

Britain's leading health and wellbeing specialists answer your questions

Q+A

However much exercise I do I never seem to be able to change my body shape – I always lose weight and gain definition on my top half, never on my bottom. What am I doing wrong?

THE FITNESS EXPERT

CHRISTINA HOWELLS Fat around the bottom and thighs is a sign of oestrogen dominance. Optimising liver function is essential, so reduce refined sugar, alcohol and processed foods. Eat cruciferous vegetables (cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower) as they contain indole-3-carbinol, which promotes the breakdown of oestrogen. Aim to eat a high-fibre diet and consider including a probiotic supplement. Adding flax seeds to food daily is especially useful.

THE PHYSIOTHERAPIST

WILL PRESSLEY If your posture isn't correct when doing an exercise you can think you are working the gluteal muscles but you may not be. Most people lean back slightly when they walk. If you lean forward (to the correct position) then the glutes will work and your buttocks will become toned. Press your fingers into your buttock muscles and take a few steps. Nothing happening? Lean forward and try again. These muscles will now get hard because your weight is in front of, rather than behind, your feet.

THE YOGA AND PILATES EXPERT

ANGIE NEWSON Genetically we are 'blessed' with things we can't change. However, standing yoga poses that target the legs can help. *Utkatasana*, or chair pose (like a squat), tones the thighs and bottom. Stand with feet hip-width apart, extend the arms in front of you at shoulder height and sit back into an imaginary chair.

Keep the abs in, chest and head up, tail bone down. Inhale, sit; exhale, stand. Do a set of eight, holding the last for five breaths.



Always consult a medical practitioner if your symptoms persist. Send your health questions, for publication only, to stellahealth@telegraph.co.uk

How safe is microdermabrasion? I tried it recently in a bid to get rid of some light scars and a dull complexion, but my skin was red and tender afterwards. Perhaps that's normal, but I'm reluctant to try again. How else might I achieve a 'fresher' face?

THE FACIALIST

LINDA MEREDITH Some microdermabrasion machines fire fine crystals at the skin and others use a diamond-tipped wand. Both use suction to remove the dead skin cells. The treatment is best suited to thicker skin as it can tolerate more surface layers being removed. It is not suitable on the delicate skin normally associated with fair or red hair as it can cause broken capillaries. Salon treatments such as natural glycolic acids are much better-suited to fine skin.

THE ACUPUNCTURIST

JOHN TSAGARIS The surface layers of the skin contain vitamin C, which protects us from the environment, produces vitamin D and prevents bacterial infections. I believe we should use milder abrasive methods that don't interfere with skin-cell turnover or the function of the epidermis. Facial acupuncture regulates skin-cell renewal by adjusting the behaviour of stem cells deep in the dermis. To brighten dark patches, use fresh lemon juice as a toner all over the face. Let it sit for 10 minutes then rinse off.

THE AESTHETIC CONSULTANT

KASIA BRENNAN Microdermabrasion can improve a dull complexion, but to improve scarring I would suggest a treatment that promotes collagen production and skin regeneration. The Dermaroller treatment, where a roller of micro needles is passed over the skin, stimulates skin regeneration and repair, naturally and safely, improving the look of fine lines, sun damage and scarring to create a smoother, brighter complexion. ●