

Prior to experiencing Facial Rejuvenation Acupuncture (FRA), I was a little sceptical. The thought of resembling a human pin cushion didn't hugely appeal – it seemed slightly more than my pain threshold could handle, and I was doubtful how effective the treatment could actually be.

Out of curiosity, I ventured to Eli Afshar's practice in St John's Wood to get first hand experience of the therapy, said to be an alternative to cosmetic surgery. Eli is a highly experienced Chinese Medicine Practitioner and Specialist in Cosmetic Acupuncture. After graduating from the University of Westminster with a BSc in Chinese Medicine she qualified in Chinese patent herbal medicine from the College of Integrated Chinese Medicine and has completed courses in Oriental medicine around the globe.

Eli explained the philosophy behind acupuncture, which is based upon the principles of Oriental medicine. Acupuncture aims to regulate the body's energy channels and to establish a balance which results in a healthy body and mind. Facial Rejuvenation Acupuncture revitalises the appearance by combating the underlying causes of aging, including stress and poor circulation. Unlike cosmetic surgery which uses superficial methods to create a more youthful appearance, FRA treats the body as a whole to heal it from within, with the aim that this will manifest in the

face. Results can include the elimination of fine lines and the reduction of wrinkles and complaints, such as droopy eyelids, double chins, bags under the eyes and general sagginess can be addressed.

My treatment was preceded by an in-depth consultation with Eli, during which she investigated my lifestyle and overall health and established my expectations of FRA. As I am yet to hit 30, I was certainly not one of Eli's more extreme cases, yet over recent years I have acquired rather deep frown lines between my eyebrows. Eli aimed to treat these, and to address general concerns including my slight insomnia.

Lying on the treatment couch, I waited in trepidation for the insertion of the first needle. I was pleasantly surprised to feel no pain at all – in fact I experienced no more than a slight pinch as Eli applied needles to prescribed parts of my body and face. Following insertion, I was left to relax for 20 minutes, before the needles were effortlessly removed and I was treated to a blissful facial massage. Although Eli had warned of a risk of bruising, I experienced none. This came as a surprise as I usually bruise like a peach.

As I gathered myself together I was amazed to look into the mirror and see a marked difference to my face – my frown lines were visibly reduced, and it appeared as if I had just had a really invigorating facial. An added bonus was that aftercare required no more than a

sit down with a cup of tea, certainly nothing like that necessary following cosmetic surgery.

A course of 12 sessions is initially recommended for maximum results. My regular visits to Eli were a pleasure, as they provided a welcome opportunity to take time out from the commotion of everyday life. Eli's soothing and genial demeanour allowed me to float away for an hour or so without a struggle.

Over the course of the sessions I could see improvements not only to my face, but overall. I experienced a general sense of well-being; my sleeping patterns improved and I felt able to cope much better with the stresses of everyday life, including a particularly nerve-racking flat purchase. By the end of the course my frown lines had all but disappeared and my skin was plumper, healthier and much brighter than pre-treatment.

Facial Rejuvenation Acupuncture may not provide the extreme results of cosmetic surgery – it does not change the shape of your features for example – but for those who wish to revitalise their appearance naturally, and to experience a renewed vigour on the whole, this is without doubt the treatment to choose.

For more information on Eli's practice visit www.londonacupuncturecentre.co.uk or call 07785 258 499

Photography by Kelly Russ

FACE VALUE

Facial Rejuvenation Acupuncture has been hailed as the natural alternative to cosmetic surgery. **Danielle Munroe** visits Acupuncture Practitioner Eli Afshar to discover more about the revolutionary procedure

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