

style

*alternatively

water, water everywhere... this month we check out colonic hydrotherapy



Colonic Hydrotherapy, Aqualibria, 1 Harley Street W1 (0800 612 9481). £35 Consultation, £95 session

'We are one of the most constipated nations in the world,' was just one of the gems Velile Ndebele shared with me during our hour-long pre-treatment consultation. Velile also pointed out that colonics have been going on since the Egyptian times. 'They used a reed!,' she laughed. 'Our system is much more comfortable.'

The system in question is Colonic Hydrotherapy. Aqualibria steer clear of irrigation ('It's what you do to crops!') in favour of 'colonic washing' using only ultrapurified water. Velile has treated conditions ranging from IBS and piles to arthritis. In a nutshell, Colon Hydrotherapy consists of lying on a bed with your lower half straddling a sort of bath/bidet with a pencil thin tube stuck up your backside. Warm water is then jetted up the tube and, when you are full to bursting, you 'just relax elegantly,' as Velile puts it. Don't worry, it's not as undignified or messy as it sounds. Your bottom half is covered, there are 'odour eliminators' in the room, and, best of all, you are left alone controlling your own water intake. (Though the unfazeable Velile pops her head round the door occasionally, just to make sure you are doing OK.)

Should you wish to let your inner Gillian McKeith into the room, there's a viewing tube that runs along the floor so you can see what you are letting go of. For the first 20 minutes of the treatment all I was saying goodbye to was water and more water. Then came a couple of lumps and then... well, let's just say better out than in. At the end of my hour session I felt physically lighter, pleasantly lightheaded and totally converted. If, like most of the friends I mentioned it to, you find yourself saying 'Oh, I'd really like to try that,' all I can say is, do! SS

flexible friend Jane, at home in her tranquil new studio



PERFECT PRACTICE

'I was going for the burn and feeling burned out,' says Jane Kersel of her pre-yoga days. She was working as a fashion designer – for Princess Diana, among others – and feeling the 80s pressure. 'I was trying to meet deadlines, then heading to the gym to work out.' Luckily, on regular work trips to India, Jane discovered yoga – 'It was yoga Indian-style: very floppy'.

'I needed to stop and look at the hectic life I was living,' she says. 'Through yoga, I learned how to just "be".' Back in the UK, Jane kept with the yoga: 'I did some lovely prenatal classes and decided to train as a yoga teacher at the Iyengar Institute. I then began teaching at a studio space in Notting Hill.'

Jane is just about to start classes in a new space – the lower-ground floor of her peaceful Notting Hill home, looking out over pretty communal gardens.

'I want to create a nurturing place,' she says. And the name Home Practice sums up what she's trying to achieve – with small personalised classes pitched at three levels and post-yoga sessions for tea and chats.

'I want to give people a really solid grounding so they can practise effectively at home. I want to take the alienation out of yoga – for people to just relax and do it'

● From £110 for a six-week course. Home Practice, 96 Lansdowne Road W11 (020 7221 3272/ www.practice.squarespace.com)



big style for little feet

One of the freshest ideas to come from Sweden since a certain reasonably priced furniture shop is Vincent. This children's shoe shop is named after the founder's son, and displays its funky styles in every size for try-and-then-buy convenience – perfect for speed shopping with tetchy toddlers.

● Vincent, 19 Camden Passage N1 (020 7226 3141/www.vincentshoestore.co.uk)