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Indulgences

How to downsize thighs

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No one, not even J-Lo, is immune to cellulite – but some treatments really do work, says **Alice Hart-Davis**

One flush of warm weather and we're contemplating shorts, summer holidays – and fretting about cellulite. We hardly need incriminating photos of celebrity cellulite sufferers (the goddess-like Jennifer Lopez was the latest) to remind us of our shortcomings.

Marathon runners aside, few women consider themselves cellulite free. Doctors usually scoff that it's "just fat", but women know otherwise, and so does the beauty industry. Cellulite always needs work and there are many, many ways of tackling it, most of which require dedication – and cash.

Cellulite remedies should be graded according to how much they hurt, because that affects one's ability to persevere. For wimps, there are magic pills and potions. Cellasene Forte pills (£29.99 for 40 capsules; 01628 488006) have a huge following – there were fights in chemists' shops in Australia when they first appeared.

I didn't believe they could do anything, but having taken part in a trial, I have to report the otherwise inexplicable (it was over Christmas) loss of several millimetres of fat from each thigh. Similarly, "reducing creams" are mocked, but the classy ones come with research showing significant amounts of shrinkage in independent clinical trials.

Sisley's Phyto Sculptural (£57; 020 7491 2722) has the approval of the American Food and Drug Administration (official acknowledgement that it "visibly reduces cellulite"), and Shiseido's new Body Creator gel (£29.95, exclusively at Selfridges until May 29, then available nationwide; 020 7630 1515) takes a new

approach. It has a smell that, it is claimed, stimulates the breakdown of fat cells, as well as ingredients that make the skin satin smooth.

Mechanical treatments are said to be painless, but it depends on your pain threshold. The only one with FDA approval is Advanced Keymodule Endermologie (£40 a session; 020 8731 5678), in which your fatty bits are effectively vacuumed up and scrumpled about. One friend said it was like a firm sports massage. Another said she'd rather do three months' strict detox than face another session.

The natural ways of tackling cellulite are certainly the cheapest (see below right), but the treatment to boast about this summer – it's chic (Liz Hurley has tried it), it's expensive and it *really* hurts – is mesotherapy. This involves hundreds of tiny injections of homeopathic substances directly into the cellulite, to boost the circulation and flush out toxins.

For the faint-hearted, that's probably all you'll want to know. The treatment is increasingly popular in London salons. Some people do it with a special injecting gun; Sister Malti O'Mahony of London's Boston Clinic (020 7229 3904; £450 for a course), who has injected bottoms so famous they can't be mentioned, prefers to do the injections freehand, to lessen the trauma to the skin.

In the interests of research, I tried it, wondering, as Malti administered 50-odd jabs in each leg, if I was mad. At first, I had terrible bruises, but after four weeks, my legs were noticeably sleeker and less bumpy.

But which treatment is right for *your* thighs? Step forward the cellulite consultants. Dr Daniel Sister of Radical Beauty in Harley Street (020 7487 3220) will assess your problem, and prescribe anything from diet to mesotherapy accordingly. Sossi Yerissian at the Joshi Clinic in Wimpole Street (020 7487 5456) offers the Rolls-Royce of all cellulite programmes. This includes diet analysis, manual lymphatic drainage massage, mesotherapy, skin brushing, exercise, fat-burning supplements, bath salts and medical support tights (price on application). If you don't have thighs like Liz Hurley or J-Lo after all that, well, you can't say you haven't tried.