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Yes, you really can have smoother legs

Cellulite - we've all got it to some degree. But the good news is there are now ways to improve it. Five readers put the latest treatments to the test - and stripped down to their pants to show us the remarkable results



Score: 8/10
Liposhape and Cellasene Forte
Tried by: Cathy Street, 42, student nurse.
How does it work? Liposhape are double-layered underpants that provide compression and micro-massage in areas where tissue is relaxed and fatty. Cellasene Forte is a food supplement containing plant extracts believed to improve circulation and boost metabolism.
Dress size before and after treatment: 12
Severity of cellulite: grade 4/5. Hard and lumpy, visible through tight clothes.
Possible causes: poor diet and weight gain.



Cathy's verdict: 'I had to wear these pants 12 hours a day, during the day, and they can feel tight and uncomfortable, especially after eating. But I'm delighted with the improvement.'
Our expert says: 'Cathy's cellulite has reduced by 25%. The skin is smoother and there is visible weight loss on her hips and bottom.'
Treatment tried for: four weeks. For best results, underpants should be worn for 12 hours continuously for a minimum of eight weeks.
Price: Liposhape, £49.99 per pair (call 0870-011 3224 for mail-order). Cellasene Forte, £29.99 for 40 capsules (from Boots).



Score: 7/10
Light Wave Therapy
Tried by: Emma Pettifer, 36, housewife.
How does it work? Cold wavelength light (not to be confused with UV or laser light) is directed on to trouble spots, aiding oxygen circulation and lymphatic drainage. Also tightens the skin.
Dress size before and after treatment: 12
Severity of cellulite: grade 2/3. Mild puckering on outside of thighs.

Possible causes: fatty diet and sedentary lifestyle.
Emma's verdict: 'My legs are slimmer and the cellulite has reduced.'
Our expert says: 'The appearance of the skin has greatly improved.'
No. of treatments: 10
Price: £60 per session. For your nearest salon, call 00 353 1 890 4133.
Emma had her treatment with Malvina Fraser at The French Cosmetic Medical Company in London (020-7637 0548).



Score: 9/10
Advanced Key-Module Endermologie
Tried by: Phoebe Jones, 23, estate agent.
How does it work? A machine is rolled over problem areas to improve circulation, draining away toxins and excess fluid. As a bonus, the skin is stimulated to produce collagen and elastin (fibres that give skin its stretchiness and bounce), which improves tone.
Dress size before and after treatment: 12/14 to 12
Severity of cellulite: grade 2/3. Medium, soft.
Possible causes: over-eating (particularly white wheat) and drinking too much alcohol.



Phoebe's verdict: 'My trousers are looser and I have definitely noticed a change in the shape of my lower body - even my boyfriend has commented. The cellulite is definitely improved. Also, I feel detoxed and much healthier.'
Our expert says: 'This is one of the better results. She's gone down a dress size, her skin looks smoother and her thighs are slimmer.'
No. of treatments: 14
Price: £40 per session. For your nearest salon, call 020-8731 5678. Phoebe had her treatment with Laura Harris at The Hurlingham Clinic in London (020-7346 6380).



Score: 10/10
M's choice Hypoxi-Therapy
Tried by: Andrea Flatford, 22, admin assistant.
How does it work? treatment takes place in a pod with an airtight blanket between cabin and client. The client pedals at a moderate level during treatment. The combination of low pressure in the pod and exercise increases metabolism allowing fat and toxins to be broken down.
Dress size before and after treatment: 12/14 to 12
Severity of cellulite: grade 4. Though Andrea is slim, cellulite is visible through trousers.
Possible causes: sudden weight gain after a childhood operation. Smoking may contribute.



Andrea's verdict: 'I am pleased with the improvement but think it could have been better as the salon used the wrong setting on the equipment for several weeks. When the setting was changed I felt the difference immediately.'
Our expert says: 'Andrea's cellulite has improved the most, I'd say by 45%. She has lost half a stone in weight, her bottom is tighter and lifted, and skin is smoother on the backs of the thighs.'
No. of treatments: 18
Price: from £350 for a course of 12 sessions. To find your nearest salon, call 0121-359 8183. Andrea received her treatment at Club Kensington in London (07887-945149).

THE BOTTOM LINE ON BEATING CELLULITE

What kind of treatment works? One that increases micro-circulation (eg by agitating tissue or heating up the problem area so that circulation increases) along with anything that increases lymphatic and venous drainage (the removal of toxins). **What sort of treatment doesn't work?** Most wraps are of limited use only, according to our cellulite expert Malti O'Mahony, a nurse and qualified aesthetic medical practitioner. If they work in the short-term, this is through the removal of water, not toxins, from the fat cells. Cellulite creams can improve skin texture but rarely break down cellulite - unless they have thermogenic properties, meaning they heat up the area, and therefore increase circulation. **How do experts rate cellulite?** O'Mahony gives her patients a score out of five before starting treatment. **Grade 1:** skin is dull but without noticeable puckering. **Grade 2:** some unevenness in the skin surface. **Grade 3:** cottage cheese-like puckering. **Grade 4:** hard, visible lumps. **Grade 5:** the area looks clogged by nodules beneath the skin surface that can reach the size of tennis balls.



Score: 9/10
Biocell
Tried by: Tracy Cox, 38, cashier for turf accountant.
How does it work? Ultrasound waves, combined with a suction action, break down fatty deposits, while medium frequency currents stimulate muscles to improve tone.
Dress size before and after treatment: 12

Severity of cellulite: grade 4. Hard cellulite, possibly caused by an imbalance in oestrogen levels and poor circulation.
Possible causes: over-eating; not losing weight after children; insufficient exercise.
Tracy's verdict: 'The difference in my legs is amazing - I first saw it after three treatments. The skin is firmer, more toned and the cellulite has softened.'

Also 'I've lost 4lb effortlessly.'
Our expert says: 'Tracy has lost weight from her hips. I would recommend her continuing with the treatment for further results. A 15% improvement.'
No. of treatments: 14
Price: from £55 per session. To find your nearest salon, call 020-7242 5749. Tracy had her treatment at The Biofarm Clinic in London (020-7242 5749).

Test by Victoria D'Alessio. Photographs by Shelly Mitchell. Malti O'Mahony used the cellulite treatment based on the patented method of microtherapy to treat cellulite. Call 000 1229 3804.