

Life & Style

MELT AWAY IRRITATING DENTS IN YOUR CARPET

DECIDED you want to move a heavy piece of furniture to a different spot, but can't bear the sight of those carpet dents? Not to worry — there's a quick and easy fix for this common problem that has sent online parenting forums into raptures. All you need to do is put an ice cube in the dents and let it melt on its own — preferably overnight. Then, gently lift the carpet fibres with the help of a spoon or a fork. The idea is to let the carpet fibres absorb the water slowly and swell, filling in the dent. The bigger the dent, the more ice cubes you will need to use. Just be careful not to flood your living room!



ELEPHANT THAT DOES THE DISHES

THIS little plastic elephant could be the answer to your washing up woes. The clever invention is designed to sit next to your sink, with the elephant's trunk facing down into it. Pop your washed-up cutlery inside, and the run-off water drips down into your sink, while drying the cutlery sitting inside of it.

Finally, your children might actually want to do the dishes.

■ £12.95, giftzone.co.uk

MEGAN STUCKEY



Would you let your husband have plastic surgery?

More and more middle-aged men are doing it. But beware, it could end your marriage



Picture: GETTY/SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY

By Antonia Hoyle

AS SHE walked into the cosmetic surgery clinic, Kim Mead was overcome with nerves. It wasn't the £7,500 cost that worried her, or the prospect of the pain.

Rather, it was the nagging suspicion that the operation she'd agreed to wouldn't solve the underlying problem.

Over the following months, she was proved right. Except it wasn't her who had gone under the knife, it was her husband David, 55. And while he may have had three-and-a-half litres of fat vacuumed from his torso during a liposuction procedure, his vanity still knew no bounds.

'In fact, now he's had surgery, he is worse than ever ... the effort he puts into his appearance!' says Kim.

David, the managing director of an

energy company, is just one of a soaring number of men going under the knife. Just last month, a survey by the British Association Of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons revealed 4,500 men had surgical work last year — a 17 per cent increase from 2012.

The most popular procedures were liposuction and 'man boob' reductions, which increased by 28 per cent and 24 per cent respectively.

And, contrary to what you might suppose, demand comes not only from younger men. In fact, the mean age of patients has increased to 42. So why are so many otherwise sensible men, with stable jobs and happy marriages, going under the knife?

'The rise of the metrosexual man,

The X factor

X-Men actor Hugh Jackman's look is the most requested among men seeking plastic surgery

personified by celebrities such as David Beckham and Shane Warne, has certainly put pressure on other men to look a certain way,' says psychologist Amanda Hills. 'There are also increasing numbers of middle-aged men re-entering the dating scene who are swayed by the promises of surgery.'

'But mostly I think men see women who have had surgery looking flawless and feel compelled to match them. They believe this is what women want.'

David, from Basildon, Essex, is the first to admit he is vain. Since he and Kim married in 1979, he has been lifting weights three times a week to maintain his physique. Kim's exercise routine, meanwhile, has largely been limited to the odd few lengths of the local swimming baths.

'I'm only 5ft 6in. As a short man I

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SCIENTISTS claim eating the right foods can actually help you to stay thin. In a new series, author Gill Paul and nutritionist Karen Sullivan tell you what to do.

AVOID PROCESSED FOODS

COOK from scratch as much as you can. Key nutrients — such as chromium, an important mineral for maintaining blood sugar and insulin levels, as well as keeping cholesterol at normal levels — are often removed by processing food.

HOW TO EAT YOURSELF THIN

LOOK AFTER YOUR ORGANS

THE liver filters old hormones from the blood, but can't do it efficiently if it is clogged and overworked. So a lot of alcohol is not a good idea. Eat foods that support the liver (ie, coconut, brown rice, wholegrains, root vegetables and apples) to support your weight loss. And iodine is crucial

for the thyroid gland, which affects the metabolic rate (good sources include fish, eggs, onions and artichokes). Even a slightly underactive thyroid means you'll gain weight easily.

STAY HYDRATED

DRINK plenty of still water, and green tea can positively help weight loss. Cut back on drinks with caffeine,

which stimulate insulin release. And avoid all sweetened and sport drinks.

TREAT YOURSELF

BUT choose them for nutritional benefits, such as a couple of squares of dark chocolate, a fruity dessert or a small glass of wine. Avoid junk foods: they're high in saturated fats, trans-fats and sugars, have no nutrition, and clog the digestive system.

■ *EAT Yourself Thin* by Gill Paul (Octopus Books, £7.99). To order for £7.49 (P&P free), call 0844 472 4157.



Life & Style

+ More money is spent on gardening than on any other hobby

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felt I had to try harder to look attractive,' says David.

At first Kim, 57 and a size 16, admired his discipline: 'I have always struggled with my own weight and yo-yo dieted over the years — I just lacked the motivation to do anything about it.'

But as middle-age advanced, David became increasingly unhappy. 'I started developing man boobs, love handles and excess fat on my stomach,' he says. 'I was fighting a losing battle. I'd look in the mirror and feel miserable.'

'When I hit 50, I decided I was going to get fit. I suppose it was a mid-life crisis.'

Kim, a housewife, struggled to rationalise how her husband was feeling. 'David always moaned that his tummy hung over his trousers, but I still found him attractive,' she says.

Her reassurances fell on deaf ears. After three years of diets — during which he'd dropped from 13st to 12st — David made the drastic decision to have liposuction at the beginning of 2012.

'David moaned so much that in the end I said: "Just get on with it",' Kim says.

His three-hour procedure took place at Spire Bushey Hospital in Watford in April 2012. Fat was removed from his stomach, chest and back.

Although he was badly bruised and in pain, the effect on David's body — and ego — were instant, as his weight dropped immediately by 7lb, to 11st 7lb.

