

Get rid of my orange-peel skin!

While, sadly, there's no overnight cure for the dreaded cellulite, there's lots you can do to firm up those wobbly bits before you reveal all in your swimsuit. Here's what will really make a difference...

Did you know that nine out of ten women suffer from cellulite — that dimply, orange-peel skin that appears on thighs and bottoms? Even skinny minnies like Victoria Beckham have cellulite, so you're in good company. You may not like it, but you certainly don't have to lump it — there's a lot you can do to firm and tone it without spending a fortune.

What is cellulite... why don't men get it?

Cellulite is different to ordinary fat. In women, fat cells are grouped within sacs, divided by tissue which is arranged in vertical columns. In men, the fat cells are divided by tissue arranged in a diamond-shaped pattern. The result is that when women's fat cells are put under pressure, the sacs change shape more than men's, and the fat is able to project upwards into the skin, giving the dreaded orange-peel appearance. Female hormones (oestrogen in particular) influence where fat is stored on a woman's body, and cellulite tends to form on thighs, bum and upper arms.

"Cellulite worsens as you get older," says Kerry Symons, spa manager at Champney's Henlow Grange. "It's basically caused by water-logged fat cells, but hormonal changes can trigger it, so pregnancy and the menopause are typical times for it to increase. Our circulation slows as we age, too, and this means the fat cells become sluggish and water-logged for longer."

But our lifestyle contributes too: "Poor eating habits lead to a build-up in toxins, while smoking damages the skin cells. Too much caffeine and salt can also increase cellulite and not enough exercise is definitely a factor," says Jill Franks, fitness and nutrition expert for QVC.

Exercise to beat it

Exercise will get your circulation going and this will encourage your body to burn off fat and get rid of waste faster, stopping those fat cells from building up.

"Walking, jogging, cycling and swimming are all fantastic cellulite-busters as they target your hips, thighs and bottom. Try to do 30 minutes, three times a week and you'll really see a difference," says Jill Franks. "If you can, combine this with strength training, as this will get those muscles working more efficiently and help burn off the fat. Use leg weights to work your inner and outer thigh. And don't forget upper arms, where cellulite can build up, too — use weights or resistance bands." Ideally, alternate days of exercise with weight-training.

Eat to beat it

What you eat (and drink) can really make a difference. "If your digestive system is sluggish because of poor diet, toxins will build up around the fat cells and cause cellulite. Similarly, not drinking enough water means waste isn't flushed out fast enough," says Jo Evans, spa training manager at The Sanctuary.

- Drink two litres of water a day.
- Eat regular meals to avoid dips in blood sugar, which can lead to bingeing on sugary snacks.
- Limit your consumption of spicy food, which can aggravate cellulite.
- "Swap caffeine drinks for herbal teas, as caffeine is a diuretic and starves the body of fluid," says Jill Franks.
- Cut down salt, as this has a diuretic effect.
- "Don't do crash diets — these force your body into starvation mode, which means it stores up fat and this will cause more cellulite in the end," says Jill Franks.

Massage it away

"Massage helps to break down the toxins in the area and drain these into the lymph nodes. Then the body is able to get rid of them," says Jo Evans. She advises massaging problem areas daily, using small, firm, circular movements, working upwards from ankles to thighs and buttocks.

You can use just your hands or a special, anti-cellulite massager such as **Opal Crafts' Cellulite Massager** (£6.50, call 020 8208 0707). Or try **L'Oréal's Perfectslim Pro-Massage** (£13.99) which combines a massager with a firming concentrate.



Brush it off

Dry body-brushing daily will improve the appearance of cellulite. "It works by stimulating the lymphatic system and should be done on dry, not wet, skin," says Jo Evans.

Choose a fairly stiff (but not scratchy) brush, and brush before a bath or shower. Start at the feet and work up the legs and across the hips, bottom and tummy using upward strokes. Then work on arms and shoulders. Try **The Body Shop's Round Body Brush** (£7).



Lotions and potions to firm it up

There are dozens of creams, gels and lotions which claim to improve the appearance of cellulite. And while they can certainly make your skin look and feel more toned, don't expect them to get rid of it all by themselves — you'll need to combine these treatments with our other suggestions.

