

# INSTALLATION & OWNER'S MANUAL

## The PHOENIX BARREL SAUNA

Read these instructions to guide your assembly.



**It is highly recommended to view the assembly video prior to starting assembly!**

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# IMPORTANT SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS

**DANGER:** Indicates a hazardous situation that, if not avoided, will result in death or serious injury.

**WARNING:** Indicates a hazardous situation that, if not avoided, could result in death or serious injury.

**CAUTION:** Indicates a hazardous situation that, if not avoided, could result in minor or moderate injury.

**NOTICE:** Indicates information considered important, but not hazard-related.

-  **READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE INSTALLATION AND USE TO AVOID INJURY OR DAMAGE TO SAUNA**
-  **FOLLOW SAFETY INFORMATION IN THIS DOCUMENT TO AVOID SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH**
-  **REFER TO YOUR LOCAL BUILDING CODES FOR ANY SPECIFIC INSTALLATION REQUIREMENTS**
-  **ALL ELECTRICAL WORK NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED BY A LICENSED ELECTRICIAN. FAILURE TO DO SO COULD CAUSE INJURY OR DAMAGE TO THE HEATER.**
-  **KEEP THESE INSTRUCTIONS FOR FUTURE REFERENCE**

## **WARNING**

- This sauna is not intended for use by persons (including children) with reduced physical, sensory or mental capabilities, or lack of experience and knowledge, unless they have been given supervision or instruction concerning use of the sauna by a person responsible for their safety.
  - Consult your doctor about any health-related limitations related to sauna use. Ignoring advice from your medical provider could cause serious injury or death.
  - Do not let people with pre-existing health conditions bathe in the sauna on their own. Using the sauna could cause these users to lose consciousness.
  - Parents should consult your pediatrician before allowing children to use the sauna. Ignoring advice from your medical provider could cause serious injury or death.
  - Do not smoke, use alcohol, or exercise in the sauna. These tasks could cause users to lose consciousness.
  - Do not exceed 30 min. in the sauna at one time, as excessive exposure may be harmful to health.  
The sauna should not be used as an endurance test.
  - Do not place any combustible material over the sauna heater (towels, bathing suits, wooden bucket or ladle)!  
This will cause the sauna to catch fire.
  - Hyperthermia occurs when the internal temperature of the body reaches a level several degrees above the normal body temperature of 98,6 °F. The symptoms of hyperthermia include an increase in the internal temperature of the body, dizziness, lethargy, drowsiness, and fainting.
- Only use stones approved for sauna heater use. Inadequate stones may crack or explode leading to serious injury.

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- Do not sleep in a sauna that the heater is operating. Sleeping in a heated sauna may lead to injury or death.

 **CAUTION**

- Keep all occupants away from the heater and when it is hot. The stones and outer surface of the heater may burn your skin.
- Do not throw excessive amounts of water on the stones. The evaporating water is boiling hot and could cause burns.
- Do not throw water directly onto the elements. This could cause burns and damage to the heater.
- Be very careful when moving in the sauna, as the benches and floors may be slippery. This could cause the user to slip and fall.
- Do not alter the sauna in any way, unless explicitly instructed in this manual. Altering the sauna could lead to structural damage, increasing the risk to bodily harm.
- When moving and lifting heavy pieces, use two or more people. Moving pieces without adequate manpower will lead to injury.

Congratulations on your purchase of an AlmostHeaven barrel sauna! The barrel sauna is unique to Almost Heaven, and has been our most popular product for over 40years. We are delighted you have decided to partake in the sauna tradition!

## **A WORD ABOUT BARREL SAUNAS**

Our sauna kits are designed for ease of assembly by the customer, and every attempt has been made to make assembly information as clear as possible. For further guidance on assembly, please visit our YouTube channel.

If [you have any questions about assembly](#), please do not hesitate to call us at **773-435-7596**, or send us an email at [support@rateoutdoors.com](mailto:support@rateoutdoors.com).

Your Almost Heaven barrel is designed for outdoor use although it is perfectly fine to use it indoors. 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. To preserve the initial look of the sauna, you may choose to stain the exterior with a UV inhibiting stain. Consult your local paint store for their recommendations on a particular stain for your sauna. We do not recommend that you paint or varnish your sauna.

Properly assembled, you should not experience water dripping in the sauna. You may experience water seepage, particularly on the top and sides of the sauna. This is due to the porous nature of softwoods as well as the tongue and groove design of the staves.

