How to get a Hollywood smile

Do you have a drink problem?

‘How Jamie Oliver saved my son’

10 ways to slim for summer
**Do you have a drink problem?**

Most of us enjoy a drink and it doesn’t usually do us any harm, but if it gets out of control, alcohol can destroy your life. Do you know the difference between moderate and excessive drinking?

1. In an average week, do you drink:
   - a never;
   - b once or twice;
   - c most evenings;
   - d every evening and a few lunch times too.

2. If you find you have no drink in the house, do you:
   - a shrug and put the kettle on;
   - b swear and put the kettle on;
   - c go down to the off licence;
   - d go down to the bar.

3. Do people you know — work colleagues, family, friends — comment on your drinking:
   - a never;
   - b occasionally;
   - c the morning after functions;
   - d frequently.

4. You are at a very good party/function, do you stay until:
   - a the time you agreed to leave;
   - b the last train;
   - c the conversation runs out;
   - d the bar runs out.

5. You are at a function with a well stocked bar, but also in attendance are people you ought to be impressing — the future in-laws, your kids’ head teacher, the boss — do you:
   - a stick to soft drinks;
   - b drink in moderation;
   - c set out to do b but end up somehow doing d;
   - d get legless.

6. Do you drink wine with a meal:
   - a never;
   - b occasionally;
   - c only when out at dinner;
   - d on special occasions.

7. If you’ve had a particularly stressful day, do you:
   - a go for a run;
   - b have a glass of wine and talk it through with your partner;
   - c go down to the bar with your best mate;
   - d polish off a bottle of vodka by yourself.

8. If, at a party, the bar has got down to some very suspect-looking liqueur and super strength lager, do you:
   - a not really notice because they’ve still got plenty of Evian;
   - b opt for a soft drink;
   - c go home;
   - d mix the two together and wonder why nobody else wants to sample your new cocktail.

9. You’ve woken up next to somebody you don’t recognise how often:
   - a several times, but all of them were on transatlantic flights;
   - b not since university;
   - c not since you were last on holiday;
   - d sometimes you don’t recognise your partner.

10. How would you describe your relationship with drink:
    - a non-existent;
    - b a mild flirtation;
    - c like having a mistress;
    - d lurrrve.

How did you score?

- **All a:** You probably only did this quiz in order to show off how clean living you are. Mostly a: It is unlike you will ever have a problem with alcohol as you don’t seem to need it and are able to control your approach to it with admirable discipline.
- **Mostly b:** Your Bs are mixed with As then you too have very little to worry about as you are the perfect social drinker. If they’re mixed with Cs though (especially on questions 3, 5 and 7), you should keep an eye on yourself.
- **Mostly c:** If your Cs are mixed with As then you too have very little to worry about as you are the perfect social drinker. If they’re mixed with Cs though (especially on questions 3, 5 and 7), you should keep an eye on yourself.
- **Mostly d:** You could have a problem or the makings of one. You don’t seem to be able to control your drinking too well and you may be kidding yourself that everything is okay – denial is a common attribute of the people that drink at this level.

**Do not lurch.**

- **Mostly d:** You are in serious trouble. Your drinking seems to be out of control, it is starting to have an impact on every aspect of your life and is doubtless affecting your health by now. You need to seek help asap.

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*From Not Rocket Science (Cassell Illustrated, £12.99), a fascinating book full of advice, horror stories and life-saving wisdom aimed at getting men to take better care of themselves.*
Serving up fitness... and a social life

OW that the fine days are upon us (well, almost) thoughts turn to the outdoors and that perennial summer pastime – tennis. With courts scattered throughout the region, including many in local parks, all you need is a racquet and you’re ready to go.

But what if you’ve never played before, or worry that your backhand will make you blush? Never fear, as you can always call on a coach.

Derek Edwards, 43, is a professional tennis and squash coach and head coach at New Blackwell Lawn Tennis Club, in Darlington. He says you’re never too old – or too young – to master the game. “I currently have people from five to six-year-olds to people well over 60, so it’s all age groups. Basically, people tend to want to play in the clubs socially and maybe some of them competitively, and they soon find out that they need a little bit of help,” he says.

Derek started playing as a youngster and got into part-time coaching when he was just 16. When he finished university, he was asked to fill in as a club coach in Hull and 22 years on, he’s the only full-time coaches in the area. “When Stuart and I came up here, we were the only full-time coaches in the area. Now there are more now with the advent of indoor courts,” he says.

Tennis is not just for Wimbledon – it’s ideal for everyone all year round, professional coach Derek Edwards tells SARAH FOSTER

EXERCISE

Derek’s top five tennis tips:
1. Watch the ball right onto your racquet. (Don’t look where you’re going to hit it, look at the ball as you hit it.)
2. Always have a good athletic ready position.
3. Try to keep on your toes, not your heels.
4. Try to keep the ball deep to the back of the court.
5. Attack when your opponent gives you a short ball.

For more tips, visit www.tennisandsquash.co.uk

A BRIEF HISTORY

TENNIS of one kind or another was played in France as far back as the 12th century. It was not until the late 19th century that the game, in a somewhat different form, began to rise in popularity in Britain with the advent of lawn tennis. The first Wimbledon was held in 1877. Over the years, the game has changed dramatically – for example, the court used to be hourglass-shaped. During the past few decades, wooden and metal racquets have gradually been replaced by those made from graphite and other compounds. In the 1900s, tennis became Australia’s most popular recreational sport and the nation went on to dominate it as no nation ever has, or most likely, ever will.
While exercise is vital to maintaining a happy, healthy heart, so is what you eat. Luckily, this does not mean a diet of lentils and brown rice – although that would not do you any harm – as many of the foods that are best for your heart and blood pressure are some of the most interesting you’ll find on any menu...

ALMONDS
Like so many nuts, these are a good source of protein. As a bonus, almonds contain circulation-boosting fibre and vitamin E, which helps to combat heart disease.

APPLE JUICE
The natural antioxidants in apple juice drastically slow down the effects of harmful cholesterol in the bloodstream.

ASPARAGUS
This is rich in folic acid, a vitamin that helps to prevent narrowing of blood vessels in the legs (which is a particular risk to smokers).

BANANAS
The yellow fruit is a rich source of potassium, which is essential for maintaining a regular cardiac rhythm.

BLACK PEPPER
Black pepper purifies the blood by filtering out a large amount of potential toxins.

BLUEBERRIES
Rich in antioxidants, reliable blood thinners and cholesterol blasters, blueberries should be a vital part of your diet.

BREAKFAST
A healthy breakfast, that is. American research has shown that people who eat breakfast are almost 50 per cent less likely to suffer heart attacks than those who skip it. The reason? It keeps their metabolism working far more efficiently and therefore able to cope with food during the rest of the day with relative ease.

CRANBERRIES
Research at the University of Massachusetts has revealed that cranberries guard against the effects of a stroke. A daily serving of the berries provided enough protection to keep brain cells from dying during a simulated stroke.
... and the food your heart hates

ALL full fat dairy foods are rich in saturated fats, which increase the levels of harmful cholesterol and do your arteries no good at all. Avoid butter by using a substitute containing monounsaturated fat (olive oil spread) or polyunsaturated fat (sunflower oil spread) and switch to non-fat cheese and milk.

SALT
The regular amount of salt most of us sprinkle on our food is fine, but too much is bad for the heart because it increases the volume of blood and so raises your blood pressure – just as if you put too much oil in your car. People of African-Caribbean descent are far more likely to be affected by excess salt than those of the Caucasian persuasion. Asians also tend to have too much salt in their diet.

ALCOHOL
Whereas drinking in moderation – especially red wine – is proven to have a beneficial effect on the heart, sinking a skinful on a regular basis can be very dangerous. Alcohol weakens the action of the heart muscle, so to compensate, the heart speeds up, raising blood pressure. Continued heavy drinking produces a build-up of fat in the liver which then cannot process toxins out of the blood with its usual efficiency; in turn, this impairs the blood’s ability to deliver oxygen to the body’s tissues. The heart then has to work even harder.

CAFFEINE
If drunk in moderation by reasonably healthy people, coffee is of no danger whatsoever. In fact, the pulse quickening jolt from a decent caffeine shot is what most of us need to get going in the morning. In providing this lift though, caffeine causes the heart to pump faster by a couple of beats per minute, raising blood pressure by up to five points. After one cup of coffee, the heart rate falls back to normal pretty soon, but constant caffeine hits throughout the day keep the rate – and blood pressure – raised for too long to be entirely safe. As caffeine tolerance is easily acquired – people tend to drink more and more to get the same invigorating experience – and blood pressure can soon creep into the danger levels. Anybody with existing high blood pressure should be very careful about caffeine intake.

More information in Not Rocket Science (Cassell Illustrated, £12.99)

May 2005   Online: www.healthspectrum.co.uk
‘How Jamie gave my son a future’

S TEMPHEN Measor has arrived at our interview clutching a white plastic carrier bag containing the ingredients for his dinner. At one time, the bag would have contained chips and sausages and other processed foods. But since a visit from celebrity chef Jamie Oliver, it is full of fresh vegetables and a bit of steak he’s fancying cooking with some herbs and garlic.

Stephen is diabetic and had been hospitalised six times because of his poor diet and fluctuating insulin levels. He’d had talks from Newcastle United football players about his eating habits, and from his parents, Janice and Les at the family home in Eden Hill, Peterlee, but no one could get through to the 18-year-old. Until the day Jamie came.

“He told me that you could do anything with food,” recalls Stephen. “And that you could cook it from scratch to make it the best meal in the world, and he was right.”

Jamie had been filming at Eden Community Primary School, in Peterlee, where Janice is a school governor, as part of his much-publicised Jamie’s School Dinners programme. The star was then asked to help Janice, Les and their nine children – Stephen, Julie, 27, Danielle, 17, Samantha, 14, Jamie, 12, Liam, nine, Connor, seven, Sophie, seven, and Sydney-Marie, three – as part of his Feed Me Better campaign.

