ARE YOU SAFE ON A SUPERYACHT? PROBABLY NOT

MODERN SWINGING
The etiquette of partner swapping

YOU FLIRT

PAGES AND PAGES OF PERFECT PINK, THE COLOUR OF THE SEASON, FEATURING FASHION STAR JOANNA HALPIN

WHO'S REALLY IN CHARGE OF THE DAILY MAIL
THE MASTERMINDS OF A MISSION TO CHANGE THE STATUS QUO

THE SHEPHERD'S PIE RULE
This is important

HOW TO IMPROV YOUR SEX LIFE
It involves a magic wand
TIGHT & SPRINGY

Update your old model for increased pleasure and fun!

EXTRA BOUNCE

IT'S THE NEW SENSATION
How to improve your self-confidence and your sex life

Candida Dare tries out some revolutionary and revelatory new procedures...

In France and Switzerland, looking after this area is a national concern. Hospitals offer treatment, advice and help on strengthening the pelvic floor, not least to guard against stress urinary incontinence (the horror of leakage when you sneeze, laugh, jump on a trampoline or join a conga). Here in the UK, women suffer in silence. According to Christopher Inglefield, a consultant cosmetic surgeon based in Harley Street, more than 50 per cent of women over 40 have stress urinary incontinence: 'The horrifying thing is that it's a huge problem and less than five per cent of women are treated on the NHS.' He blames a 'dismissive attitude' towards women in this country. It's the idea of, 'You've had three kids - what do you expect?'

All this before the hell of the menopause - dryness, vaginal atrophy, labia that look like 'deflated balloons' (Inglefield's words) and painful, chafing sex. Perhaps we should be celebrating the arrival of help for our vaginas, rather than covering our eyes and squealing. So, in the interests of journalistic enquiry, I find myself panting off, lying on a padded examination bed, with a nurse photographing my completely shaved - aha! - on her iPhone 6. Luckily, the nurse was unshackled (and she swore on her life she would not be laughing at the pictures in the pub later).

She had her vagina treated, as have other nurses at Phi. Most are in their early-to-mid-30s, with no children, and two described the procedure as 'life-changing'. I am over 40, with two vigorous births under my belt, so to speak, and therefore what is described as the 'ideal profile'.

First I tried the Exilis Elite Intima (£1,500 for four sessions), a radio-frequency machine whose day job is shrinking and toning tummy skin to look 'bikini ready'. Switch the handset to a pen-like instrument, and it can be rolled up and down the labia, pumping out radio-frequency waves until the area reaches 42°C. It's at this point, the nurse says, that 'the magic happens'. She gets to work: 10 minutes on each side of the labia majora, 10 minutes on the softer labia minora.

Once I had stopped whimpering in agony from the scorching heat, we both admired how much my labia had shrunk. She took another photo so we could compare 'before' and 'after'. How can I describe this? The first was a long dark wodge with its wingspan extended, the kind that would give you a fright if you turned on the bathroom light. The second was smaller, pinker, poutier. Certainly less suggestive of impending doom.

I underwent four of these treatments (they get more bearable), and now am in possession of a tighter, tidier, tinner and more 'tucked-in' little number. It's what you might call a 'designer vagina', and yes, it does make a difference to sex (more later). But it's not just appearance. Tight jeans don't cut. There's no 'camel toe'. I can feel the difference in the shower and see it when I pass a mirror in my exposed shaven state. There's a 65-75 per cent improvement in size and appearance. The whole area also feels more - well, alive.

Until then, having my labia shrunken was the weirdest experience I'd had. But then the nice people at Phi suggested I try the internal treatment: the ThermiVa. This is the Rolls-Royce of vaginal tightening; the machine exorcised by the Kardashians (according to Khloé, 'in my household, all they do is talk about this vagina laser').

Actually, it's not technically a laser (although the job can be done with a laser), but radio frequency again. The nurse rolled in the machine, snapped on some gloves and pulled out a stick that looked like a ruler, which she proceeded to lube up with a bottle of ultrasound gel. D
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disappears from your muffin top and abdomen – it also disappears from your labia.
Satisfaction rates are 'very high', because women usually come with 'a concern', which they are able to address with great results.

Inglefield, who has been performing labiaplasty for 19 years, tells me another reason women consider it, which is relatively distressing. 'Boyfriends and ex-boyfriends can be awful,' he says. 'It's usually at break-up. The boyfriend would make a nasty comment, like I never liked your large labia.' That happens a lot – maybe to 10-15 per cent of patients. Those who ask for labiaplasty as a result he sends for psychological counselling.

Labiaplasty, incidentally, is a serious surgical procedure for women with abnormally large

OTHER THINGS THAT MIGHT HELP DOWN THERE...

BEST FOR PLUMPING
Desirial at River Aesthetics
Dr Charlotte Woodward and Dr Victoria Manning use Desirial, a filler especially designed for the vaginal area. Injected internally, it helps to enhance the G-spot and prevent painful sex; there is also a version called Desirial Plus, which is injected via a cannula to plump the labia. Local anaesthetic is used at the point of injection, and the treatment takes under half an hour. Avoid baths, swimming, riding and sex for five days. Results last an average of six months. From £595 (riveraesthetics.com).

BEST FOR TIGHTENING
FemiLift at HB Health of Knightsbridge
Dr Alexandros Bader helped to develop, and was the first to administer, FemiLift, which helps to improve vaginal contraction and control. A probe shoots laser energy into the vaginal wall, causing muscle tightening; the effects improve the feeling of sex, as well as urinary incontinence. No anaesthetic is required, and there's no pain; a course of three sessions, four to six weeks apart, is suggested (as are Kegel exercises).

From £4,500 for three sessions; annual top-up, from £1,500 (hbhealthoffknightbridge.co.uk).

BEST FOR HYDRATION
MonaLisa Touch Laser Therapy at 25 Harley Street
Consultant gynaecological oncologist Miss Tania Adib uses fractional CO2 laser to relieve dryness, discomfort and bladder infections. Laser energy, delivered via a cylindrical probe, causes micro-ablations to the vaginal wall, enhancing collagen production and hydration; outer skin can be treated too, using a probe with a flat plate (anaesthetic is only needed for external treatment; the sensation is warm). Three sessions, four weeks apart, are recommended.

£1,950 for three sessions; annual top-up, £700 (25harleystreet.co.uk).

BEST FOR STRENGTHENING
vSculpt
The first at-home device for improving laxity and a weak pelvic floor, vSculpt works by combining heat, therapeutic light and sonic vibration. Used internally (it comes with a water-based hyaluronic-acid gel) for 10 minutes, every day, it promises to increase elasticity, blood flow and muscle strength in six to eight weeks. 82 per cent of users reported an increase in pelvic-floor muscle strength after use; 95 per cent noticed an improvement in overall tightness. From £375 (vsulpt.com).