Water seepage or leakage will NOT harm the sauna and in most cases will evaporate quickly in the hot, dry interior. If you wish to completely waterproof your sauna, we suggest covering it with a shelter or structure with a roof. Alternately, you may purchase an Almost Heaven rain jacket, which covers the top of your barrel sauna.



## **YOUR BARREL SAUNA WILL INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:**

- One full box of staves
- Drain stave
- Filler stave
- Two barrel end sections (two end panels).
- Two vertical door frame boards for the front barrel end.
- Heater and mounting hardware, which are found in the heater box enclosed in the bag containing plaques (if ordered)
- Stones (if ordered)
- Hardware bag
- Door handle assembly
- Two benches
- Two backrests
- Six bench brackets
- Six bench braces
- Four Banding assembly's
- Cradles

## **LOCATING THE SAUNA**

Because the traditional sauna experience involves a heating-cooling-resting regimen, it is important to plan ahead before installing your sauna. Our method of construction allows you to place your barrel sauna in a wide variety of settings.

Be sure the surface is firm and level, and can support the weight of the sauna and its users (1,000+ lbs). A deck or concrete slab is certainly an option, but if your sauna sits directly on the ground, be sure the cradle supports rest on paver stones or something similar to prevent the cradles from settling into the ground.

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## BASIC TOOLS

These tools are helpful in the assembly of your barrel sauna:

- Cordless drill & 1/2" drill bit
- Rubber mallet
- Hammer
- Framing square
- Utility knife
- Level
- Screwdrivers (Phillips and flathead)
- Wrench
- Pneumatic nail gun (optional)

## FIRST CONSIDERATIONS

Before beginning assembly, ensure that the installation surface is level. Many garage, basement or deck floors are sloped for drainage. A slight slope will not be an issue, but a more pronounced slope will require shimming to make the sauna level. An uneven installation surface can result in poor-fitting staves leading to poor sauna function. Also, if the site might receive heavy winds, it is recommended extra precautions are taken to ensure the door does not blow open. In most situations, this factor will not be a concern. Unpack all staves. Identify the drain stave (it will have one or more drainage holes bored into it). This will be the bottommost and first stave used.

## SAUNA ASSEMBLY



- **Ensure sauna foundation is sturdy and level. If the foundation is not, the sauna could tilt, shift or fall leading to injury.**

### FLOOR ASSEMBLY

Begin assembly by placing the two end cradles on the ground, space the remaining cradle evenly between the two end cradles (1). For optimal assembly, it is important that the cradles are parallel to each other. Fasten the drain stave directly in the center of the cradles using 2" screws, and so the stave extends over the end cradles by approximately 4" - 5" (2-4).

**Note:** When installing screws on drain stave, try to position them so they are between the two sets of bolts in the cradle.

(5).



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

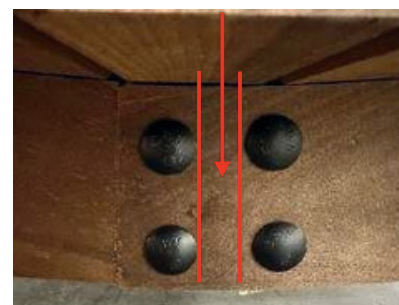


Figure 5

Make sure the stave sits perpendicular to the cradles with framing square before continuing. Continue adding staves to each side of the center stave, tapping each into place with a rubber mallet (6).

As you are adding staves, fasten every other stave to each cradle making sure each notch lines up with the others and that each stave is perpendicular to the cradles (7). While fastening, apply slight pressure on the stave so it makes contact with the adjoining stave. Repeat this process until staves fill the cradles (8). Note: If you have access to a pneumatic nailer this process will go faster.



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

Position the front and back ends in the notches, with the horizontal support boards facing the inside of the sauna (9-10).

**Note:** the metal vents are to be on the bottom on the back end. The front end panel is positioned so they are in the upper left corner.



Figure 9



Figure 10

Place a level on the uppermost horizontal support boards on the front and back ends to ensure each end is level (11). Adjust as necessary. Figure (12) shows what your assembly should look like at this point of the installation process. You will find it helpful to place a temporary stave at the top, connecting the two ends. This will align and stabilize the two ends while you continue adding staves to your sauna.