"Look out for products which contain

ingredients such as seaweed, which has detoxing properties, caffeine, which helps to flush out excess fluid, and green tea, which has anti-oxidant benefits," says Jo Evans. **We like: Clarins Total Body Lift** (£29.50), **Nivea Body Goodbye Cellulite** (£9.99), **L'Oréal Nutrisummer Tone Up** (£11.99), which also builds a light tan, **L'Occitane Warming Body Wrap** (£22.50), **RoC Patch Body Modelling** (£14.99 for 14 patches), for stubborn cellulite areas, and **Spa Find Inchwrap Firming Gel** (£24, call 01580 211055).

Sort it at a salon

Fancy a pre-holiday treat? A course of anti-cellulite treatments is a good investment before you go away as it'll firm up skin tone quickly. There are lots to choose from, but here are a few of our favourites.

The Sanctuary's Body Contour treatment (£65) is an intensive massage to stimulate the flow of the lymphatic system, followed by a cooling mask to tighten the area. For details,

call 0870 770 3350. Beauty salons in your area should be able to offer similar treatments.

At **Spa Find** (call 01580 211055), training manager Yvonne Smissen recommends its **Marine Miracle treatment** (£45). "It's an algae body mask which helps to break down the fatty deposits," she says. This could be followed by the **Inch Wrap treatment** (£60) which helps to get rid of fluid retention.

Aquablitz is a new type of cellulite treatment (call 01580 211055) which uses pulses of warm mineral water to oxygenate the skin, then a roller massage to break down fatty cells and drain toxic waste. An hour-long treatment costs £60.

For a quick fix, a body wrap gives good results. "These work by getting rid of excess fluid and the effects will last for at least a week," says Kerry Symons. Try **Universal Contour Wrap** (£50 for one or £135 for three, call 01784 259988).

Cellulite super-foods

Jill Franks advises eating more of these:

- * **Flax-seed oil** is rich in omega-3 oils — add it to breakfast cereal.
- * **Lecithin** — found in tomatoes, oranges, spinach, lettuce and peanut butter.
- * **Fresh fruit and veg** that are rich in vitamin C — these are packed with anti-oxidants which help to repair and strengthen skin cells.
- * **Spirulina** (green algae) is a useful supplement to take. Try **Holland & Barrett Spirulina tablets** (£5.39 for 60).

Get ready for that bikini — spa treatments, massaging healthy eating and exercise will all help

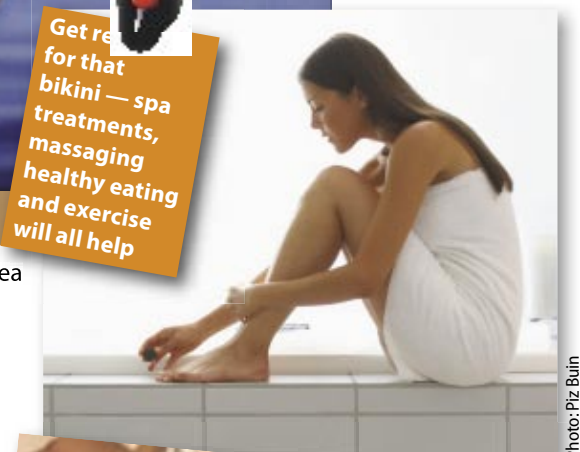


Photo: Mystic Tan

Photo: Piz Buin

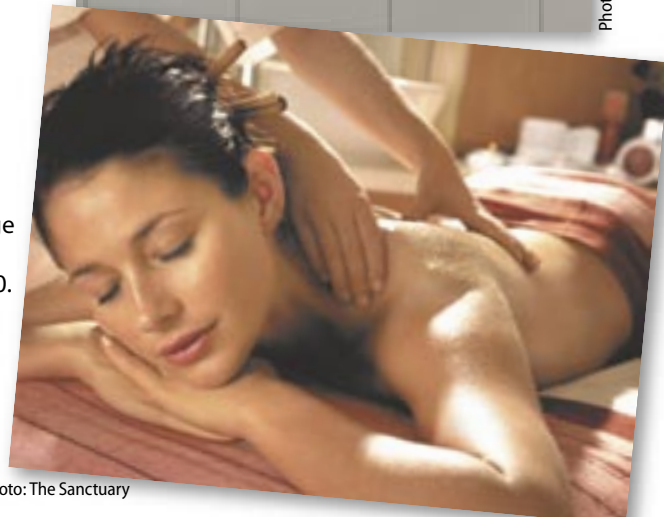


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