

TREATMENT OF THE WEEK

THE nights are drawing in, the winter tights are out and already everyone seems bogged down with sniffles, sore throats and an assortment of aches and pains.

Generally, my approach to that rundown feeling that comes with the seasonal shift is to reach for the red wine or head to a pub with a fire.

Then an alternative was suggested — the Fire and Ice Massage.

I'll admit I was hesitant. It was the 'ice' bit — in this weather I'm reluctant to take my clothes off even to dash to the shower.

Despite my misgivings, I headed to The O Spa in London's New Bond Street, which offers the 75-minute treatment.

The place smells divine — it's instantly soothing. Warm, softly lit and twinkling with candles, the cosy massage rooms made me feel a little more inclined to disrobe.

The idea of the Fire and Ice Massage is to help you reduce stress, relax and detoxify. Hot stones are placed behind your

neck, on your breastplate and stomach to help the body's energy flow. The rather dashing therapist, Elias, informed me I needed to clear my thoughts as this is as much a detox of the mind as the body.

He then massaged my body — moving from my feet and legs to my arms, shoulders and back, alternating between rubbing hot and cold stones on each area.

It's a strange sensation, but calming.

The principle is that the cold makes blood vessels constrict, stimulating the nervous system and drawing out blood and toxins, while the

warmth expands the blood vessels and flushes the toxins away.

It also raises your pulse and gives you a cardiovascular workout, which, given I was so relaxed I was barely awake, made it the easiest exercise I've done for a while.

■ *FIRE and Ice massage, O Spa London, £89, ospalondon.com, 0845 604 4991.*



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