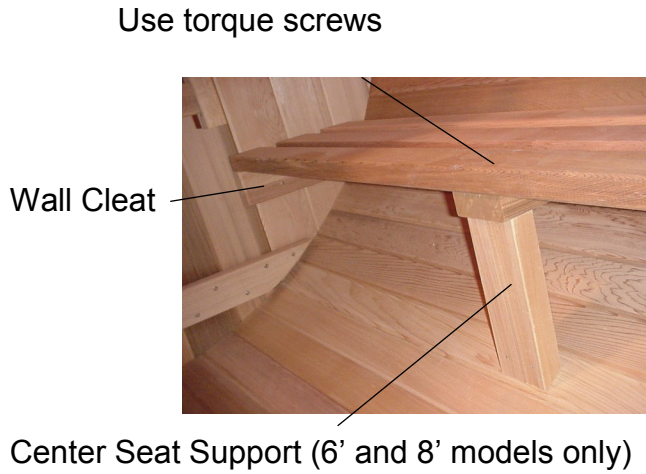
**Figure 3 - Band Assembly**

**Note:**

- 4' and 5' Barrel Saunas require two bands, one on each end and positioned over the croze.
- 6' Barrel Saunas require three bands, the third band positioned in the center of the sauna.
- 8' Barrel Saunas require four bands, the third and fourth evenly spaced along sauna length.
- For Canopy Barrels, place the front band 4" from the front of the sauna.
- 8' Grandview Barrel requires 5 bands evenly spaced.

**BENCHES & 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 only) 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 Grandview and Rustic Saunas include two contoured back supports. Place the spacers against the installed benches and screw the back supports to the sauna walls. **(See Figure 5A)**



**Figure 5 - Seat Installation**

**Figure 5A - Back Support Installation (Grandview, Huntington, and Rustic Saunas only)**

**Note for Canopy Barrel:**

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



**Bench Support**

**Note for Grandview Barrel**

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

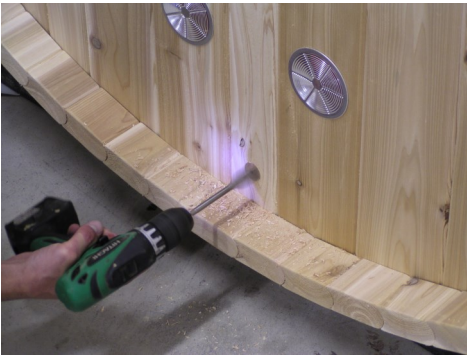


**Duckboard Floor Section**

**HEATER**

Mount the heater as shown in the heater installation instructions. The heater should be positioned between the benches on the back end wall approximately 7 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.





Drill hole in rear of sauna to bring power to sauna heater. Location shown is typical, but the wire can come in at any point most convenient and accessible to the power source.



Bring conduit into sauna in compliance with local electrical codes.



Interior view of wire coming into sauna and then wiring directly to heater according to heater manufacturer's installation and hookup instructions.

Refer to the heater installation instructions for further heater installation details.

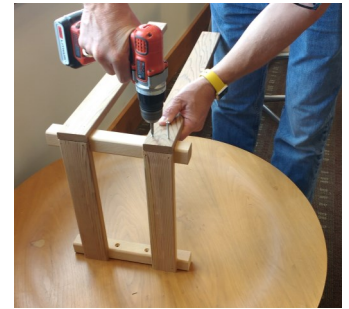
### HEATER FENCE ASSEMBLY



Your fence kit will arrive banded with stretch wrap. It consists of four pieces, shown here.



Prop up the first pre-assembled portion and attach the two long horizontal pieces. Make sure the countersunk holes on the wall mounting bracket face inward.