“Straight after school they would have a snack at about 3.10pm of yoghurts, crisps and ham sandwiches in white bread,” says Janice. “To me, that was fairly normal for them to come in and snack.

“By 5 to 6pm I would be making all sorts. None of them liked the same kind of foods so I gave them options, I didn’t agree with the school giving them options and yet I was. I’d make a bowl of rice, a bowl of pasta, and a bowl of chips. There would be beef burgers, sausages, spaghetti, fish fingers, then the options of the sauces – salad creams, tomato sauce.”

Jamie would then go on to cook the family supper at various times throughout the evening before the children went to bed.

“If one of them wanted a bowl of chips, I would cook them one,” she says. “I didn’t want them to go to bed hungry. By the time I’d got them off to bed, I would make Les and me and the eldest ones rump steak, salad and chips or something at 11 and 12 o’clock at night. It was unreal.”

She shakes her head and starts to laugh. “When I look back, I can’t help wondering what was I thinking. There was always food on the go. When Jamie came in he couldn’t believe how much time I was spending in the kitchen.”

Jamie spent three days a week with the Measors throughout June last year. The first thing he did was empty their cupboards into the bin. He then set them daily menus and got one of his staff to supply the ingredients and explain what to do with them. On some days he would cook the family supper at various times throughout the evening before the children went to bed.

“He may be on a mission to transform the lunchtime menus of thousands of schoolchildren, but celebrity chef Jamie Oliver also had a profound effect on a family of 11 when he overhauled their diet as part of his television show. Women’s Editor LINDSAY JENNINGS reports

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“At first they wouldn’t eat what was on the table because they didn’t like it,” recalls Janice. “So I was getting upset because they were going hungry and Jamie was saying ‘be tough, they’ll start eating if they know you won’t give in’. But by the third day they were tucking in.”

For some of the children who didn’t like vegetables, Janice would puree the food and mix it into their gravy, so they received the vitamins without realising they were eating them. The effects were startling, and none more so than in the hyperactive Connor, who hated school… and his mother.

“After a day and a half, he was getting quieter, but by the third day he got up, put his uniform on, gave me and cuddle and told me he loved me and said ‘come on, I’m going to be late for school’. He’s been brilliant every day since,” she says, still sounding amazed at the transformation.

Liam found that the eczema on his face cleared up and the girls discovered their hair turned glossy. In the meantime, Janice lost more than a stone and Les, 47, lost two stone.

The couple have also been pleasantly surprised at the extra time it has given them; previously, Janice went to bed at 2am and got up at 6am to feed her army. “It’s been bliss, we’ve even had time to watch a film,” she laughs.

She says the children are allowed foods such as pizzas, but only as treats. They lapsed back to their old ways only once, she says, over a half-term holiday, but the children ended up “bouncing off the walls”. “I’ll never go back to that way again,” shudders Janice.

She blames the products that are given away with many fast food meals for enticing young children. “They don’t necessarily want the food, they want the freebies,” she says.

She also wants to see the Government improve school dinners at secondary schools as well as primary and for awareness to continue to be raised. “I never used to look at the packets, I’d just throw them in the trolley,” she says. “But now, because I’ve been made aware, I’ll stand and read it. If I can’t pronounce it, I don’t buy it – that’s my motto.”

Before Jamie’s arrival, Stephen had been told by one consultant that he would be dead by the age of 21 unless he stopped his bad eating habits. But rather then frighten him into looking after himself, it only served to give him a complex. Thinking that he would be dead by 21 anyway, he made no plans for the future and carried on eating junk – until the one-to-one with Jamie.

“Whatever he said, he did something no-one else has been able to achieve and when Jamie left, Stephen wanted everything to be right. He said ‘I’m not going to let him down Mam,” says Janice.

Stephen is even thinking of moving out of the family home, which would have been not have been possible before with his unstable diabetes. “He’s even written a list, he wants a kitchen just like Jamie’s,” smiles Janice.

Stephen says he feels 100 per cent better since he changed his eating. “Before, I would have woken up in the morning with a dry mouth and I would feel down,” he says. “But since I’ve start-ed healthy eating I feel as if I have more energy. I feel happy.”

He proceeds to chat animatedly about how he cooked last night’s dinner for himself and sister Samantha and adapted one of Jamie’s recipes using gammon because he didn’t have any liver. “I used herbs and onions and red wine vinegar. It was gorgeous,” he grins, clutching his white carrier bag. “I haven’t decided what I’m doing tonight yet.”


The mysterious power of flowers

When you come across Bach flower remedies in shops, there is usually an explanatory list of uses beside them. You choose your emotion – anger, shyness, anxiety – then the appropriate remedy.

On a good day you realise you’re doing okay; on a bad “Bridget Jones” day, you think you need the whole lot and give up on the minefield of flower remedies. It’s also hard to analyse exactly how you’re feeling when you are in a crowded shop, being pushed around by busy shoppers.

But there are now Bach flower practitioners throughout the country, who take the hit or miss out of choosing a remedy. They do the hard work for you. All you, as a patient, have to do is be completely honest with them about your life and your emotions.

The 50 remedies were created in the 1930s by Harley Street doctor Edward Bach, a homeopath, bacteriologist and immunologist. Dr Bach believed a healthy mind is the key to recovery from ill health, and the remedies are said to help manage emotions, restoring balance and emotional well-being.

Most of the remedies are made from British flowers or plants and can be combined to make a treatment so a whole range of emotions are treated together, not just one by one.

The best-known is the Rescue Remedy, which I was introduced to on my wedding day eight years ago. It transformed me from a neurotic bag of nerves with an upset stomach – which I was introduced to on my wedding day – to a confident, healthy bride, a change that has never failed to astonish me.

Yet if I was already a convert when I went along to Clare Midgley’s practice in Newton Aycliffe, I was harking up the wrong tree. As I stood on her doorstep, with a streaming eye and a runny nose, I was convinced Clare, a Bach Foundation registered practitioner, would take my headache and earache away. I also hoped she’d cure my poor sleeping patterns.

I was way off. Clare began by explaining that Bach remedies don’t treat a condition, but they can help you control the way you’re feeling and get more out of life. Then, the happier you become, the healthier you are. Clare starts by checking any medication patients are taking, and takes a short medical history. Then she asks the big question that I was totally unprepared for: “How do you feel emotionally?”

My frustration about the lingering head cold led to a discussion about my work pattern, my broken sleep, my refusal to ask for help...even my chore-filled weekends came under scrutiny. It’s only when you sit down and analyse your lifestyle that you can see the patterns for yourself. Clare pointed out I was running on adrenaline, and my life was rush, rush, rush. Yet I wasn’t thriving on it – I was a coughing, sneezing, sniffing wreck, stumbling from one virus to another.

There’s a Bach remedy for most feelings. If moving house is making you feel frustrated and impatient, try Impatients. Walnut is good if you are trying to adapt to a new neighbourhood. Star of Bethlehem is good for grief.

There are seven major groups of emotions – fearful, uncertainty, a lack of interest in the world around you, lonely, over-sensitive, dependent and over-concern for others.

“No two people react in the same way,” explains Clare. “We choose remedies by how you are reacting to your own life. If two people were told they had severe arthritis, one might go home, feeling miserable and just go to bed, while the other might go and help dig his neighbour’s garden, making his condition worse. Both are different.

“We can’t treat specific medical conditions, but we can help support the emotions. These remedies are totally safe, and can be given to people who have undergone a bereavement or a marriage break-up, as well as babies or chemotherapy patients, for example.”

Once Clare had questioned me, she was able to choose six remedies for my personal blend. I was given Centaury for being anxious, Oak for the strong sense of duty which makes me struggle on even when I’m exhausted and Rock Water for setting my self high standards. My final two remedies were Vervain for being over-enthusiastic, with fixed principles and ideas, and Willow for feeling resentful. It was a very impressive analysis for a comparatively short consultation.

The remedies are blended in a pipette-topped bottle and I was prescribed four drops on the tongue at least four times a day, and definitely first and last thing daily.

That was a week ago. I have used the remedies as prescribed and I’m already treating myself with more respect. My life has slowed down considerably and I am taking regular breaks from work. I have also slept through the night for the first time in months.

Sitting down and analysing my lifestyle with Clare was the start. Now the remedies seem to be working their magic too, making me more content, less frazzled and, amazingly, more patient.

Clare Midgley can be contacted at her business, Balance Holistic Healthcare in Newton Aycliffe, on (01325) 308283. A Bach flower consultation lasts an hour and costs £30. Clare is also a qualified teacher of Bach flower remedies. Email her at clare@holistic-balance-healthcare.co.uk

The Edward Bach Centre can be contacted on (01491) 834678, or visit www.bachcentre.com

Claire Midgley: says while Bach remedies can’t treat specific conditions, they can help support the emotions

Picture: SARAH NICHOLSON
When the heat is on

Dehydration can make you feel quite ill. It can even be dangerous. But it is easy to avoid if you just make sure you drink enough water this summer. Health Correspondent BARRY NELSON reports

A

S temperatures creep up and with summer just ahead of us, it’s important to be aware of the increased need to take in adequate amounts of water. This is particularly true if you are physically active.

Northumbrian Water experts point out that our bodies lose up to two litres of water every day, even when it’s cool, through sweating, urinating and just breathing out.

“When it is warm, it is particularly important for people who are vulnerable to dehydration to drink enough water. Young children, the old, even teenagers all need to top up their water levels,” says Dr John Woodhouse, deputy regional director for public health.

“We are encouraging people to walk, cycle, run and swim more but you need to think about making sure you are hydrated. You might end up feeling unwell if you don’t.”

And you don’t have to spend anything to top up. We are very lucky in the North-East with the excellent quality of our drinking water, says Dr Woodhouse, and while bottled water is all very well, we are talking about the stuff that comes out when you turn on your tap at home.