Figure 11



Figure 12

### ROOM ASSEMBLY

With the front and back pieces level and placed, begin placing staves up the sides of the sauna. Tap each board with a rubber mallet to ensure a snug fit (13). Hammer a 2" nail through every second or third stave into the front and back end panels to keep them from falling out. The fewer nails you use, the easier disassembly will be should you ever need to take down the sauna. Periodically set the level on the staves to check that they are level (14). Stop using nails about halfway up the sides (15-16).



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16

**Note: at this point in the installation, you may find it helpful to tie a loose rope or strap around your sauna.** Continue placing staves, tapping them in place with a rubber mallet (17). Do not nail the remaining staves in place.



Figure 17

When you arrive to the point of closing the room, you may find that the remaining space will not accommodate a full-size stave (18). We have provided a set of filler staves cut into various widths (19). Choose the necessary combination of filler staves to provide the tightest fit. Use the fillers with the ball, socket and then place any required additional fillers between these pieces. Install the filler staves by tilting the adjacent staves up, insert and mallet in the filler staves, and push them all back into place (20). It is important that you use as many staves and fillers as you can prior to tightening the stainless-steel bands in order to ensure the tightest seal possible. It is recommended that you insert enough filler staves so that some of the staves between the 10 – 2 position actually “lift off” the front and rear end panels. In other words, the radius of that the staves create will actually be slightly larger than the radius of the barrel end panels. This will ensure the tightest seal possible when the bands are tightened.



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20

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## BAND ASSEMBLY

Each band assembly includes the following components:

- Stainless steel band w/brackets
- Threaded rod
- ½" nuts (2)
- Black vinyl caps

Position a band around both end panels. (The two end bands should cover the nails used to hold the lower staves in place.) Insert the threaded rod through the bracket and tighten the nuts by hand evenly until no longer able (21). Before continuing to tighten, verify the bands are evenly spaced (approximately 3" from stave end) and align or stagger the bracket placement along the side of the sauna according to personal preference (22). Tighten nuts evenly and place vinyl caps over the threaded rod (23). Place middle two bands following the same procedure. Space them evenly between the outer two bands, approximately 32" from stave ends (24).



Figure 21



Figure 22

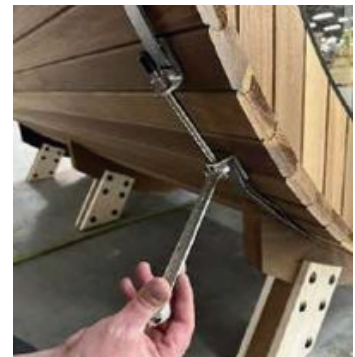


Figure 23a



Figure 23b



Figure 24

Once the bands are in place and tightened, remove the temporary cross members on the front end. Now install the two vertical door boards using screws from supplied hardware bag installed into the pre-drilled holes (25).



Figure 25

## BENCHES AND SUPPORTS

Locate a set of bench brackets and braces (26). The front and rear brackets will be 7" in from the end panel (27). Set your level on the top of a bench bracket and slide it up the wall until it is level, and 7" from end panel (28). While holding in place, mark the center of all three holes (29). Set bracket to the side, and drill three holes using 1/2" drill bit (30). **NOTE: HOLES MUST BE DRILLED PERPENDICULAR TO THE WALL SO THE BRACKET ON THE OUTSIDE ALIGNS.** On the outside of the unit, push the bolts through the brace so they go into the sauna and through bench bracket (31). Bolts may need slight tap from rubber mallet to go through wood and brackets. Once bolts are through the holes in the bracket, apply a washer then fully tighten the nut (32).



Figure 26



Figure 27



Figure 28



Figure 29



Figure 30



Figure 31



Figure 32

For the middle bench bracket, measure 41" from the back wall and make two marks to ensure bracket is vertical (33, 34). Place the bench on outer two brackets and place middle bracket so the edge is on the 41" mark, and the top is touching the bottom of the bench (35). Mark the bottom of the bracket, and lift bench up out of the way. Using the side marks and bottom mark, place the bracket in place and mark center holes (29). Repeat previous process to drill, and fasten bracket (30-32, 36).



Figure 33



Figure 34

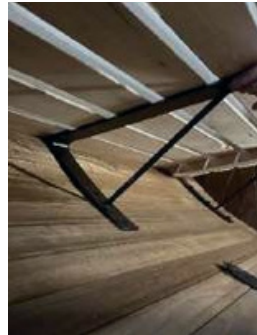


Figure 35



Figure 36

Place bench down centered on three brackets and attach using provided screws in fifteen pre-drilled holes in brackets (36). Repeat this process for opposite side bench.

