

Fresh start

Need a system clear-out? **Lesley McCave** samples a selection of the latest detox treatments.

Detoxes used to be the stuff of New Year's resolutions, after too many mince pies and mugs of mulled wine. But these days they're 'enjoyed' (if that's the right word) year-round, as city dwellers are encouraged to rid their bodies of toxins on a regular basis with elixirs and salon treatments.

One of the wackier therapies is Aqua Detox (£41.20 for 45 minutes), offered at the **Full of Energy** clinic (92 Harwood Road, SW6 4QH, 7731 4715, www.liliiascurtin.co.uk), which also provides such fringe treatments as Biological Terrain Management and Magnet Therapy. The spiel is, you place your feet in warm water, salt is added and an electric current passed through. It's said to draw the toxins out via the feet, and while it sounds plausible, we're not sure it actually does anything – aside from clean your tootsies, perhaps. The water turns a hideous orangey-brown, complete with foaming scum – apparently, the exact shade reflects the overall state of your health. In our case, the therapist commented that we seemed to be having problems in the stomach area. This was true, but could easily just have been a lucky guess. All we gained from the treatment was a Polaroid of our feet in the gunky water. Lots of people swear by Aqua Detox, and while we're not converts, it makes them feel better, then why not?

Turning our focus from feet to legs, the Detoxifying Leg Treat (£50 for 45 minutes) at the **Shengala Beauty Boutique & Day Spa** (see p86) – apparently great for people with fluid retention – was surprisingly luxurious; it starts off with skin brushing, followed

by a massage of the hips, bum and thighs – all the places where cellulite and flab accumulate. Granted, we weren't rail thin by the next day, but we did feel a little lighter in our step. There was more pampering with the Deep Sea Detox at **Bliss London** (see p88, £125 for 90 minutes), which claims to 'slim, remineralise, relax and hydrate'. Coming from the creators of such scary-sounding treatments as the Quadruple Thigh Pass and Oxygen Blast facial, the detox was a little airy-fairy for our liking (when the therapist applied pressure to our lymphatic areas we could barely feel a thing). That said, when the seaweed mask is washed off, you can almost picture yourself in a proper German spa, and the firm head massage was truly invigorating.



Over in Westbourne Grove, **Spa.NK** (see p86) offers a Detoxifying Body Combo (£60 for an hour), which aims to 'aid the release of fluid retention, relieve stress and detoxify the body'. Although we're not entirely convinced it achieved the latter, the experience was a delight, from the candle-lit room to the warm bed and fluffy towels that swaddle you while the refreshing gel, infused with essential oils, gets to work.

With all three spa treatments, we're not sure we felt any lasting effects (and to be fair, several sessions are recommended for full benefit). But who cares? This is exactly the kind of treatment that you'd fancy after a sherry too many – nurturing and relaxing, yet (hopefully) doing some good on the inside, albeit in the short term.

Treatments hip alignment, massage, sports massage.

Martin Jefferies avoids classification as a massage practitioner, teacher of the Alexander Barrie System of Pelvic Correction, body alignment specialist or one of many other possible titles. Instead, he prefers to operate on an outcome basis. How he treats someone depends on how they feel when they arrive, how they want to feel when they leave, and any condition that might become apparent during a session. Operating from treatment rooms at Natureworks, Jefferies addresses muscular dysfunction and postural imbalance with skilful hands and a quirky wit (sessions from £70). He also runs regular practical workshops that give a superb insight into the role flexibility plays in overall fitness. If you thought stiffness, a sore back and not being able to touch your toes were just part of getting older, Jefferies is the man to convince you otherwise. For details of other venues and workshop information, visit the **SuppleworX** website.

Wimpole Therapeutics

2 Wimpole Street, W1G 0ED (7491 7767/ www.wimpoletherapeutics.com). Bond Street tube. **Open** 9am-8pm Mon-Fri; 10am-4pm Sat. **Credit** MC, V.