“The quality of drinking water in our region is very good indeed. It has a good taste, which can’t be said in some other parts of the country,” says Dr Woodhouse, who is based in Newcastle.

“In some parts of Britain the tap water is highly chlorinated but in the North East it is only slightly chlorinated. It doesn’t surprise me that Northumbrian Water is proud that their water is good to drink,” he adds.

Dr Woodhouse certainly believes water – and tap water in particular – is a very good thing, particularly when the alternative might contain stimulants or preservatives.

“In our modern, consumer society we tend to consume a lot of processed drinks but there is good reason to think that drinking water is the best way to keep yourself topped up,” says Dr Woodhouse, who is involved in planning improvements to public health throughout the North-East.

“Some processed drinks are either very calorific or they rot your teeth, so if you just want to get yourself properly hydrated in order to function well then water is the best way to do it.”

While it is true that people of all ages would benefit from drinking more water, there is quite a lot of evidence that schoolchildren are able to learn more easily if they are adequately hydrated.

Earlier this year a Government-backed initiative was launched as part of efforts to encourage youngsters to drink more water, for the sake of their health and in a bid to improve concentration and behaviour in the classroom.

Instead of fizzy, sugary drinks filled with preservatives, children at 20 schools in County Durham, Teesside, Tyne and Wear and Northumberland have been equipped with attractive water coolers.

A total of 12,000 youngsters will be given improved access to drinking water at their schools as part of a wider programme designed to reduce obesity, improve long-term health and establish healthy eating habits.

Supplying more than 2.6m people from the Scottish border down to North Yorkshire, the company is currently investing millions in a water improvement programme to further enhance the quality of its drinking water.

Most people are aware of the need to drink a certain amount of water every day to ensure that we feel at our best. Northumbrian Water recommends that everyone should drink eight tall glasses of water every day to stay healthy, not so surprising when you consider that blood is 92 per cent water and that our brains are 75 per cent water.

DID YOU KNOW?

Oil-based sunscreens interfere with sweating, so choose a water-based product; it will let your sweat glands do their work as well as decreasing your risk of skin cancer.

DEHYDRATION: THE SYMPTOMS

- The early signs of dehydration are thirst; low urine output; concentrated, dark urine; dry, flushed skin; dry eyes; dry mouth; furry tongue; headache; clammy hands and feet; sunken eyes; dizziness, confusion and irritability.
- A dehydrated baby may be pale and depressed with sunken eyes. You may also notice a decrease in urine output. If the “soft spot” on your baby’s head is sunken, this may be an indication that it is dehydrated.

- Chronic (long term) dehydration is bad for skin, kidneys, liver, joints and muscles and can cause cholesterol problems, headaches, reduced blood pressure (hypotension), fatigue and constipation.
- It is particularly important to take in fluids if you catch a tummy bug on holiday as this can lead swiftly to severe dehydration.

In a cool environment, a normal person loses about half a litre of sweat in a day. In the heat it’s much more, so it’s important to keep taking in fluids.
SMILE is one of the first things that strikes us about a person. It speaks volumes, putting us at our ease, telling us that there’s really nothing to worry about, that we’re in for a friendly reception… and, sometimes, it tells us that the person who’s smiling is in sore need of a dentist.

Not so long ago, we all put up with the teeth we grew up with, however wonky, uneven or discoloured. But now that dental clinics offering implants and whitening have come to the high street, we no longer need to.

The services are not cheap – around £500 for tooth whitening – but they can really transform your looks. In the recent series of the television programme Ten Years Younger, the guinea pigs were mostly always whisked off to the dentist for some cosmetic dentistry, which knocked years off them.

Sometimes they needed veneers and implants to straighten the tooth line; other subjects just needed tooth whitening to turn back the years. Fruit juices and sugar are two of the culprits which ruin healthy teeth, but smoking is probably the biggest villain when it comes to turning your pearly white teeth into grubby little pegs.

Many people, smokers and otherwise, have turned to whitening toothpastes, but the big question is: do they work? Cosmetic dentist Ian Wintrip, of Oasis Dental Care, says: “Some toothpastes claim to whiten and they may clean more effectively, but, in my opinion, the only way to turn back the clock is to have professional tooth whitening.”

“There has been an upsurge in the number of people wanting whitening and far more treatments are available on high streets everywhere,” says Ian. “It’s now available on high streets everywhere.”

I had before and after pictures taken and I had my very own Hollywood smile. “Some practitioners make inflated claims for the whitening, but you can realistically expect to go up about three shades,” Ian tells me.

“Fortunately, I hardly ever smoke, but tea and red wine had left my teeth looking yellower than I’d like. After an initial consultation the week before the whitening treatment, I went back, fingers crossed, to claim my very own Hollywood smile.”

“The process is not cheap – around £500 – but otherwise the procedure is quick and straightforward.”

Bishop Auckland dental surgeon Ian Wintrip with his dental nurse Nicola Fleming and her bright new smile.
What your dentist can do for you

SCALING AND POLISHING: make a regular six-monthly appointment with the dental hygienist to remove plaque and surface stains and give teeth a brightening polish. Ultrasonic scalers are generally available; the latest technology is the air-abrade – an “airgun” which fires high speed abrasive powder at the teeth, giving excellent results in stain removal.

CROWNS: the traditional way to repair a broken or unsightly tooth is by grinding the tooth down to a peg and fitting a replica over the top. Leading dentists are now working in porcelains which are so hard that metal reinforcement is unnecessary – so crowns look better, last longer and never have a black line around the margin. With healthy gums, a crown will last 20 years.

BONDING: sticking tooth-coloured material to an existing tooth is an alternative to crowning. The tooth is etched using a weak acid, which creates a rough surface on the tooth to which composite or porcelain inlays or onlays are attached, depending on the problem. Bonding is far easier than other means of fixing. It is particularly helpful for filling gaps between widely-spaced front teeth. Expect to need replacements every five years or so.

VENERS: a popular solution for badly discoloured or misshapen teeth – a very thin layer of porcelain, rather like a false fingernail, is bonded to the tooth. Increasingly, veneers are so super-thin that they can be applied without removing any of the tooth. Disadvantages are that veneers can chip and, in rare cases, they may fall off, usually because of poor technique. Since teeth darken with age, veneers will need to be redone at intervals to match other teeth.

IMPLANTS: titanium screw implants have revolutionised the replacement of lost teeth; until recently their use was limited to places where there was sufficient bone to screw in the implant – otherwise false teeth were the only option. Now, however, advanced surgical procedures mean that surgeons can graft the patient’s own bone from another part of the body into the mouth as a “bed” for the implant.

AMalgams: removing amalgam (mercury) fillings and substituting composite (plastic and ceramic) or porcelain fillings will give you an all-white yawn instead of a mouth like the inside of an ironmonger. For larger fillings, where shrinkage is a big problem, the dentist takes an impression and the filling is made in the laboratory and pre-shrunk before use. These fillings are also stronger and can be excellently colour-matched, but they are more expensive. Taking out amalgam fillings may help your general health too; there is considerable evidence that the neurotoxic mercury continuously released from amalgams can lead to a wide range of illness, including allergies, headaches, fatigue syndromes and skin conditions.

ORTHODONTICS: using fixed braces, a trained orthodontist can correct the alignment of teeth, adjust the relationship of teeth and jaw to give a better bite, improve the shape of a sticking out or receding jaw and correct congenital anomalies such as cleft lip and palate. In extreme cases, the upper and lower jaws are so poorly aligned that surgery is also necessary. Adult orthodontic work, mainly private, is becoming more common. The latest ceramic technology means that fixed braces can be tooth-coloured rather than silver. Treatment may take 18 months to two years.

Do you want perfect pearly white teeth?

A non-invasive, fast teeth whitening service, administered by professional dentists, now available at Saks.

- Process complete in just 30 minutes
- Perfect for reversing effects of ageing, coffee, tobacco and other food/drink stains
- The choice of countless celebrities
- Lasts up to 5 years

Special Offer

Teeth Whitening £399

(normaly £500)

Terms and conditions: Mention offer at time of booking and bring advert to appointment. Valid on selected days with selected staff at Saks Darlington only. Cannot be used with any other offer.

Teeth Whitening Clinics at Saks are delivered by medical practitioners, independent of the Saks group. Full details available on request.

CASE STUDY

Stephen Hopper, 39, an engineer from Tow Law, had implants in his front teeth and whitening done by Ian Wintrip.

“I HAD a denture in for a couple of years and previously, to replace it, I would have had to have surgery. The implants procedure was much more straightforward – you just drill them straight in.”

Stephen is over the moon with his new look. “I smile at girls now and you can see me in the dark,” he laughs. “It’s definitely been worth it. I’m taking good care of my new teeth – I’m determined to keep the shine.”
Summer will soon be here with its long days, warmer weather... and skimpier clothing... and all the extra pounds we’ve hidden away so well under winter layers will be back on show. If you need to lose a few pounds before revealing all, here are some tips...

1. DRAIN THOSE TOXINS
TREAT yourself to a manual lymphatic drainage and chill out while this hands-on treatment clears away congestion in the body. Complementary practitioner Sue Mellish, who is based in Richmond, North Yorkshire, says: “People report a real energy boost and a feeling of relaxation after this treatment. Once the toxins are cleared from the body, the internal system will work much more efficiently. The metabolic rate will improve and calories will be used more quickly, leading to weight loss.”

Manual lymphatic drainage costs £35 for an hour. Telephone Sue for an appointment on 01748 864071.

2. JUMP TO IT
GET a skipping rope and get out in the fresh air. Athletes and fitness pros consider skipping a perfect exercise as it tones the whole body while strengthening the cardiovascular system. It also develops co-ordination, speed, balance and flexibility while burning calories.

Tanita have brought out the perfect skipping rope for slimmers. The CalorieJump tracks the number of jumps and calculates the calories burned. It costs £14.99 and can be ordered on 0800 7316994.

