

Inch busters

If no amount of diet and exercise can spot treat and shift the fat from stubborn areas of your body, leave the hard labour to these trim-down helpers, *BeautyBlackBook* reviews the mean machines

New Life with B.E.A.M

WHAT IS IT: New Life with B.E.A.M (Bio Electrical Acceleration Management) technology not only tones and reduces the circumference on problem body parts like your saddlebags, but lifts droopy buttocks and breasts, the skin on your face and can even clear acne. Each customer gets their own personal set of electrode pads which are stuck onto target areas of the body like the hips and thighs. Once adjusted to your level, the B.E.A.M technology imitates your natural body pulses and your muscles are contracted, folding onto themselves to become smaller and more defined.

PROCEDURE: The B.E.A.M almost feels like mild electrocution with your muscles contracting like a real workout. As you progress, the contraction time is lengthened and the frequency of the waves are altered to get the best possible results. In the stomach area, it felt like I was holding a sit-up position mid-air while at times, my legs involuntarily jerked from the stimulation. My therapist helped make each session more relaxing by giving me a light scalp, and shoulder massage using pure essential oils.

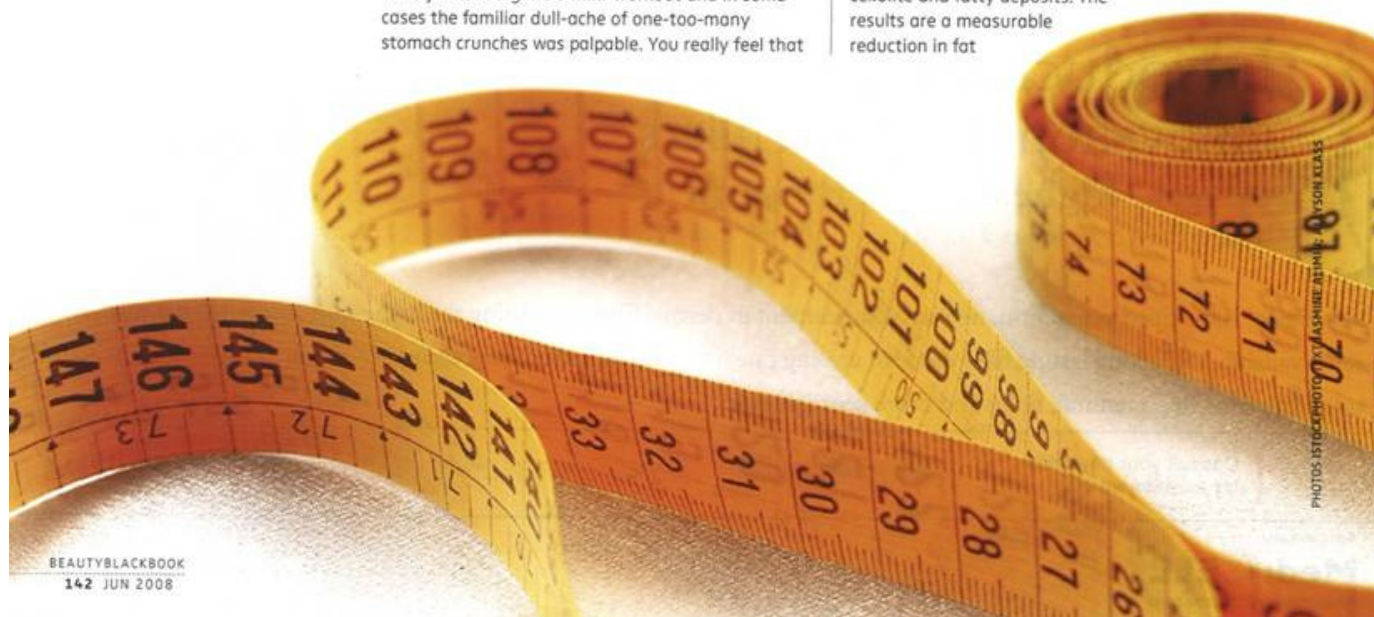
VERDICT: After each 50-minute session, I felt like I had just undergone a mini-workout and in some cases the familiar dull-ache of one-too-many stomach crunches was palpable. You really feel that

your muscles have been toned, almost like you're wearing an invisible corset for an hour after, and clothes fit better after just one session. After five sessions, I saw considerable circumference loss (about 4cm in total) from my thighs and tummy. The only minor side effect I experienced was a mild prickling sensation on my skin on one occasion, a day after I had undergone the treatment. The key is going for six to twelve sessions in close succession and then maintaining your newly-trim figure with regular monthly upkeep.