Treatments acupuncture, aromatherapy, Ayurveda, homeopathy, hypnotherapy, massage, nutritional therapy, osteopathy, personal training, physiotherapy, reflexology, reiki, stress management.

Many of the complementary health centres in the heart of London are either overwhelmingly glitzy or underwhelmingly impersonal. Yet Wimpole Therapeutics gets the balance right, with a soothing environment and practical approach to well-being, albeit at prices that are par for the course in the West End. More than a dozen therapies are available in two treatment

rooms, ranging from the familiar (osteopathy, acupuncture) to the enticingly exotic, such as lomi lomi Hawaiian bodywork. There's also a mind-body room for tai chi, yoga and meditation, a personal training suite fully equipped for Pilates, and a small garden. Most one-to-one activities cost £65-£80 per hour and all practitioners are fully qualified.

Wren Clinic

All Hallows House, Idol Lane, EC3R 5DD (7283 8908/ www.wrenclinic.co.uk). Monument tube. **Open Reception** 10am-1pm, 2-5pm Mon-Fri. **No credit cards.**

Treatments acupuncture, aromatherapy, beauty therapies, Bowen Technique, counselling, cranial osteopathy, homeopathy, hypnotherapy, kinesiology, McTimoney chiropractic, massage, meditation, naturopathy, nutritional therapy, osteopathy, reflexology, reiki, shiatsu, sports massage therapy.

The clinic is set in the tower of a beautiful Wren church, and some of the cosy treatment rooms have impressive period features, high ceilings, and views of the gardens of St Dunstan in the East – all of which contribute to the aura of calm. A wide range of physical and emotional conditions are treated, from food intolerances and sports injuries to stress and depression. The clinic also has a GP and its own psychotherapy-trained financial planner (this is the City after all). Beauty therapies (using Dr Hauschka products) and meditation courses are also offered. Given the location, prices are competitive; consultations start at £40.

Wyndham Centre

86 Hatton Garden, EC1N 8QQ (7404 0023/ www.wyndham-centre.co.uk). Chancery Lane tube/Farringdon tube/rail. **Open** 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri. **Credit** MC, V.

Treatments acupressure, acupuncture, alternative health checks, aromatherapy, aqua detox, Bowen Technique, Chinese herbal medicine, cranial osteopathy, homeopathy, hot stone therapy, hypnotherapy, massage, nutritional therapy, physiotherapy, reflexology, reiki, spiritual healing, sports massage therapy.

The majority of practitioners at the Wyndham Centre are chartered physiotherapists and much of their business comes from GP referrals. However, physiotherapy here is practised with a broader approach, incorporating complementary therapies such as acupuncture. You can extend this holistic route to physical healing with other therapies too, such as reflexology and hypnotherapy. The clinic also has a large studio where Pilates classes are held.

Branches: 21-6 Garlick Hill, EC4V 2AU (7248 3850); 12 Upper Wimpole Street, W1G 6LW (7486 5237).

East

Ashlins Natural Health

181 Hoe Street, E17 3AP (8520 5268/ www.ashlins.co.uk). Walthamstow Central tube/rail. **Open** 9am-9pm Mon-Fri; 9am-7pm Sat. **No credit cards.**

Treatments acupuncture, Alexander Technique, aromatherapy, chiropractic, chiropractic, counselling, homeopathy, Hopi ear candle treatments, hypnotherapy, kinesiology, massages, psychotherapy, reflexology, reiki, sports massage therapy, Thai yoga massage, yoga.

Ashlins provides complementary therapies to treat anything from headaches and back pain to irritable bowel syndrome and depression, but the real trump card is the pricing. Per hour, massages are £34, reflexology is £30 and acupuncture is £35. The company offers herbal

remedies for common ailments and sells a selection of natural products, including Bach Flower Remedies.