3. TRY HYPNOTHERAPY
HYPNOTHERAPIST Simon Alexander has the quick fix technique we’re all looking for. Called the Emotional Freedom Technique, he asks clients to taste and hold the food they crave. Then he taps on a succession of acupressure points. Afterwards, he says, people find their favourite food smells offensive or tastes too sweet. Simon also uses visualisation to get people to improve their self image. “Rather than feeling deprived, visualising themselves much slimmer stops people from comfort eating and makes them feel better about themselves,” says Simon, based in Darlington and Bishop Auckland. One-hour sessions start from £35. Telephone (01325) 316700, or visit www.simon-alexander.co.uk

4. DRINK SOUP AND HOT CHOCOLATE
CARBOLITE has launched a new range of low-carbohydrate soups and hot chocolate drinks, perfect for on-the-go lifestyles.

The soups come in French Onion, Chicken and Herb, and Tomato, and have under 2g of carbohydrate per serving, compared with most soups which average 16g. The chocolate drinks are available in milk and mint. If that’s not enough, there are also seven chocolate bars. Visit www.carbolitefoods.co.uk

5. CHANGE YOUR MINDSET

P E R F O R M A N C E coach Phil Olley, left, encourages would-be slimmers to focus on the extra energy and vitality being slim would give them. “If you think and act energetically, you will start doing energetic things and you will train your body to think energetically,” says Phil. “Your mind will automatically reject the foods that aren’t good for you and send you over to the fruit bowl instead of the biscuit barrel.”

Phil also recommends writing down how you feel when you’re slim on an index card, and reading it every day. It could be something like: “Wow, I feel totally energised and full of vitality now that I am fuelling my body with the right food and fresh water.” Phil runs success courses; contact 01392 563393, or visit www.phолодley.com
6. FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE
If you groan every time you step on the bathroom scales, there are some new scales just right for you! The Weigh to Go Scale is digital and doesn’t tell you how heavy you are – instead, it tells you how much weight you have to lose until you are at your target weight.

These white and satin chrome scales have two memory keys and are available from Argos and Boots at £29.99.

7. NEUTRALISE THOSE CARBS
COPY Bad Girls actress Claire King, formerly Kim Tate in Emmerdale, and try the new, natural slimming aid, Phase 2. Claire, pictured below, lost eight pounds in the first two months of taking Phase 2. You take one tablet before each meal, and carbohydrates such as bread, pasta, potatoes and rice, will pass through your system undigested, reducing your calorie intake. Phase 2 is derived from the white bean and is neither a stimulant nor a laxative. It also increases the body’s ability to burn fat through exercise.

You can obtain Phase 2 from most health food stores and pharmacies, with prices ranging from £9.99 to £24.95 for 60 capsules. Or you can visit the web at www.phase2info.com

8. SAY ADIOS TO EXTRA POUNDS
TRY this natural remedy to speed up your metabolic rate, and thereby the rate at which the body converts food stores. Adios contains a mild thyroid stimulant, thought to speed up the body’s metabolic rate, and thereby accelerate the rate at which the body converts food stores. Adios works best when it is used with a calorie-controlled diet.

Adios is available from most health and beauty stores, as well as pharmacies and supermarkets.

9. HAVE A MASSAGE
BEAUTY therapist Donna Pipe recommends massage to stimulate the circulation and drain away the toxins. “A good massage can refine the figure, get rid of those ugly bumps and give you a more slender look,” says Donna, a mobile therapist, based near Northallerton. “If you eat healthily, take just a little bit more exercise, even if it’s just walking the dog, and have a course of massages, you will definitely see a difference very soon.”

A full body massage costs £25. Telephone Donna on 07818 871189.

10. IF ALL THIS FAILS, CHEAT
ELIZABETH Gange, above, of Gange Beauty, at Tracy Chipperfield Salon in Darlington, says: “A fake tan can make you look half a stone lighter immediately; besides, brown flab is always more attractive than white flab. The St Tropez tan I use won’t turn you orange and it’s much healthier than using a sunbed.”

The treatment starts with an exfoliation, then the “mud” is applied, and left for five hours before you shower it off at home. It lasts for up to a week and costs £22 for a half body tan, and £31 for a full body tan. Telephone Elizabeth on (01325) 369797. Also available at the Beauty Oasis on Northumberland Street, Darlington (01325) 489970.
TWENTY minutes into the New Year’s Day clash between Newcastle Falcons and Sale and Mathew Tait catches a long pass from teammate Jonny Wilkinson. Charging forward, the 18-year-old dummies a switch in direction around one opponent, skirts around another, then barges England captain Jason Robinson out of his way to score.

“It was my favourite game of the season and my favourite try,” says Mathew. “The crowd here were brilliant, as they have been all year, and the try was one of those things that just came together.”

It was also a perfect demonstration of why, five weeks later, the former Barnard Castle School pupil would be selected to play for his country in the RBS Six Nations. “He just bumped me off that day,” admitted Robinson afterwards. “He showed me how strong he is and bundled me out of the way. He’s got a lot of pace, he’s confident and he’s a strong lad.”

He may not be the biggest or the tallest player – “I’d like to say I’m 6ft but really I’m 5ft 11ins,” he admits – but what Mathew lacks in stature, he makes up for in pace, skill and strength.

Nevertheless, things haven’t always gone his way. During England’s Six Nations opener observers pointed out that in comparison with other internationals, he was at a pound for pound disadvantage when facing the likes of Wales’s Gavin Henson, who picked him up and tucked him under his arm.

It’s something Mathew’s working on. He weighed in at 12½ stone at the start of the year; but he’s already increased that to 13st 11lbs. “I am trying to put some beef on. I just need to bulk up generally,” he admits.

The centre position he usually plays is a balancing act between being fast to outrun your opponents but also being strong enough to bring down other players and brush off their tackles. “I need to be strong enough without being too big,” he explains.

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Reflected on the future, right, and up against Gavin Henson of Wales, which ultimately won the tournament, in the RBS Six Nations match at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff

Fast and fearless, Mathew Tait is one of the most exciting young players to mature from school rugby to the professional game in recent years. He tells SARAH FRENCH about how he has coped physically and mentally with his meteoric rise.

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Mathew is 18 and has just completed his first season with Newcastle Falcons. He started playing rugby aged five and went to a rugby-playing school in Barnard Castle.

He has always been tall and fast but as a younger he was never the strongest player. “I was 15 stone and 5ft 7ins,” he says. “I never used to be the strongest, but I’ve always played rugby and I’ve always had a lot of pace.”

Mathew was first noticed by a coach from Newcastle Falcons when he was 11 and was signed by the club. He played for England at under-16 and under-18 level before being selected for the under-21 team.

He started his professional career with a try in his first game a year ago. “I was 5ft 11ins and 11st at the time,” he says. “I’ve come a long way in the last year.”

Mathew is 5ft 11ins and 13st 11lbs, and is now looking forward to the challenges of the next season. “I’ve got a lot to look forward to,” he says. “I’ve got a lot to learn and I’ve got a lot of people to impress.”

Mathew is hoping to play for England at the World Cup in 2011 and is determined to make the most of his opportunity. “I’ve always been determined to be the best I can be,” he says. “I’ve always been determined to be the best I can be.”

Mathew Tait is one of the most exciting young players to mature from school rugby to the professional game in recent years. He tells SARAH FRENCH about how he has coped physically and mentally with his meteoric rise.
With high-profile players like Jonny Wilkinson being forced out of the game for long periods because of injuries, there’s a school of thought that says players need to wear more protection or learn to look after themselves better on the pitch.

Mathew thinks neither is realistic. “I don’t know whether a small bit of foam would make much difference. People are going to get injured, it comes with the territory. You have to put everything into tackling and running; you wouldn’t be playing the game if you shied away from that.”

Part of staying fit is a diet that’s high in protein and low in fat with slow release carbohydrates and lots of fresh fruit and vegetables. High protein levels, vital for building and repairing muscle, come from chicken and eggs, though mention of the C-word sends Mathew into despair. “I hate chicken. There are only so many sauces you can put with it,” he moans.

Mathew moved out of the family home in Wolsingham last year and now shares a flat in Newcastle with Falcons teammate Geoff Parling. So is he a dab hand in the kitchen? “I don’t think my flat mate would say so. I tried making a cold, sweet and sour egg white omelette once. He wasn’t convinced.”

Luckily, a Newcastle restaurant comes to the rescue several times a week – young players get to fill up for free on pasta and steaks at Da Vinci’s in Jesmond. Is there anything that’s a definite no-no in the rugby player’s diet? “As long as you eat sensibly enough and you’re not eating fried food all the time, grilling everything and generally eating healthily, you’re pretty much fine,” says Mathew.

Dr Adam Carey, the doctor from Celebrity Fit Club and nutritional director of the England RFU, provides protein power shakes and vitamins to maintain players’ general health and recovery from training.

But being physically fit isn’t enough for Mathew, he needs a mental challenge too. Having achieved a full set of As in his biology, geography and sports studies A levels, he decided to defer his place at Durham University last year to focus on rugby but is now thinking about studying again.

“Coming here was new for me and with university also being a new environment it could have been too much and both could have gone badly. Now I know that if the game goes badly at the weekend, you are cheesed off all week if you’ve got nothing else to take your mind off it,” he says.

Mathew comes from a sporty family. His maternal grandfather played for Sheffield Wednesday and mother, Julie, was a Midlands county hockey player and a sprinter. His dad, Alasdair, played rugby at university and younger brother, Alex, is also doing well with the England Under-18s.

When it comes to relaxing away from the game, Mathew spends his time watching DVDs with mates and reading, and he’s thinking of taking up the piano. He headed to Scotland recently to do some fishing and walking to recover from his injuries.

His first premiership season now over, there is still the prestigious Churchill Cup tournament in Canada to look forward to next month before pre-season training for the premiership kicks off again.

He is also planning a quick break before then, but one thing is guaranteed – it won’t mean a holiday away from the gym.

