

THE TREATMENT

BY the time you are in your 20s, chances are you've already done something to your back that will start to cause you serious problems. For me, as a fearless young ponyclubber, I was always falling off, winding myself and spraining things, but never truly hurting myself. Only recently have I realised that one such fall probably knocked out my pelvis which has since caused extreme back pain from time to time.

Add to this a career spent slouching in front of a computer and my poor old back is not what it should be. Of course exercise is key to a healthy back – swimming, yoga, cross-training and pilates will all help. But sometimes when it comes to chronic

back pain, you need a miracle, and that's what 21st Century Back Care in Edinburgh is offering with TAMARS.

Standing for Technology Assisted Micro-Mobilisation and Reflex Stimulation, it's basically a huge handheld computer-controlled 'bionic arm' that works on three speeds up and down the spine to restore elasticity, mobility and flexibility. In other words, it straightens out the back and relieves pressure on the joints that through injury, bad posture or just natural wear and tear have become compressed or crooked, thus causing pain.

Sports injury specialist Jeff Knox recommends four to five treatments which consist of lying face-down on a curved couch (for natural traction)

while he works the bionic arm up and down your spine which more accurately targets each joint than even human fingers can. Basically it feels like hundreds of gremlins tap-dancing on your spine, but I found it neither painful nor unpleasant, but, shall we say, vigorous. After five treatments, my spine feels straighter, the tightness in my upper back is gone, my posture is greatly improved and my pain has not returned. If all else has failed you in your chronic back pain, this could be the treatment that finally works.

JANE WRIGHT

TAMARS costs £65 for an hour's session. 21st Century Back Care, 9 Mansfield Place, Edinburgh; 0131 557 4404; www.tamars.co.uk