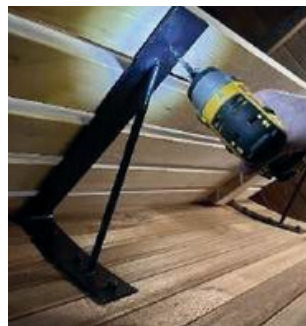


Figure 37

## BACK RESTS

Mount the backrests at the level most comfortable to you, typically 8-12" above the bench. Use a level while fastening to ensure an even installation (38-39).



Figure 38



Figure 39

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## LED LIGHT

Locate the two LED mounting brackets, they should come attached to the light bar (40). Remove them from the light bar and using supplied hardware, place a screw and three washers through each one (41). Attach in the center of the middle slat, approximately 5-6" inside of the bench braces (42).



Figure 40



Figure 41



Figure 42

Clip LED light bar into two installed clips so it is snug and centered. Route wire using supplied cable clips and route plug out of hole in back panel (43-44).



Figure 43



Figure 44

Connect the light bar plug to the power supply plug, and then twist the cover to secure them together (45). Using the provided screws, mount your waterproof power supply where it is most convenient on the exterior of the back sauna panel (46). Repeat for light bar under second bench. Plug the power source into a standard 110V outlet either directly or with an extension cord. You may also wish to have your electrician hardwire the light to a 110V circuit.



Figure 45



Figure 46

## INSTALL DOOR HANDLE

Open door handle package and layout the pieces of the door handle, you will also need a phillips screwdriver for installation (47). Install both woodspacers into wooden handle (48). Insert screw, metal spacer and plastic spacer over screw (49-50). Insert screw through the top hole in the glass from the inside, so the wooden handle is inside the unit (51). Now place the plastic spacer and metal spacer over the screw. Mate the metal handle to the screw on the outside of the unit, and partially tighten screw (52). Swing handle to the side to access screw (53). Repeat process from above by applying metal spacer and plastic spacer over screw. Push screw through bottom hole in the glass, and swing the metal handle out to apply both spacers (54). Partially tighten bottom screw; make sure handle is straight from top to bottom and finish tightening screws to complete installation (55).



Figure 47



Figure 48



Figure 49



Figure 50



Figure 51



Figure 52



Figure 53



Figure 54



Figure 55

## FINAL THINGS

Once assembly is complete, sweep and vacuum the inside of the sauna. Wipe down the entire interior with a damp cloth to remove any remaining dirt, dust and debris.

**Note:** If the sauna has absorbed moisture in storage, the staves may shrink as the high heat evaporates that moisture. This may require you to tighten the bands even further. If your sauna is left in the open rain, this will cause the staves to expand again resulting in an even tighter seal.

**Note:** It is highly recommended to treat the exterior window and door trim pieces with an exterior grade stain or sealant of your choice.

**HEATER** - Please see heater manual.



- **Turn off power to heater at breaker before beginning installation or performing maintenance on the heater**  
Failure to turn off the power will lead to electrocution and even death.



- **Improper installation of heater or heater mounting bracket could cause the heater to fall leading to burns and other injuries.**
- **Before replacing or adjusting stones, ensure heater is back to room temperature. Failure to do so may cause burns.**

## TRADITIONAL SAUNA USE

Congratulations! You are ready to enjoy your barrel sauna! You may use your sauna in a wet or dry fashion. Dry, meaning you do not sprinkle any water onto the stones; wet, meaning you increase the humidity of the room by sprinkling water onto the stones. Please note, not much water is needed to achieve a wet sauna experience. 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!

- Set your heater so your sauna achieves the desired temperature. This is typically 160 -185+ degrees F. Novice sauna users should begin at the lower end of that range and increase their high temperature over time.
- Take a quick shower or a quick dip in a hot tub or pool.
- 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.
- Take a plunge in a pool, shower, snowbank, lake-anything that will cool you down! After that, relax and cool down for 10-20 minutes.
- 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. If water spills through the heater to the floor, you are using too much water, though this will not hurt the heater or the sauna.
- 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.
- Prepare to feel refreshed for the day or to have an amazing night's sleep!

Whatever your sauna routine, it is imperative that you **STAY HYDRATED!**

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