‘I need to beef up a bit, put on some bulk’
If it’s serious, head for hospital

Darlington’s walk-in medical centre is proving hugely successful… and perhaps a little too popular, IAN LAMMING explains who can be treated there, and who should be heading for hospital.

People have been urged not to use a new walk-in medical centre in Darlington as a hospital after a number of seriously ill patients turned up seeking help. Ambulances had to be called to take the patients to Accident and Emergency as the nurse-led clinic is only designed for minor injuries and ailments.

In just ten weeks, more than 6,000 people have been treated in the Darlington Primary Care Trust nurse-led clinic on the ground floor of Doctor Piper House, in King Street.

But among these patients have been many cases too severe to be dealt with which have had to be rushed to hospital by ambulance.

More than 70 asked for help after experiencing chest pain and were sent to hospital with suspected heart attacks. Another case was a suspected stroke, while others have turned up with notifiable diseases such as measles. Staff treated two people who had been in a car accident who should have gone straight to hospital, and patients have also asked for medication reviews which cannot be done at the walk-in centre because staff do not have access to medical records. Others have sought a second opinion after visiting their GPs, while some have turned up expecting to see the dermatologists, who share the building, when this service is by doctor’s referral only.

Modern matron Nicola Wharton said: “We are a 21st century organisation and are looking above and beyond the conventional. Used alongside conventional healthcare, complementary therapies can prove to be extremely effective.”

Therapies are already widely used in palliative care to help relieve some of the symptoms of serious conditions. They can also help with back, neck and shoulder pain, indigestion and heartburn, insomnia, hay fever, headaches and pre-menstrual tension.

Patients have also had success with therapies supporting more orthodox treatments when trying to give up smoking, or with anxiety and panic attacks, chronic fatigue syndrome and depression.

“Complementary therapies will never be a replacement for conventional medicine but are important in that they take a holistic approach to treatment,” said the PCT’s Patient Advice and Liaison Service manager, Clare Hinton. “They also consider the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual factors and tailor treatments to suit the individual.

“Many treatments simply offer patients the chance to relax, which in itself can be beneficial. They also encourage patients to take control of their illness and offer a proactive approach to healing.”

For more information contact Sue Lawrence on (01325) 746248 or for a service specification, head of primary care Lorraine Tostevin on (01325) 746249.

WHAT THE WALK-IN CENTRE TREATS

The walk-in centre concentrates on minor ailments and injuries including the following:

- Sore throats, coughs, colds, fevers, flu-like symptoms, impetigo, rashes, skin infections, insect bites, allergies, conjunctivitis, ear infections, diarrhoea and vomiting, headaches, sinus problems, urine infections, mouth ulcers, sprains and strains, superficial burns, minor head injuries, lacerations requiring closure with glue, cuts and bruises, emergency hormonal contraception and tetanus.

- Health promotion and public health activities include: Healthy living advice, flu vaccinations, mental health promotion, health checks for vulnerable patients and phlebotomy (blood taking). Also by appointment, stop smoking services, retinal and foot screening, screening for hypertension and diabetes.

Darlington Memorial Hospital’s Accident and Emergency Unit provides care for any injury or illness that needs urgent attention.

Medical advice can also be given over the phone through NHS Direct on 0845 4647 and the Out of Hours Service is available on 0845 6033131.
An end to all those questions

A new scheme has been set up to spare patients the need to answer the same questions again and again.

Thousands of people are to benefit from a major initiative designed to improve health and social care. The scheme was launched in Darlington today in the middle of April and aims to get the town’s most needy residents.

Called the Single Assessment Process, it will bring together Darlington Primary Care Trust and Darlington Borough Council in a joint approach to care.

Community nurses, therapists, support staff, doctors and hospital staff will work with social workers and housing officials to ensure residents’ needs are met in full.

And instead of enduring countless rounds of questioning, people will be asked just once for personal and medical information. They will undergo a comprehensive assessment of their health and social care needs, leading to an individual care plan which, with their permission, will be shared by all the professionals with whom they come in contact.

Darlington PCT’s nurse development facilitator Win Suggett said: “We think the new system will be excellent. It will improve access to health and social care and provide seamless partnership working for people within the Borough of Darlington.”

Lynn Walker, manager of intermediate care services at Darlington Social Services, added: “This follows a pilot project which proved very successful because people no longer have to be asked the same questions by every agency they come into contact with. This will provide a more effective, efficient service to the public and ensure health and social care resources are used efficiently.”

The new system will be used for people aged 18 and over with a physical or sensory impairment, and elderly people. After the initial contact, where the basic information is obtained, people will undergo a comprehensive assessment of their needs.

The key details will be fed into a computer so the records can be accessed by health and social care professionals and patients don’t have to repeat the information. An individual care plan will be developed which the various professionals will share and follow.

Darlington PCT’s mental health improvement specialist Vicky Waterson said: “Young men are still the suicide capital of the country. It’s an unenviable record as 45/100,000. In some parts of the town the figure was as high as 45/100,000. But overall the rate has now fallen to 10.2/100,000, much closer to the current national figure of 9.5.

The latest figures now put Darlington in line to meet Government targets of reducing the number of suicides by 20 per cent by the year 2010 compared with 1999.

The new posters, featuring the slogan “death leaves no option – life does”, will be targeted in a major campaign designed to cut the number of suicides in Darlington. Rates have begun to fall in the town thanks to measures aimed at tackling its unenviable record as suicide capital of the country. But Darlington Primary Care Trust is reinforcing its efforts by launching a poster campaign directed at the most vulnerable groups.

The move follows an audit of suicides in the town and the implementation of a suicide strategy. This included staging a multi-agency conference and workshops, increasing crisis intervention services, working closely with the housing department, the police, the Samaritans and the town’s drug and alcohol addiction service, issuing only prescribed drugs, such as anti-depressants and painkillers, which cannot be used to overdose and the drawing up of an action plan to tackle the issue.

Darlington PCT’s mental health improvement specialist Vicky Waterson said four posters had now been produced for various target groups, including men, stressed workers, older people and youngsters.

“We have chosen the images carefully in order to relate to the various groups and green was selected because it is a calming colour,” she said.

“Employment does help bolster self-esteem and counters depression. But some jobs can cause stress and many deaths involve employed people.

“Elderly people can decide to take their own lives because they, or their carers, feel isolated. The campaign is designed to let everyone know there is support out there for them.”

Until recently, Darlington had one of the worst suicide records in the country, with rates well above the national average. From 2001 to 2003, 53 people took their own lives, mainly young men in work. The rate of 14 suicides per 100,000 people compared with a national average of 10/100,000.

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The new posters, featuring the slogan “death leaves no option – life does”, will be appearing all over town in a variety of public settings, pointing people in the direction of helpline numbers, support and advice.
HEALTH staff in Darlington have been rewarded for their efforts at an OSCARS ceremony to be remembered. Darlington Primary Care Trust launched the Outstanding Service Contribution and Recognition Awards 2005 to complement its annual long service ceremony. Each marks the hard work and dedication shown by many staff over decades with the NHS.

Darlington PCT chief executive Colin Morris and chairman Sandra Pollard performed the honours at a special ceremony staged at Darlington Football Club.

Mr Morris said: “We are operating in an ever changing world in the NHS and in many ways things will never be the same again. But what remains constant is the undying commitment of the people that work in the health service. These awards recognise their spirit and courage.”

Mrs Pollard added: “The tensions and challenges within the NHS are huge and the fact that so many of our staff are so loyal has to be applauded. The OSCARS are one way we can show we really do appreciate their efforts.”

Nominees were put forward by staff at the PCT in 11 categories, reflecting the diverse nature of the organisation. The Lifetime Achievement Award went to Macmillan Nurse Terri Ricci, who also collected a long service award for working in health for 40 years.

Her nomination read: “She has demonstrated tireless dedication and commitment to countless patients, their families and her colleagues during what is often a very distressing and difficult time. She has been a fantastic source of support to all throughout her career and is worthy of this award.”

Mrs Ricci, of Spennymoor, said she was surprised to win the award. “I thought I was there to get a long service award and was really shocked when they called my name out again. Now it has sunk in, I’m really pleased as it is nice to be acknowledged having worked for so many years in nursing.”

Shotton Colliery born, she trained as a nurse at Sunderland Royal Infirmary and worked in hospitals in the region and America and as a district nursing sister, before becoming a Macmillan nurse 16 years ago.

She is now managed by Darlington PCT but also works with Durham Dales and Sedgefield PCTs.

The Light Bulb Award recognised staff who were ‘switched on’ to new developments and innovations. This was awarded to district nursing sister Elaine Shaw for her idea to provide a mobile clinic in the form of the Flu Bus.

Her nomination read: “Achieving targets for flu is not only essential for the health of our most vulnerable residents but is also crucial for the Trust to achieve its star status. Against a difficult backdrop of flu vaccine shortages and the negative publicity that followed, her idea was as inspired as it was effective.”

The Bureaucracy Buster Award for cutting through red tape went to the Sure Start Wave 3 team based at McNay Street.

Their nomination said: “A variety of things have come under their spotlight, from domestic violence, breastfeeding support, children in need and empowering parents. And they have shown great creativity to see beyond the jargon, paperwork and form-filling and still fulfil their duties.”

TEAM of the Year went to the Palliative Care Inpatient Team at St Teresa’s Hospice for showing dedication and commitment well beyond the call of duty to their patients and their families.

A new team of staff, they came together last year in an innovative partnership between Darlington PCT, Marie Curie Cancer Care and St Teresa’s Hospice to provide 24-hour cover 365 days a year.

The nomination said: “Our winning team is passionate about the care of their patients and thoroughly deserve this recognition for all their hard work and dedication.”

Director of primary care Carole Harder was awarded the innovative contribution to work life balance accolade.

The nomination said: “We’re all looking for ways to balance our work and home lives and this award is designed to recognise someone who has come up with a creative solution. It is more remarkable still that she has achieved this while working at an executive level, putting in place ways of working that have proved it is possible and setting a positive example to us all.”