Bodywise Yoga & Natural Health Centre

119 Roman Road, E2 0QN (8981 6938/ www.bodywisehealth.org). Bethnal Green tube/rail. **Open** 9am-8.30pm Mon-Fri; 9am-2.30pm Sat. **Credit** (classes only) MC, V.

Treatments acupuncture, Alexander Technique, aromatherapy, cranial osteopathy, homeopathy, hypnotherapy, Indian head massage, kinesiology, massage, naturopathy, nutritional therapy, osteopathy, reflexology, shiatsu, sports massage therapy, Thai yoga massage.

Run by five Buddhist women, this non-profit-making clinic takes health very seriously. The alternative therapies (around £40 per session) are carried out in six pleasant, recently revamped rooms. Yoga classes (£6.50 per hour) are taught in bright, cheerful studios and cover various abilities. Other classes include tai chi, Pilates and post-natal/antenatal yoga.

City Skinklinic

12 Brushfield Street, E1 6AN (7655 6920/ appointments 0870 751 3870/ www.cityskinklinic.co.uk). Liverpool Street tube/rail. **Open** 9.30am-8pm Mon-Wed; 9.30am-5.30pm Thur, Fri. **Credit** MC, V.

Treatments beauty treatments, electrolysis, facials, massage, non-surgical cosmetic procedures, IPL hair reduction, microdermabrasion, reflexology, teeth-whitening, waxing.

Well located for City slickers, this small but professional centre offers a wide range of treatments from de-stressing or freshening-up facials, waxing and reflexology (£55) to more involved procedures, such as teeth-whitening (£295), cheekbone contouring, Botox, or lip enhancement (which lasts for up to a year). A skin analysis with a nurse practitioner (£55) or the resident consultant, Dr Vincent Kabeya (£75), is carried out to determine a treatment programme (and redeemable against it if booked within a month). The hour-long BioMasque Facial (£95) is particularly effective: after a cleanse and exfoliation, vitamin C cream is applied to the face, followed by a warm mask that facilitates penetration of the cream, which boosts collagen and evens out skin tone. Also offered are high-tech solutions for leg and facial veins, TCA peels for sun-damaged or acne-scarred skin, and permanent hair reduction and anti-ageing using Intense Pulsed Light (IPL, £600 for a course of six 30-minute sessions).

Forest Complementary Clinic

843 Forest Road, E17 4AT (8531 7188). Walthamstow Central tube/rail/Wood Street rail. **Open** 9am-7pm Mon-Fri; 9am-4pm Sat. **No credit cards.**

Treatments acupuncture, Alexander Technique, aromatherapy, chiropractic, herbal medicine, homeopathy, hypnotherapy, Indian head massage, massage, osteopathy, reflexology, sports massage therapy.

For 65 years, this traditional clinic has offered holistic healing and treatment to the people of east London, and it shows no sign of stopping now. The centre is unfussy, looking, as the name implies, much like a doctor's clinic. The approach to therapy leans towards maternal and sympathetic, with thorough explanations of each step as it happens, so nothing surprises or startles. The array of treatments is limited, and clients are mostly local regulars, but it clearly fills a need in the community.

Health Works Complementary Health Centre

111A Hoe Street, E17 4RX (8503 7794/ www.thehealthworks.co.uk). Walthamstow Central tube/rail. **Open** 10am-noon Mon (baby clinic only); 8am-8.30pm Tue, Thur, Fri; 2.30-8.30pm Wed; 10am-4pm Sat. **No credit cards.**

Treatments: acupressure, acupuncture, aromatherapy, Bowen Technique, cranial osteopathy, homeopathy, hypnotherapy, Indian head massage, kinesiology, manual lymphatic drainage, massage, meditation, naturopathy, nutritional therapy, osteopathy, reflexology, reiki, shiatsu, Thai yoga massage.

This bright, upbeat centre in the bustling heart of Walthamstow is building an excellent reputation for the warmth of its welcome and the quality of its practitioners. Original art on the walls sets a relaxing tone as you climb upstairs to the first-floor reception area. A wide