

Life & Style

+ Just one human brain generates more electrical impulses in

THERAPY OF THE WEEK

Egyptian Goddess Massage

I'M LYING flat on my back with my head and body wrapped up like a mummy, which is appropriate since I'm on a massage table just a few paces from the Red Sea in Egypt.

I've been like this, in an immovable cocoon of fabric, for about ten minutes, and I'm beginning to wonder whether I might be left here for a few thousand years, like King Tut.

This, I am discovering, is one of the more bizarre sections of a fantastic two-hour experience at the Abu Soma's Intercontinental Dreams Spa that will set you back €130 (about £116). The treatment — which uses local products — begins in the sauna, to open your pores before your first session on the slab. Moving into one of the peaceful



Relaxing: Abu Soma

treatment rooms, I had a cool, wet concoction of coconut flakes mixed to a paste with milk applied from head to toe. Next came a thick mud mask based on ground local stone, before my head and body were wrapped up snugly.

What seemed like eons later, I was into the shower to wash off the coconut paste and the mask, and into a steam room which was so hot that the drips falling from the ceiling stung my shoulders (no doubt the locals take it in their stride). After two minutes, I was out of there, gasping, and into a Jacuzzi until I had cooled down enough for the grand finale — a firm massage with sandalwood oil at the hands of an expert masseur.

This far into a long treatment, your mind really starts to empty, and I was drifting away again by the time I turned onto my back and had my face, head and shoulders massaged with scented honey milk. Bliss.

■ **ABU SOMA** Beach resort, Egypt. Prices from £495 per adult for one week (based on two adults sharing). Reservations 0871 703 3944 or visit markwarner.co.uk

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HOME BEAUTY SCHOOL

SAVE money and look great with our credit crunch beauty column. This week, Zoe Irwin, celebrity session stylist and Creative Director of Hari's, shows how to do a salon style blow-dry in five easy steps.

STEP ONE

ROUGH dry your hair to about 80 per cent (50 per cent if you're trying to tame unruly curls).

Don't blow dry when your hair's too wet — otherwise all you'll have to show for it is aching arms. Apply products such as root lifters before you start drying your hair.



STEP TWO

START styling at the back of your head or you'll disturb the front as you move round to style. This is where you really need the nozzle on your hairdryer. This aims the



blast of air down the hair shaft — essential for flattening those cuticles and creating shine.

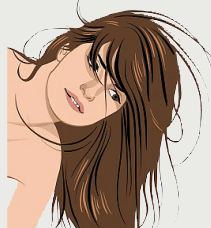
STEP THREE

PAY equal attention to roots and ends. Lift hair from the roots with the brush.

When winding hair round the brush down to the roots, aim the nozzle on the underside of the brush as well as the top. This gives roundness and good ends.



STEP FOUR



ONCE the hair is dry, blast with the cool button in order to set it.

STEP FIVE

AFTER you've put your head upside down and given your hair a good shake, lift back up and you'll have a fabulous salon standard blow-dry.

ELSA McALONAN



Illustrator: BEN KIRCH

BRACEY

It's painful and pricey, so why are so many women opting for 'train track' braces?

by Jill Foster

THE idea of volunteering for a fixed brace probably horrifies those of us who wore them in our teens and can recall the 'Metal Mickey' jibes — not to mention the delightful amount of food which used to collect between the 'spokes' every day.

But surprising as it might sound, a growing number of British adults are choosing to have metal 'train tracks' fitted to their teeth in a bid to close any gaps and straighten out any kinks.

In spite of the pain — and the not insubstantial cost — it appears that we, like the Americans, have become neurotic in our quest for the perfect smile.

According to the British Orthodontic Society, adults make up half of the patients in some orthodontist practices in the UK — and many are choosing to have fixed braces.

This means there are hundreds of sane women happy to spend up to two years looking like Ugly Betty's mother in the hope they can smile without scaring their children. Are they mad?

'It doesn't bother me,' shrugs hairdresser Nicola Wilson, 39, who had metal braces fixed to her top teeth six months ago. 'My 14-year-old daughter was more horrified than I was. I think she's embarrassed.'

'But I've hated my front teeth for so long and I don't care what people think. It's only for a year.'

Harley Street orthodontist Les Joffe says around 15 per cent of his clients are adults and around 10 to 12 per cent of those choose fixed braces to straighten their teeth.

'Of course, some patients practically run out of the room when you mention that they need braces. But in America, it's perfectly acceptable to see an adult wearing a fixed brace and it's becoming more so in the UK. It's



Picture: GETTY

much cheaper than other orthodontic treatments — which may also explain its popularity.'

Unlike 'retainers' which are wires fixed onto a mouth plate and can be removed for special occasions, fixed braces are small brackets which are glued to the teeth and then held together with wire. Small elastic hoops are then used to keep the wires in place. These exert gentle pressure on the teeth to move them into a new position.

As someone who wore a 'train track' for ten months when I was 14, I can tell you that it feels as if you've been punched in the mouth every time you have the wires tightened. After a few days, the pressure exerted by the wires on the teeth eases off and the discomfort abates, but continually to move the teeth, wires need to be tightened regularly — around once every five weeks.

The length of time braces take to work varies from a few months to two years. The traditional stainless steel system is also available in white ceramic or gold. Even the hoops can come in bright colours — if you feel that a jaw full of metal is not drawing enough attention to your mouth.

Costs for orthodontic treatment vary and it is rarely available on the NHS for adults. But private treatment with a metal brace starts at around £1,000.

If the thought of having a mouthful of metal mid-life horrifies you, there is a less invasive solution. Aligners — sometimes known by the brand name

Smile

We spent £627m on cosmetic dentistry in the UK last year — three times as much as in 2005, according to market research by Mintel

SLIM, FIRM, TONE

FROM LEFT: Firming body crème, £28.38, esteelauder.co.uk.

Caudalie Roller, £61, hqhair.com.

Regenerating concentrate, £39, loccitane.com.

Perfect sculpt gel cream, £38, decleor.co.uk.

Tummy contour concentrate, £24 for 2 bottles, dovespa.co.uk.

Aromatic sculpting concentrate, £34.50, shiseido.com; 020 7313 4774.

Slimming anti-cellulite gel,

£79, [Chanel](http://chanel.com): 020 7493 3836.

Omorovicza Dimple Vanisher, £50, [Liberty](http://Liberty.com): 020 7734 1234.

Caudalie Contour concentrate, £24, hqhair.com.

Leg tone, £59, adonialegtone.com.

Rodial Bum Lift, £100, [Harvey Nichols](http://HarveyNichols.com): 020 7235 5000.

Omorovicza Body brush, £5, [Liberty](http://Liberty.com), as before.

Naturetis Firming oil, £18.99, fragrancedirect.co.uk.