Primary care and clinical governance facili-
Marilyn Abbott was recognised for her innovative contribution to improving recruitment and retaining staff. The awards ceremony heard the lengths she had gone to in order to attract doctors from Europe.

The nomination said: “Her support has ranged from meeting head teachers to get doctors’ children into school, organising mortgages and car insurance and even taking control of roof repairs.”

Publication of the Year was awarded to Barbara Conway for her published work Community Angina Rehabilitation: the case for a new paradigm.

As clinical team leader for Coronary Heart Disease Services Mrs Conway has been at the forefront of pioneering work that has helped to increase dramatically the fitness of patients and reduce hospital admissions in Darlington.

The work has been recognised nationally and is used as a model by other rehabilitation units across the country. She also recently stepped on to the international stage to present her work at a major conference in Switzerland.

The nomination said: “She is a fantastic ambassador for Darlington and we are extremely proud to call her one of ours.”

The National Recognition Award went to Darlington’s Cardiac Rehabilitation Service, which is led by Mrs Conway and includes the heart failure service run by Victoria Duffy, Jill Drinkall, Jenny Altimes, Alison Billau and Claire Redpath.

The nomination said: “Their achievements have put Darlington on the map.”

Best Supporting Colleague went to performance officer Jonathan Slee for “his tireless efforts in helping others” while the Best Supporting Manager accolade went to workforce modernisation lead Barbara Bright for her willingness to lend a helping hand and her loyalty and commitment to her team.

Two Unsung Hero Awards were handed out, one for clinical and the other non-clinical staff. The award recognised the achievements of individuals who weren’t usually in the spotlight, but who worked behind the scenes to help the Trust deliver its objectives.

The winner of the clinical staff category was integrated teams facilitator Christine Kelly who was described in her nomination as being a good listener, professional in her approach and an excellent ambassador for nursing.

The non-clinical category attracted more nominations than any other. The winner was Maureen Wallace for providing exceptional support, exceeding what was normally expected.

The nomination read: “She is never without a smile or a word of encouragement and has been described as an indispensable star.”

Long service awards totalled 835 years with certificates being presented for 15, 25 and 40 years.

In the 15 years section were the following: Margaret Buckman, Julie Wolstenholme, Jean Firth, Lyn Hunter, Kathleen Whitfield, Catherine Wojcik, Jayne Ralphs, Chris Allison, Linda Oliver, Sarah Tully, Kim Robinson, Margaret Collinson, Syivia Rycroft, Sally Bell, Barbara Nimmo, Anne Archer, Jayne Unwin, Patrick Henry, Nicola Fletcher, Marie Kerridge, Chris Allison, Karen Watson, Gail Cook, Michelle Wolstenholme, Carolyn Bruce, Kate Robertson, Kathryn Saunders, Helena Tait and Tricia Parkes.

The 25 years section featured Elaine Shaw, Bill Spencer, Vanessa Marwood, Joan Roberts, Patricia Robson, Angela Perry, Kath Lane, Susan Godfrey, Carol Zarwi, Ruth Taylor, Linda Bailes, Christine Kelly, Karen Robinson, Christine Clark, Jane Hall, Gill Angus and Margaret Bennett.
The Green fitness machine

A weapon in the bad breath battle

UNSWEETENED yoghurt is the latest weapon against the social embarrassment of bad breath, according to a new Japanese study. A serving a day for six weeks reduced the level of hydrogen sulphide – a major cause of bad breath – by 80 per cent of volunteers. Yoghurt was also found to be a deterrent to tooth decay and gum disease, contributing factors in bad breath which affects one in four people.

The research was welcomed by British Dental Foundation chief executive, Nigel Carter, who said: “It’s pleasing to hear that this healthy snack may have oral health benefits.”

Mole warning

A REMINDER to people with lots of moles: keep an eye on them. Remember to look for new moles, moles with ragged edges, moles that change shape or colour and moles that weep, itch, become inflamed or grow bigger. If any of these apply, get them checked out immediately.

INBRIEF
Stepping out for a fitter future

THE Chance To Live partnership provides a range of physical activity-based activities in Wear Valley which are targeted at specific groups. This includes the Walking the Way to Health programme, a year-round schedule of walks taken by a specially trained walk leader.

Apart from a variety of community groups at different venues around Wear Valley the scheme also works specifically with schools in the district.

This programme of walks is also used by the local Cardiac Rehabilitation and Exercise Referral programmes as an alternative to gym or swimming pool-based activity for people who are recovering from cardiac or other health problems identified by their GP.

Another long running programme which targets the over 50s is the PALS group, which stands for Physically Active for Life Seniors. Apart from regular organised walks, this programme also includes a range of activities including Tai Chi, fencing, badminton and yoga.

Many of these PALS groups will be encouraged to take part in the Great North Walk on Sunday July 10. This year’s walk, which will start and finish in Wolsingham, Weardale, will be used by literally thousands of people of all ages as a focus for getting fitter.

The great majority of those who will take part this summer will prepare themselves for the eight-mile course by gradually building up their stamina and strength so they can meet the challenge of the walk.

The organisers of the Great North Walk say there is strong evidence that the majority continue with some walking activity after the event.

Great North Walk entry forms are available by ringing (019188) 761558. The closing date for entries is Monday, June 20, or earlier should the entry limit be reached.

For more information on your local walking group, contact either Lorraine Honeybell or Jane Eddy on 0191-269 1600 or visit www.whi.org.uk

F EVER a woman was walking confirmation of practising what she preaches, then that woman is Diana Moran, formerly and perhaps forever, known as the Green Goddess. Diana is tall, blonde, strikingly beautiful and perfectly poised, with the firmest female handshake I have ever encountered.

She looks like a very well-preserved woman in her mid to late 60s. But Diana is 64. Now, all the secrets of how she can look so gorgeous while managing a hectic career as well as being a pensionable mother of two and grandmother of four are in her new book Fresh Face, subtitled “the easy way to look 10 years younger”.

Diana’s suggested combination of homemade cosmetics – the concoction using runny honey, Greek yoghurt and mashed avocado sounds good enough to eat – facial stretches, healthy diet and positive thinking clearly works.

I don’t really need to ask her, as I did later, whether younger men find her attractive – because I am one, and I do. But I also wanted to ask her about a darker secret, a secret depression which hit her as a direct, though long-delayed, reaction to the breast cancer, the double mastectomy and the simultaneous reconstructive surgery she had endured in the 1980s.

“Ahh. I was a bit wary of saying anything about that, but you’ve caught me out,” says Diana. “It happened two-ah-half years or so ago and I didn’t know who I could go to. I just knew that I need help to get through it.”

Breast cancer had threatened her life and her career and she had beaten it. Yet 11 years later there was a backlash which almost floored this glamorous woman with a seemingly unquenchable thirst for life.

“The break-up of a relationship was the catalyst,” says twice-married Diana. “I didn’t want to talk to my family and friends about it... We’d done all that cancer business and I didn’t want to go through it all again. I just needed somebody new to unburden to.

Just as she had done her utmost to keep her cancer secret all those years earlier, Diana gave nothing away to her friends and loved ones about what she was going through. “I got really depressed, but it was a secret heartache, a secret depression. I’m a great one for putting a smiley face on and getting on with life.”

That was the root of the problem, in a way. Diana has always been the one who coped, the one who advised others how to keep smiling and stay positive, so the moment she recovered from cancer she was back in her familiar role, personally and professionally, showing daytime TV viewers how to keep fit.

“I had pushed aside my personal feelings of grief at the loss of my breasts, and of my perceived diminished femininity. My emotions were compounded by a sense of sexual rejection and, for the first time in 15 years, I found myself blaming cancer for my insecurity and depression.”

Diana’s salvation came via a course of eight sessions with the Cancer Counselling Trust, a small London-based charity which she now wholeheartedly supports.

So it was a complete novelty to be the one in need this time? “It was. I was embarrassed at first, and the whole thing was very upsetting, because you don’t hold anything back. If you do, it’s not worth bothering with. The first session is an assessment for you and for them, but if you decide to go back, you have to commit to eight sessions; you see the same person at the same mutually convenient time each week. And you’re not burdening them, because that’s what they’re there for, but you feel unburdened.

They’re such clever people – just a couple of words can give you a different spin on how you think about things...

“It’s not a comfortable experience, not at all. It raised all these other issues and it went through its peaks and its troughs, but at the end of it, phew, what a relief!”

Diana’s 40-year career, on the other hand, seems mostly peaks. It has taken in model...
Diana Moran at the height of her TV fame as the Green Goddess, and far left, today

Diana Moran spent most of the 1980s telling people how to stay fit and healthy, only to succumb to breast cancer herself. As she brings out a new book on how to stay looking young and radiant, Diana tells GRAHAM KEAL how sudden depression nearly undid all the good work

Five years later, Diana tried in vain to drop the tag but now she is happy to have it. “I feel now that I owe a debt to the Green Goddess, because she opened doors for me. The public feel comfortable with her and seem to want to keep her around.”

Hence the latest book, a distillation of all the tips about maintaining and restoring good looks and good habits which it has taken Diana a lifetime to amass. Her clear, smooth complexion and bright-eyed vivacity owe everything to the methods she outlines, not to the surgeon’s knife.

Cosmetic surgery is not for me. As well as the cancer operation I had a partial thyroidectomy and I was 20, so I’ve had my share of surgery and I don’t want to go under the knife unnecessarily. When I see someone on television having a face operation I get frightened to death at the thought of something going wrong.

Cosmetic surgeon fans who are out for a quick fix might be surprised at how quickly Diana’s gentler alternatives can work. “I know people can see and feel a lot of difference within 28 days because people from my classes have noticed and people can see and feel a lot of difference within 28 days because people from my classes have noticed. When you get to this sort of age, it’s about maintaining what you’ve got.”

