

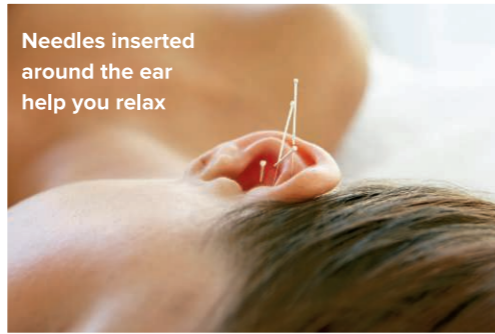
Don't stress about the feel of the needles – they sit lightly in the skin

FACE-FIRMING GEM!

Facial rejuvenation acupuncture *lifting, firming and revitalising!*

Tested by Liz Normand, 45, from London
IS IT FOR YOU? If you're concerned about wrinkles, under-eye bags, double chins and general sagging, then yes, this could be for you, as facial acupuncture promises a firming, lifting and brightening of the skin.
THE EXPERIENCE: "My eyes are my real concern as my once rather nicely defined lids seemed to be collapsing and becoming hooded. After taking a really in-depth health profile – more than with any doctor! – Eli,

my therapist, inserted hair-fine needles all over my face, especially around the eyes, and on my scalp, plus quite a few around the outside of my ears, which she said would help me relax. She also drummed what looked like a little wooden hammer with a needle in its head – called plum blossom needling – just under my jaw. This sounds drastic but it didn't hurt at all and Eli said it would improve skin circulation and help tighten up that area which is heading



Needles inserted around the ear help you relax

towards a double chin! Surprisingly, I found it quite enjoyable – all tingly and warming. After all the drumming and insertions, I rested under a warm lamp aimed at my diaphragm, and drifted in and out of a nice doze until the needles were removed."

"After all the drumming and insertions, I rested under a warm lamp aimed at my diaphragm"

BEAUTY & THE BONUS: "Eli predicted that results wouldn't show for a couple of days and that I'd need a few treatments to see real results. However, just one day later, I had more energy and my normally ultra-pale skin looked warmer and healthier, my brows looked lifted and lids less droopy, plus a deep forehead crease has lessened. Eli's my new hero – I'm hooked, and it's more relaxing than the thought of surgery!"

✦ IT'S WORTH KNOWING

You may feel some of the insertions more than others but this often cheers a therapist as it can mean they've hit the right therapeutic spot. They may also insert needles on the abdomen, feet and legs – remember, this is a whole-person treatment!

Liz had her treatment with Eli Afshar at the Kailash Centre, London. First consultation £80, follow-ons £65 for one hour. (020) 7722 3939; orientalhealing.co.uk. For therapists close to you, try the British Acupuncture Council, (020) 8735 0400; acupuncture.org.uk.

The Hema facial

Seriously eye-opening

Tested by Kathryn Hobbs, 52, from Kent
IS IT FOR YOU? Based on acupressure and lymphatic drainage, it's for you if you'd like to open eyes and firm up those contours!
THE EXPERIENCE: "I'd really noticed before this facial that I was suddenly looking my age – and a little more! Everything was sagging and my eyes were looking lined and droopy. I was lucky enough to have Margaret Hema, the creator, working on me for what was the least fussy – but the most beneficial – facial I've ever had. After skin cleansing, Margaret massaged my face with the organic oil she creates herself. As she works, Margaret picks up the tension in the muscles, and the rhythm of the underlying fluid, and works where skin needs it most. After a rest that included a hand massage, she finished with a slick of more organic oil. No steam, no toner, no scrubs or masks but my skin looked smooth and plumped, and my eyes were wide open again!"
BEAUTY & THE BONUS: "What's good about this facial? Everything! My skin felt wonderfully smooth, my eyes were lifted, de-puffed and de-created. No other facial has ever done so much for my confidence!"

IT'S WORTH KNOWING: New Zealand therapist Margaret Hema treats at Glow Urban Spa in London. You can also have the facial by other therapists, and buy the organic skincare. *Hema Facial, £95 for 75 mins, (020) 7752 0652; glowurbanspa.co.uk.*



SKIN-PLUMPING LUXURY



Facial reflexology is wonderfully soothing

The Reflexology facial

De-stressing, relaxing and skin-smoothing!

Tested by Lynn Tilling, 59, from Middlesex
IS IT FOR YOU? Definitely, if your face is revealing the stress you're under and you'd like to get that relaxed glow back again. Working on facial acupressure points, reflexology massage focuses on balancing the cause of your problems.
THE EXPERIENCE: "A few months of stressful working and poor eating had left me looking and feeling drained. I'd heard about facial reflexology and as I'm not a great fan of anyone working on my feet, this seemed like the therapy for me. Just like a regular facial, you lie on a bed in a warm and soothing treatment room, but that's where the similarity ends. This facial feels therapeutic right from the off. Nikke, my therapist, wiped over my skin with some rose water, then started my massage using just rose oil and her

fingertips. Oh, it was bliss. Using small but really deep movements, she worked over my face until I felt so seriously relaxed that I melted into the massage table. I stayed cosy under blankets until it was time to get up and leave. My skin looked amazing, with no redness or shiny finish. It's a miraculous treatment!"
BEAUTY & THE BONUS: "No other facial has affected me so deeply and shown such brilliant results. Days later, my skin still feels smooth and lines softened."
IT'S WORTH KNOWING: You'll fill out a long health questionnaire before a treatment, but be honest – it pays off! *Lynn was treated by the talented Nikke Ariff, £65 for the first 90-minute consultation; then £50 for 50-minute follow-up treatments, (020) 7388 9818; mindbodypositive.com. For therapists in the UK, see facialreflexology.com.*

Shiatsu massage

De-stressing, relaxing, soothing and caring!

Tested by Amanda Jones, 42, from London.
IS IT FOR YOU? It's perfect if you've a bit of a health niggles that could be affecting your looks. Poor kidney energy, for instance, could reveal itself in dark rings under the eyes, while a digestive imbalance can result in a yellow, sallow complexion. Improve these and looks will perk up!
THE EXPERIENCE: "A problem with my sinuses prompted me to try shiatsu. I'd had an operation but felt things weren't quite right. At my first visit, Katherine took a long

and detailed health history. Unlike most therapies, you don't undress – except for shoes and your watch – and you lie on a futon on the floor. You start out lying on your back, then using a mix of gentle and firm hand touch, she works on acupressure points of the body, turning you on to your side. Katherine finishes off my treatment with work on my face and head to clear sinus congestion and release tension. After a treatment I felt relaxed and quiet, then really quite energetic."

BEAUTY & THE BONUS:

"I didn't have the shiatsu as an alternative kind of facial, but since treatment for my sinuses, the puffiness under my eyes has gone!"
IT'S WORTH KNOWING: Shiatsu is terrific for those emotional times – menopause, divorce and job changes – that leave traces of stress on your skin. No oils are used, you keep your clothes on and stay warm! *Rosemary was treated by Katharine Hall, based in Northants and London. Sessions cost from £45 to £70 for one hour. 07931-286272; shiatsuplus.co.uk. For therapists near you, contact The Shiatsu Society, 0845-1304560; shiatsusociety.org. >>*

STRESS-EASING SOOTHER