

# IT'S A ROLLER

Would you pay £250 to have this instrument of medieval torture rolled over your face? Thousands do just that...

by Alice Hart-Davis

**A**LARM bells started to ring when Dr Sach Mohan extolled the virtues of his extra-strong anaesthetic cream — four times as powerful as any other.

I had been persuaded to book in for a Genuine Dermaroller treatment by an enthusiastic friend who was singing the praises of this peculiar device and was sufficiently intrigued to give it a whirl.

I say 'peculiar' because the Dermaroller looks like a miniature medieval instrument of torture. About 2in across, it has a barrel covered in ultra-fine 'micro-needles', spikes designed to pierce holes in the skin, a bit like aerating the lawn.

And why would you want to even contemplate this?

Because, say aficionados, Dermaroller therapy stimulates the skin to repair itself (well, duh, it's got to, hasn't it?) and can significantly improve the appearance of acne scars, ageing and sun-damaged skin, wrinkles and stretch marks.

The worse your skin is, the greater the results. It is an attractive thought.

Dermarollers work by producing thousands of microscopic needle holes in the dermis, which prompts the skin to produce new collagen and elastin and generate new cells. They have been used in the States for a while, but they have been a strictly minority interest; now, they're moving in over here.

Once my face was nicely numb, Dr Mohan began working the roller quickly across my face, back and forth, back and forth. I hardly felt it. 'I thought you just did six passes?' I asked. 'Six in each direction,' he replied.

That meant rolling a Union Jack pattern on my cheeks and forehead, with extra on my nose to help with the large pores.

That was a bit sore and, of course, lots of those tiny puncture marks bled. Yikes! Once I was cleaned up, I wobbled home on my bike. The breeze was cooling.

My son, aged ten, looked at me with concern. 'Is that cosmetic surgery?' he asked. No, I reassured him, just something to make me look younger and

lovelier. 'But it looks really sore. And anyway, what's the point, you're nearly 50,' he concluded, turning his back, so I couldn't kiss him goodnight.

Grr. For a couple of days, my skin looked sunburn-red.

I cancelled all my appointments and treated it with great care, slathering on moisturiser as the traumatised skin became hard and dry. Covering it up with make-up was tricky, since it gathered in drifts on the drier bits. The next week, it softened.

I could still see traces of the needled roller-tracks but no difference in my skin and felt cross at having been gulled into the treatment. The Dermaroller is certainly some-

## Skin deep

The UK market for skin make-up and haircare for black and Asian women is worth £65million, 2 per cent of the £3.7billion beauty industry



thing that divides opinion in the skincare world. Leading facialist Sarah Chapman, who has built her reputation on being a whizz with the most effective gadgets, has been using the Dermaroller for two years.

'It is excellent for tired skin, skin that is losing its smoothness and plumpness or becoming slack around the mouth and jaw,' she says.

'I see most effect on lower face, although it makes the whole area look smoother and much fresher, as the skin takes on a new vitality and looks brighter as well as firmer.'

But it's no instant fix, she warns. 'I always do at least three sessions, six weeks apart and have found results are noticeable only after the second session.'

Other skin specialists throw up their hands in dismay at the thought of the treatment, pointing out that it needs to be carefully done, by an

expert, and there is a fair risk of infection from all those puncture marks if you're not careful.

I went on grumbling, then something strange happened. It was slow, subtle and I hadn't really noticed until I began to get compliments about my skin from other beauty writers — who have eyes like lasers that don't miss a thing.

I was then forced to acknowledge that, yes, my skin was looking much improved. A bit fresher, a bit livelier, maybe even a bit tighter. It had to be the Dermaroller.

Now, I've been obliged to eat my words and admit I'm impressed enough to book another treatment. But this time I'll clear my diary for a couple of days afterwards.

■ TREATMENTS, from £250; genuine [dermaroller.co.uk](http://dermaroller.co.uk) or 0800 0195 322; Sarah Chapman, [sarahchapman.net](http://sarahchapman.net)