DIANA’s TOP TIPS

- Wake up tired-looking skin by massaging it with moisturiser, morning or night, for five minutes
- Give tired-looking skin an instant bloom by using moisturisers, foundations and balms that contain light-diffusing properties
- For special occasions, paint egg white over lined areas on droopy faces. It temporarily tightens and lifts the face. Allow it to dry completely before applying any make-up
- Lighten age spots on hands and face with lemon juice, though note that this treatment is not suitable for sensitive skin.

SUGAR may be sweet but it hastens the ageing process. Sugar attaches to your body’s proteins in a process called glycosylation. It transforms the protein, making them unable to repair the skin and adversely affecting the collagen and elastin structures deep down.

CALM red and itchy eyes with cotton wool pads soaked in cold milk. Leave over eyes for ten minutes.

WHETHER they are due to poor circulation or an accumulation of toxins under the thin surface skin, you can remedy dark circles in two places. Place two thin slices of raw potato on top of closed eyes for ten minutes and relax. Alternatively, become more active – take a brisk walk, do facial exercises and get your lymphatic drainage system working.

GRAHAM KEAL

Diana Moran is not the only celebrity to have suffered from severe depression. Actor Stephen Fry is just one of a host of celebrities including film star Winona Ryder, and TV gardener Monty Don who have publicly admitted suffering from depression. In 1995 Fry was so depressed he walked out of a West End play and considered suicide. He has now recovered. He describes his feelings as: “Somehow the future looks an impossible place to be, and the direction you are going seems to have no purpose. There is this word despair, which is a very awful thing to feel.

“...There is never any logical reason for despair. Reason has absolutely nothing to do with it. You can’t reason yourself back into cheerfulness any more than you can reason yourself into an extra 6in in height.”

DIANA Moran, died in 2005 at the age of 56, from cancer. She was a TV presenter, writer and fitness expert.

Fresh Face (Hamlyn, £12.99)
Even if we don’t know much about it, most of us have a mental image of acupuncture – usually a human pin cushion. Yet while it was once fairly marginal, regarded with a degree of scepticism, its reputation as a viable form of medicine is now firmly established. But what really is acupuncture (aside from sticking in needles) and how – and who – does it help?

Traditional acupuncturist Emma Robinson explains that it’s an ancient form of medicine handed down from the Chinese. “It’s the idea that our bodies naturally maintain our health but for various reasons, can get out of balance. What we have is Qi, pronounced ‘Chee’, and that’s everywhere. It flows within us in meridians, which are channels throughout the body. Whenever there’s ill-health, whether that’s physical or spiritual, we see it as coming from disharmony in the flow of the Qi.”

Of the different forms of acupuncture, that Emma practises is known as Five Element, based on the natural elements of wood, fire, earth, metal and water. Exponents believe that these correspond with the body’s makeup, with each person having the characteristics of one more strongly than the rest. When something goes wrong, it is likely to be linked to this element.

Emma, who grew up in Hamsterley, County Durham, says the key to treatment is to look at the whole person. “It’s the person as an individual and what’s going on with them. We start working with that person and trying to help that weakness that we see as the cause of the problem,” she says.

In the initial consultation, lasting about an hour and a half, Emma starts by getting to know the patient. “I have a very in-depth discussion firmly established. But what really is acupuncture (aside from sticking in needles) and how – and who – does it help?”

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In the initial consultation, lasting about an hour and a half, Emma starts by getting to know the patient. “I have a very in-depth discussion with them, including their full medical history and details of medication, but also their emotional state, family situation and lifestyle. Then I look at the body systems, such as bowel movements, urination and sleep patterns,” she says. “What I’m really looking for is not only the symptoms of the problem but what the cause is. I very much concentrate on trying to treat the cause.”

During the session, Emma also takes the patient’s pulses, of which there are six on each wrist, connected to 12 main meridians. Treatment starts tentatively, with the insertion and quick withdrawal of needles. Even in subsequent consultations, Emma says that more often than not, she won’t leave the needles in. “A lot of the time I won’t leave them in at all – I’ll just put them in and take them out,” she says.

The needles are stainless steel, of varying lengths and not much more than the width of a hair. Emma uses the least amount possible – usually four to ten – and places them in mirror image on both sides of the body. She says there’s no pain involved. “Often you don’t even feel the needle going through the skin. You can feel the energy moving. Some people describe it as like static.”

Sometimes, Emma will burn a herb called Moxa over the acupuncture point, warming it and helping the energy flow. After one to two sessions, she says the patient should start to feel better, although she stresses that there’s no instant cure. “It isn’t something that you have once and the problem’s sorted. People should be willing to give it at least six treatments,” she says.

The range of conditions shown to benefit from acupuncture is diverse, taking in the whole spectrum from stress and allergies to back pain and infertility. Emma says that not only does it treat the problem, but patients often report other improvements. “It can be quite intangible things. I think one of the key areas is mental health,” she says.

Evidence that doctors are looking more and more to acupuncture is provided by Emma’s appointment to the NHS-run Bishopgate Medical Centre, in Bishop Auckland. She sees private patients at the Durham Complementary Health Centre and Middlesbrough’s Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Centre.

For Emma, acupuncture is a way of life – not only does she practise it, she has herself to prevent illness. Yet despite her years of training, and her experience of treating patients, she admits that part of it remains a mystery. “You get to the point where you can’t really understand. There’s a little bit of magic in there,” she says.

To book an appointment or a free 15-minute consultation, contact Emma on 07739 557316, Durham Complementary Health Centre on 0191-375 7507 or The Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Centre on (01642) 246385. For more information, visit www.traditional-acupuncture.co.uk.
ME&MYHEALTH

MICHELLE PAYER

AUTHOR Michelle Paver had a huge hit with her first children’s story, which is still at the top of the best seller lists. She landed a £2.8m publishing deal for Wolf Brother, the first of her Chronicles of Ancient Darkness series, which is set amongst nomadic tribes in a northern forest 6,000 years ago. The film rights for Wolf Brother have already been snapped up by North-East film director Ridley Scott.

Paver was born in Malawi on September 7, 1960, and has lived most of her life in Wimbledon. She gained a first in biochemistry at Oxford and then became a high-flying City lawyer. Plagued by colds and headaches, and surviving on coffee, Paver gave up the fast-paced lifestyle to become a writer.

“Let’s face it,” she says, “I was only earning money I never had the time or energy to enjoy. I was a mug. Now I have about 10 million times more fun, and time to do the things I really love.”

How much sleep do you need?

“These days a good eight hours, nine if I can get it. When I worked in the City, I used to get by on five. Writing is surprisingly tiring. I try to do about seven hours a day and by the time I’ve done that I feel like I’ve been hit with a truck. I tried cat napping as well, but couldn’t get the knack of waking up so I gave up.

How do you feel first thing in the morning?

“Providing I get my eight hours, I feel sharpest in the morning.

What exercise do you take?

“I don’t have a car, so I walk a lot and that does it for me.”

Are you careful about what you eat?

“I don’t have a car, so I walk a lot and that does it for me.”

Are you or have you ever been overweight?

“In my teens I was a couple of stone overweight, which made me utterly miserable. I tried every diet known to woman but none of them worked. Then in my twenties I got busy at work and forgot about dieting, and it all just fell off.

Do you take vitamin and mineral pills?

“I take calcium, a vitamin pill and usually some other fat pill – for a while, then I’ll lose interest in it.”

What foods can’t you bear to eat?

“I can’t really think of anything. I’ll eat anything, I once ate fried piranha eyes for a dare on holiday. They’re quite nice – crispy. But if it was alive and it could speak I’d have a problem.”

Do you drink or smoke too much?

“I’ve never smoked. I’m pretty sure I did drink too much when I was in the City, and I’d love to drink too much now, but I’ve been cutting down and these days I limit myself to one glass of wine a night.”

Have you ever been in hospital?

“I’ve never been in hospital for an illness or injury, but when my father was dying I spent days and nights there, so the answer is yes.”

Do your job affect your health?

“Generally.”

Do you think you suffer from stress?

“I don’t mind, but I used to a lot. Every single case was important, and they were all clashing with the others. These days, I’m working for myself and on one book at a time. There’s pressure when it comes to meeting deadlines but not stress.”

Do you look after your skin?

“I wash it and I slap on cheap moisturiser, and, for me, that’s looking after my skin. I don’t believe in spending money on a lot of expensive stuff.”

Are you happy with your body?

“Aesthetically, yes. I’ve learnt to live with the flaws, I’m the same weight as I was 20 years ago. In practical terms, it doesn’t yet set me free when I ride a horse or walk ten miles. So, yes, I’m reasonably happy.”

Do you take more care of yourself as the years go by?

“Because of my father I’m pretty cancer aware, so I don’t get those sorts of problems you get with smoking. But I don’t think I really take more care, generally.”

Wolf Brother by Michelle Paver (Orion, £8.99)

Current doctor even though I’ve been on his books for several years.”

Do you catch a cold most winters?

“I think I do, about once a year. It’s about a cold a year.”

Do you feel your body getting weaker?

“I don’t get those sorts of problems you get with age. I do feel more tired.”

Do you take your age into account?

“I don’t think I do. I don’t think much about it.”

How do you feel about yourself?

“I think I do, about once a year. It’s about a cold a year.”

Do you think you suffer from stress?

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Reservoir jogs

ANY people like the idea of going for a walk or jog in the country but are put off because they are unsure where they can walk. If you don’t want to learn to read a map or join a ramblers’ club, you might consider heading for one of the North-East’s reservoirs for a spot of healthy outdoor exercise in stunning surroundings.

Paul Russell, local operational manager with Northumbrian Water, is proud of the fact that most of the region’s reservoirs have welcoming car parks, information boards and clearly marked out paths for walkers. Some have wheelchair and pushchair-friendly routes and there are plans to install more around the region.

“We like to encourage people to keep fit and we actively promote...”