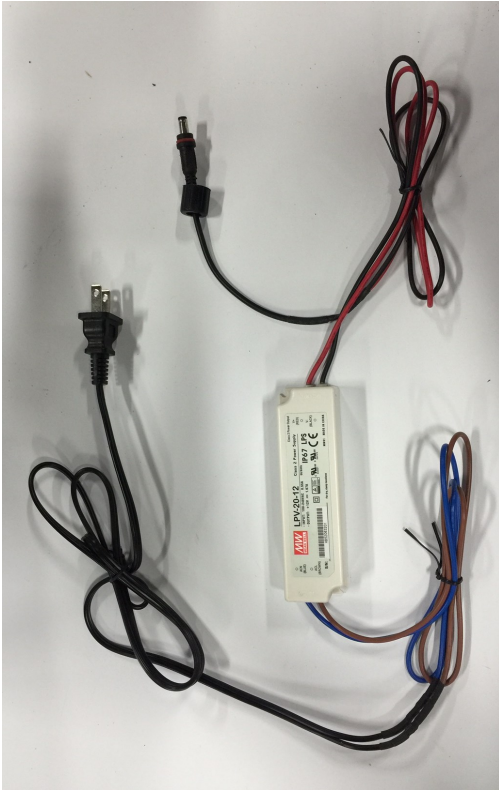
Attach the final piece—the remaining pre-assembled portion.



Position the fence around the heater and use the pre-drilled holes to attach it to the wall.



## LIGHT



### 1. Run LIGHT CORD through Hole

The LED lighting comes installed beneath your sauna heater, and a small hole has been drilled in the back wall for you to run the power cord through.

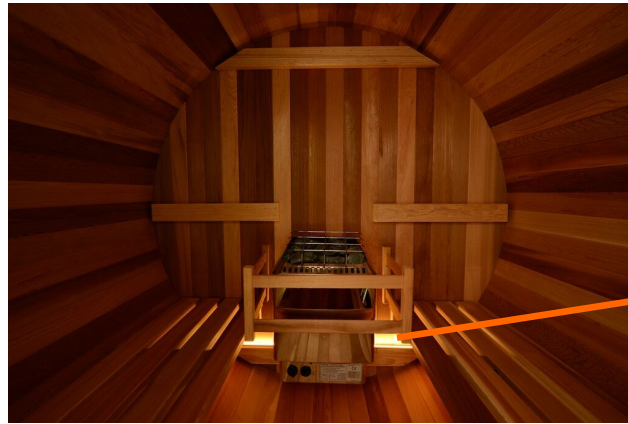
### 2. Connect LIGHT CORD

Connect the female end coming from the LED lighting bar to the male end coming from the power supply



### 3. Mount POWER SUPPLY

Use provided screws to position waterproof Power Supply where most convenient on the outside of the sauna.



LED Lighting bars come pre-mounted.

### 4. Connect to POWER

Plug into any standard outlet, or have your electrician hardwire it into a 115V circuit. To operate, press the red, pre-mounted switch.



## TREATING THE SAUNA

The lumber used in the construction of your Barrel Sauna is naturally resistant to the elements. Left untreated, the exterior of an outdoor sauna will change colors. For example, a red cedar sauna will become silvery-gray. Rest assured, 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 coloring.

If you want to retain the natural color of the lumber, your local paint store can recommend an outdoor stain. A clear stain will retain the full natural color of your sauna. Be sure that it has a UV inhibitor 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.

If you have a red cedar sauna, here are a couple recommended stain types. However, be sure to test a small piece of wood to be sure you like the color.

### LOWES

Brand: Olympic Elite  
Type: Woodland Oil  
Color: Natural  
Part #80100

### HOME DEPOT

Brand: Behr Premium  
Type: Transparent Weather Proofing  
Color: Cedar Naturaltone  
Part #50101

## 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. Remove the corks from the drain holes to let any water drain out. Replace the corks and leave them in place while using the sauna to minimize air flow. Rinse off the sauna stones and install them in or on the heater in accordance with the heater manufacturer's instructions. Improper placement of heater stones can result in lower than desired heat temperatures. The first time you turn the heater on, set it 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 lumber 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 left dial is the temperature setting and the right dial is the combined timer/on-off switch. Please refer to the manual that came with your heater for full heater operational instructions. Since you most likely will use your sauna as both a "wet sauna" and a "dry sauna", you should install the sauna stones that have been included with the heater, following the manufacturer's 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 to let the humidity escape. Not much water is necessary to achieve a "wet sauna".

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 distances of up to 30 feet from the breaker box are as follows:

- 4.5kw, 5.0kw and 6.0kw heaters require 10-2 w/ground, copper only wire, and 30amp non-GFCI breaker.
- 8.0kw heater 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.

## ACCESSORIES

- Mount the thermometer on the opposite wall as the heater and at about eye level.
- A wooden bucket and ladle are provided for you to sprinkle water over the hot sauna stones.
- 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 or swimming pool.

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 stones, 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 yourself 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.