PRICE: \$130 per session, available at *One Beauty Place, Level 2 Tangs Orchard, Tel: 6738 0200*

VelaShape

WHAT IS IT: Showcased on US talkshows like *The Dr Phil Show* and the *CBS Early Morning Show*, the VelaShape is supposedly the first and only non-invasive device to receive FDA clearance for cellulite treatment, body re-shaping and temporary reduction of thigh circumference in as quick as four sessions. The technology uses a combination of light (infrared), bi-polar radiofrequency (RF), mechanical rollers and vacuum suction to manipulate the superficial fat tissue layer that contributes to cellulite and fatty deposits. The results are a measurable reduction in fat



PHOTOS: ISTOCKPHOTO/MIKE OLSON KLAAS

layers, circumference and cellulite on the thighs, buttocks, love handles and abdomen.

PROCEDURE: A cold slimming gel is massaged over the treated area (in our case, the thighs). The machine's applicator looks very similar to an Endermologie machine which has smooth metal rollers to "iron" the skin, grabbing as much superficial fat as possible and sucking it into the machine like a vacuum. As it rolls over the skin, heat is emitted and skin starts to get hot. Within two minutes it starts to get uncomfortable and should reach an optimal 41 degrees celsius to be effective in zapping fats.

VERDICT: Definitely not for the faint hearted, the heat combined with the incessant pinching and rolling is comparable to the pain from tattoos, especially around the inner-thighs where fats are the softest and most malleable. However, with pain comes pleasure — a total of 3cm inch-loss on both thighs in just one first session. What was even more obvious, was the refinement of cellulite which, till two months later, stays smooth. It's believed that one can lose up to 7cm depending on the patient's body shape and how much cellulite they have.

PRICE: \$600 for a 30-minute session, \$250 per session (with a package of 40 sessions), available at *Calvin Chan Aesthetic & Laser, #05-11 Wheelock Place, Tel: 6732 4981*

UltraShape

WHAT IS IT: Designed for those who want to get rid of stubborn fat but are afraid to go under the knife, UltraShape uses a unique technology that incorporates a search-and-destroy ultrasound beam which disrupts fat membranes in the subcutaneous flayer, while surrounding structures such as blood vessels and nerves remain unaffected. The zapped fat is transported to the liver and passed out through the natural metabolic process. Supposedly, it can reduce as much as 10cm in body circumference after three sessions at four-week intervals. Accompanied by a healthy diet and exercise regime, there won't be any need for maintenance treatments.

PROCEDURE: The procedure begins with the patient going through a full consultation session with the physician. After your targetted treatment area is marked out, you lie on the treatment bed while the treatment zone is "photographed" by a tracking system. The tracking system then calculates a 3D matrix of the treatment area which specifies the number of pulses of ultrasound to be performed. Led by a computer-guided system, the trained operator glides the hand-held transducer over the targetted zone indicated on the computer monitor. Painless pulses

of ultrasound are then performed on the patient.

VERDICT: The treatment is generally pain-free but I did feel a quick hot sting at less fatty areas (you need at least 3cm of fat to qualify for the treatment incidentally). For best results, I was told to go on a low carb diet and work in some moderate exercise in the next week to help the liquefied fats get processed and expelled. I lost 1.2cm and 2cm on my left and right thighs respectively after the treatment.

PRICE: From \$1,500, available at *Healthtrends @ Novena, #08-34/35/36 Novena Medical Center, Tel: 6397 6865*

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Skin tyte

WHAT IS IT: The SkinTyte treatment is based on the principle of Sciton's Broadband of Light (BBL) technology and infrared (IR) light energy which deeply heats the skin, thereby promoting partial deterioration and contraction of collagen to stimulate the creation of new collagen. The heat travels deep into the dermis, but has a powerful cooling mechanism to keep the outer skin considerably colder. SkinTyte works on the face, neck, chest, arms and tummy. It is recommended that individuals undergo a series of up to three treatments spaced a month apart, and expect to see optimal improvement by month four.

PROCEDURE: Lying down, the doctor holds the machine's applicator to the skin and it delivers rapid, gentle pulses. A series of pulses will be repeated over the treatment area to ensure best results. It takes between 30 to 45 minutes a session, and you can resume normal activities, right after, like running on the treadmill.

VERDICT: There is no real pain; the flashes of light feel like tiny pin-pricks where thinner areas close to the bone, like the forehead, cheekbone and eyes, tend to hurt more. There is no need for a topical anaesthetic, however, you may choose to use one on more sensitive areas. Some patients feel tighter skin after just one treatment, but doctors say visible improvements will be more noticeable between three to six months, coupled with a healthier diet and some abdominal crunches.

PRICE: Between \$780 to \$1,500, available at *True 'Est Aesthetics & Laser Centre, #16-02 Ngee Ann City Tower A, Tel: 6235 0990* 