I tried every diet known to woman but none of them worked. Then in my twenties I got busy at work and forgot about dieting, and it all just fell off.
The School of Health & Social Care at the University of Teesside has nearly 7,000 students (a mixture of full and part-time) studying on a range of courses at all levels, from national vocational qualifications to doctoral degrees. Health and social care students benefit from state-of-the-art facilities in the Centuria Building, which is one of a small number of purpose-built university health and social care centres in the country. An outstanding feature of our courses is the successful collaboration with NHS/Primary Care Trusts and Social Services, which ensures that our students receive the widest possible range of hands-on practical experience and, on qualifying, are in demand from potential employers. We have a number of courses and modules suited to everyone's tastes and encourage you to contact us for more information or visit our website at www.tees.ac.uk.

Foundation Degrees

Foundation Degrees offer a flexible way to gain a professional qualification while you work and can help to improve your career prospects.

The School of Health & Social Care Foundation Degrees have been developed directly with employers and training agencies in the health, social care and education sectors. Some degrees are delivered by further education colleges in the Tees Valley.

Foundation Degrees normally last two years and on successful completion you can progress to a full honours degree at the University.

- **FdA Complementary Therapies**
  This Foundation Degree is ideal for those who wish to practise aromatherapy interventions within integrated health settings in order to enhance the client's health and well-being. Students will develop advanced aromatherapy techniques and learn the skills necessary to become a safe and effective practitioner.

- **FdSc Healthcare Practice**
  This two-year programme is aimed at those currently working as assistants or support workers within the health and social care sector.
  The programme is a combination of academic and practical modules enabling students to improve and enhance their understanding of their role within the workplace. Subjects covered include anatomy and physiology, IT skills, communication, skills for practice, introduction to evidence-based practice and specialist modules relevant to the student's area of work.

  Routes available within the programme are – diagnostic radiography, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, radiotherapy and oncology, maternal and child health, nursing, medical laboratory practice, nutrition and the vulnerable adult.

- **FdA Early Years Sector Endorsed**
  This highly successful vocational degree has been developed in collaboration with employers, further education colleges, Local Education Authorities and SureStart. It is specifically designed to allow students to work through the modules whilst staying in employment with young children. Designed to meet the growing need for skilled staff who have an in-depth knowledge of their subject as well as the relevant practical skills, this course is ideal for classroom assistants, nursery nurses and assistants and managers in childcare settings. Students have the opportunity to turn their Foundation Degree into an Honours Degree with further study.

Lifelong Learning

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The **BSc (Hons) Promoting Practice Effectiveness** degree is aimed at health and social care professionals who wish to undertake a degree relevant to their work. The programme can be taken on a part-time or full-time basis and is currently recruiting for September 2005.

A generic pathway is available along with numerous routes which reflect a specialist practice focus e.g. Cancer & Palliative Care, Leadership & Management, Complementary Therapies, Care of Older People and Nurse Practitioner.

For an information pack on any of the above call 01642 384176 or email sohscadmissions@tees.ac.uk.

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The School of Health & Social Care offers a number of programmes at Masters level for those who wish to undertake Continuing Professional Development.

The programmes recruiting in September 2005 include:

- **MSc Evidence-based Anaesthesia**
- **MSc Evidence-based Orthopaedic Studies**
- **MSc Evidence-based Practice (Online)**
- **MSc Evidence-based Public Health**

These programmes are intended for professionals who are actively engaged in health and social care related work within a variety of settings. Students will develop a lifelong ability to understand how evidence is generated, retrieved, appraised and applied in practice.

- **MSc Health Sciences**

This programme promotes academic study and the development of analytical skills in a variety of disciplines relevant to health and social care. It is suitable for graduates in health and social care related subjects seeking personal development in their professional roles. Pathways include Cancer Care, Public Health or the more flexible Generic Pathway.

- **DProf Advancing Practice**

Recruiting for September 2005, this programme is aimed at health and social care professionals who wish to make an independent and original contribution to knowledge at doctoral level. This is achieved through the systematic advancement and evaluation of personal and professional practice, which is supported through a combination of taught modules and a large-scale independent research dissertation.

- **PgCert Musculoskeletal Studies**

This programme recruits at various points throughout the year and provides the opportunity for registered health care professionals to develop advanced clinical skills in joint examination, assessment and clinical management of patients with musculoskeletal conditions at postgraduate level. It is a collaborative venture between the University of Teesside and the Society of Orthopaedic Medicine. On successful completion of this programme relevant students will be eligible to apply for membership of the Society of Orthopaedic Medicine via a written multiple choice examination and additional practical examination (currently open to medical practitioners and physiotherapists).

- **BA (Hons) Evidence-based Interventions in Mental Health Care**

This new two year part-time degree, recruiting for September 2005, is aimed at qualified health care professionals. It focuses on therapeutic mental health interventions and offers an introduction to the principles and practice of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) with the option of another CBT module on common mental health problems. There is also a Psycho-social Interventions module, with an emphasis on evidence-based interventions.

**University Certificate in Professional Development (UCPD)**

- **Screening and Supporting Post-16 learners with specific learning difficulties**
- **Supporting Post-16 Learners**

These courses lead to a certificate and are designed for anyone who supports adults and young adults with dyslexia or other specific learning problems and who are learning in the workplace, voluntary settings or further education. Recruiting for September 2005.

For an information pack on any of the above call 01642 384176 or email sohscadmissions@tees.ac.uk.

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**BSc (Hons) Public Health & Well-being**

An innovative degree that will give graduates the knowledge and skills to bring about positive change in the policies and practices that influence the public’s health. Students will be actively engaged in work experience in areas such as community development. Applications are welcome for September 2005.

**Nursing Studies**

We have vacancies available for the Diploma in Nursing Studies (Mental Health) and BSc (Hons) Nursing Studies (Mental Health) starting in September 2005. These programmes enable you to spend 50 per cent of your time in a mental health practice setting, giving you valuable hands-on experience.

For more information on any of the above call 01642 384110 or email sohscadmissions@tees.ac.uk.

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**MA Advancing Practice**

This programme provides the opportunity for professionals working within the health and social care environment to develop their ability to implement and evaluate evidence-based change. The multidisciplinary nature of the programme enables students to explore areas of practice across a wide spectrum of care environments.

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If your head is aching, use your fingers to make a soothing head massage at your desk.

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Complementary therapist
Brenda Jones demonstrates to Michelle Gaff how workers can give themselves a soothing head massage at their desk.

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If you suffer from eye strain or sinus congestion, put a finger in the corner of each eye under your eyebrow then press and release, working your way along the bone to the outside of your eye. Do the same thing along the edge of the bone under your eye. Then put your first fingers on your top lip, the second finger on your bottom lip and your third finger on your jawline. Walk your fingers outwards along your jaw. End by giving your earlobes a little tug.

If your neck is aching and tense, move your chin down towards your chest then slowly pull your head back. Then carefully do full orbit head rolls in both directions.

Rub the tops of your arms to warm up your deltoid muscles then using your fingers and heel of your palm ‘pull’ the muscles from the bones.

If your head is aching, use your fingers to clasp pieces of hair and do little tugs across your head. Then rest your elbows on the desk and use both hands to move your scalp.

If you feel unwell because of feeling stressed at work, take any time out and when we do we’re often too tired to know where to begin. Instead we’re storing up tension, both physical and mental, to the point where eventually we feel unwell because of feeling stressed at work,” she says.

“The answer is to learn a few de-stressing techniques to do at your desk or in a quiet moment at lunchtime.

According to Brenda Jones, who runs Lothlann Complementary Therapies and lecturers in the subject, just a two minute time-out can add 30 minutes in productivity. She recently gave a presentation to PAs and secretaries – members of the NRG City PA Forum – on how they could reduce their stress with a few simple techniques.

Here are some of her ideas:

1. Take off your shoes and put your feet flat on the floor. Rest your hands in your lap. Shut your eyes and begin to breathe deeply. Concentrate on breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. As you breathe out, visualise all the tension leaving your body. Work your way around your body, releasing the tension in your shoulders, your arms, your back, your legs and so on.

2. If your neck is aching and tense, move your chin down towards your chest then slowly pull your head back. Then carefully do full orbit head rolls in both directions.

3. Warm up your trapezius muscles (the ones which run across the top of your shoulders down your arms and down your upper back) by reaching across to your left shoulder with your right and squeeze the muscles from your neck and out across your shoulders.

4. Rub the tops of your arms to warm up your deltoid muscles then using your fingers and heel of your palm ‘pull’ the muscles from the bones.

5. If your head is aching, use your fingers to clasp pieces of hair and do little tugs across your head. Then rest your elbows on the desk and use both hands to move your scalp.

6. If you suffer from eye strain or sinus congestion, put a finger in the corner of each eye under your eyebrow then press and release, working your way along the bone to the outside of your eye. Do the same thing along the edge of the bone under your eye. Then put your first fingers on your top lip, the second finger on your bottom lip and your third finger on your jawline. Walk your fingers outwards along your jaw. End by giving your earlobes a little tug.

7. For your legs, rotate your ankles in both directions. Lift your lower leg and push out keeping your foot flexed. Wiggle your toes together, then try to wiggle each one separately. Every night, raise your feet above your hips for 20 minutes.

NRG City PA Forum holds regular events to help PAs and secretaries in the Tees Valley meet up and get to know each other. Membership is free. For more information, call Michelle Gaff on (01642) 626350.
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More good news is in store for those who then join the club because they will also receive £150 worth of free vouchers, including £50 off a stay at any one of the Paramount Group’s 16 quality hotels around the UK. To find out more about the Bodysense Club please call a team member on 01388 770649.

Note: This introductory offer for over-16s is for three consecutive days and excludes beauty treatments. Fitness classes are subject to availability and the offer is valid until June 30, 2005.
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“The quality of tap water in our region is very good indeed and good value for money - more reason for us all to keep hydrated, especially as the warm weather approaches.”

Dr John Woodhouse, Deputy Regional Director for Public Health.

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