

YOUR HEALTH



■ Charlotte Ford who uses a Thai herbal heat treatment to treat stress

Give it a Thai

WHEN it comes to easing away the stresses and strains of modern living, one of the best ways is with a soothing body massage.

Local therapist Charlotte Ford of La Dolce Vita, specialises in stress relief treatments and she invited me to try her new Thai Herbal Heat Massage which is a combination of Eastern and Western therapies.

I knew I was in good hands as she is an official masseuse of the London Marathon.

“A good massage relieves and soothes tired, aching muscles but deep-heat herbal therapy gives you extra healing benefits too,” she said. Charlotte explained that herbal healing has deep roots in Thai culture dating back to ancient times when it was the secret healing technique of Buddhist monks, local herbal dealers and midwives.

After completing a basic questionnaire about my health and wellbeing, I undressed and lay down on the treatment couch.

Charlotte draped a Thai sarong over my body and began to warm up my muscles by bending and stretching them - rather like a mini yoga workout.

She then gave my back, legs and arms a vigorous massage using a pre-blended massage oil (I had a choice of detoxifying or stress relieving - I opted for the later as it's National Stress

Awareness Week!).

Just in front of my head was a steamer with what looked like a large jacket potato cooking away inside but it turned out to be the herbal heat compress.

It's a hand held, muslin ball tightly-packed with exotic herbs including cassumunar to boost circulation, camphor to promote calmness, lemon grass and kaffir lime which is both soothing and deodorising.

She checked the temperature by briefly dabbing the compress on the back of my leg through the sarong. It was hot enough to be effective without being unbearable.

Charlotte explained that the compress is applied along the meridian lines as well as any specific problem areas.

It felt wonderful especially on my lower back and the soles of my feet and smelt gorgeous too. An hour later I left the salon feeling both invigorated and relaxed - I could still feel the warmth in my muscles for sometime afterwards. I slept really soundly that night too.

Although Charlotte offers a very flexible mobile service, she also has a salon base at a couple of Bournemouth hotels.

For more information visit her website relaxretreat.co.uk.

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