

# Relaxation FOR MEN

Why is it  
that **men** are  
so **reluctant** to  
**pamper** themselves?  
Richard Hewett  
investigates

Laura Martin, manager of the Total Health Clinic, is particularly keen to find an answer to this question. "Members are quite time-pressured, but while men will say 'Okay, I can treat myself to a massage', there's a real issue concerning skincare treatments and grooming."

And that is a great shame, because - as this guinea pig discovered over the course of a very relaxing afternoon in the hands of the Clinic's therapists - those males are missing out on a treat. Treatments offered include a 60-minute men's facial, half-hour manicures and pedicures and both hour-long and 90-minute massages, at the end of which the fortunate recipient feels like... well, a new man.

First off was the facial massage, a process that managed to be both invigorating and relaxing at the same time. Laura explains why; "A facial is great because it isn't just applying a face mask and a cream, it's the whole process; exfoliation, deep cleansing, hydration and massage, which is incredibly relaxing. I think for men it's now acceptable to think, 'I want to look after my skin.' Of the skincare ranges offered by the Clinic both are suitable for men, one having a specific male range - proof that the Clinic is not exclusively for female use.

Although having one's fingernails filed, cuticles clipped and hangnails disposed of might not exactly qualify as a beauty treatment, the manicure I received next left me feeling decidedly well groomed.

Manicures used to be as common in this country as a trip to the barber's, but recently English men have tended to lag behind their American and continental counterparts. Laura thinks it is high time this trend was reversed and is quick to reassure anyone concerned about entering what they perceive as feminine territory; "You have to tailor the environment to the people that

you're trying to attract. The Clinic is much more user-friendly than a lot of salons that are pink and frilly. Even our manicures are performed in a private room and the men's manicure is ideally suited to men and their lifestyle."

A comprehensive, stress-relieving massage topped off my afternoon of rest and relaxation in style. Particularly beneficial for those suffering from muscle strain, circulatory problems or sports injuries, massage is a good example of the way in which the Total Health Clinic treats the 'whole person'. Laura takes pride in the fact that the eighteen therapists on the team are all extremely experienced and respected in their own field. Although the holistic massage is performed to an overall routine, deep tissue is tailored to the specific requirements of the client. As Laura says; "Men really like a massage that concentrates on problem areas."

Those who have been daring enough to sample the Club's full range of treatments have always come back for more, but word of mouth has been somewhat slow to spread due to continuing masculine resistance to 'pampering' - something Laura and her team are determined to put right. "Why shouldn't men pamper themselves? We all need to take a bit of time to look after ourselves. I say come and try it! Come and try it and we'll change your life..." //