'It was the best money I've ever spent. It spurred me on to do more exercise,' he says. 'Looking good gives me a buzz, which hasn't done our sex life any harm.'

NOW David is trying to persuade Kim to follow his lead. 'We'd both be happier if Kim was slimmer,' he says. 'That said, after 35 years of marriage I love her for more than just the way she looks.'

In any case, Kim has told him in no uncertain terms that she won't be following suit. 'I am not concerned about my appearance to that extent. Besides, David hasn't had surgery for me — it's all about him, and his desire for control. I don't find him any more attractive now than I did before.'

Some women, such as Charlotte Sykes — whose husband, Alex, has just had a tummy tuck — are slightly more supportive of their husband's endeavours.

Until his early 20s, Alex, 6ft, a revenue controller, weighed 19st and wore an 42in shirt. 'I comfort ate all the time and was desperately unhappy with my weight,' he says. Six years ago, he found the motivation to lose 5st through healthy eating and regular exercise, but was left with folds of saggy skin around his stomach.

When Alex, 30, met Charlotte, also 30 — a PA at the firm where he works — in 2008, he worried she wouldn't find his body attractive.

'She'd say I looked good, but I didn't believe her,' he says. 'My belly looked as though I'd had children.'

Even though he'd lost most of his excess weight, Alex, from Chelmsford, Essex, still limited himself to 1,200 calories a day and even went running on the morning of their wedding day in July 2011.

'He'd get moody because clothes didn't fit when we were shopping. In his head, he still saw himself as fat,' says Charlotte. 'But it didn't bother me at all.'

Size 10 Charlotte admits the disparity in their physiques didn't help. 'I can eat what I want, so I was having chocolate every night while Alex was eating salads and going on ten-mile runs.'

Frustrated, Alex began investigating cosmetic surgery. 'I didn't tell many friends. It's a taboo topic among men and I found it embarrassing,' he says.

Eventually, he took out a loan to



Ears pinned back: Kennie before the op and on his wedding day

'The operation boosted Kennie's self-esteem — and gave him the confidence to leave me'



Happier: David Mead, who had liposuction, with wife Kim

pay for the £5,000 operation done by MYA cosmetic surgeons at Highgate Hospital in North London this January.

'I'd watched him beat himself up so much with diets and exercise and get no results. I wasn't a fan of surgery but thought maybe it was the answer,' says Charlotte.

Both were shocked by the aftermath of the three-and-a-half-hour operation, in which surgeons trimmed and tightened the loose skin on Alex's stomach.

'When I woke I was in so much pain I was throwing up,' says Alex. 'I had 80 staples across my body and wondered what I'd done. That was my lowest point.'

Alex has been told not to weigh or measure himself for three

months until his body has recovered, but his stomach is already flatter — and he is thrilled.

'I'm much more confident,' says Alex, whose operation has left him with a scar from hip to hip. 'I went swimming

with Charlotte and our baby son, Henry, at the weekend and for the first time in years wore my swimming trunks.'

'Charlotte says I look amazing, and I think the operation will make our marriage happier.'

Yet he admits: 'I still can't walk past a mirror without wondering whether I look fat. I'd consider more surgery to keep my weight down if I need it in the future but hopefully I won't.'

But psychologist Amanda Hills, who is based in London, warns that cosmetic surgery rarely improves the patient's self-esteem

in the way they imagine. Instead, it may highlight other imperfections and lead to a desire for further surgery.

'It may provide instant gratification, but it doesn't fix the underlying problems,' she says.

And not all marriages can withstand the after-effects of male cosmetic surgery, as Susan Barden discovered.

Susan, 34, a wedding planner from Crawley, West Sussex, met her ex-husband Kennie, a project manager, in 2002. He proposed the following year.

'He was kind and funny, but also vulnerable and shy,' she says; all character traits she believes stemmed from his deep-rooted insecurity about his sticking-out ears. 'To me, they were just a part of who he was,' she says.

When the couple set a date for their wedding, Kennie's paranoia intensified. 'It dawned on him that on our wedding day, everyone was going to be staring at him,' says Susan. Nonetheless, she was still shocked when he said he wanted to have them pinned back.

'It seemed a huge risk. I didn't want him to get it done, but I knew how desperately they bothered him,' she says.

For his part, Kennie says: 'I didn't want to be defined by my ears and I didn't want them to be in our wedding pictures.'

Kennie's operation — done under local anaesthetic — cost £1,500, which the couple took out a loan to pay for. 'It was horrendous,' says Susan, who accompanied him. 'Kennie said he could actually hear the cartilage in his ears being cut, folded back and stitched to his head.'

Afterwards, Kennie had to wear bandages for a fortnight. But Susan says that as soon as they came off, the psychological transformation was instant.

'He stopped stooping,' says Susan. 'He smiled more, and he had the confidence to hold more conversations. Everyone complimented him, and our wedding day in June 2008 was undoubtedly all the better for it.'

It was only after the wedding that the problems began. As Kennie's confidence soared, Susan's plummeted. 'I'd been on a strict diet to fit into my wedding dress, but afterwards I relaxed and I put on 4st,' she says.

'Suddenly, the tables were turned. Compared to Kennie, I felt unattractive and didn't want to go out.'

KENNIE started to go out without her. 'The old Kennie wouldn't have had the confidence to socialise so much,' she says. 'I needed his support, but felt he was embarrassed to be seen with me.'

Ms Hills says that women whose husbands have had surgery often suspect they are having an affair. 'Mistrust develops as they look at their motivation. Alternatively, the wife may feel obliged to have surgery, too, thinking that if her husband is dissatisfied with how he looks maybe he is dissatisfied with her, too.'

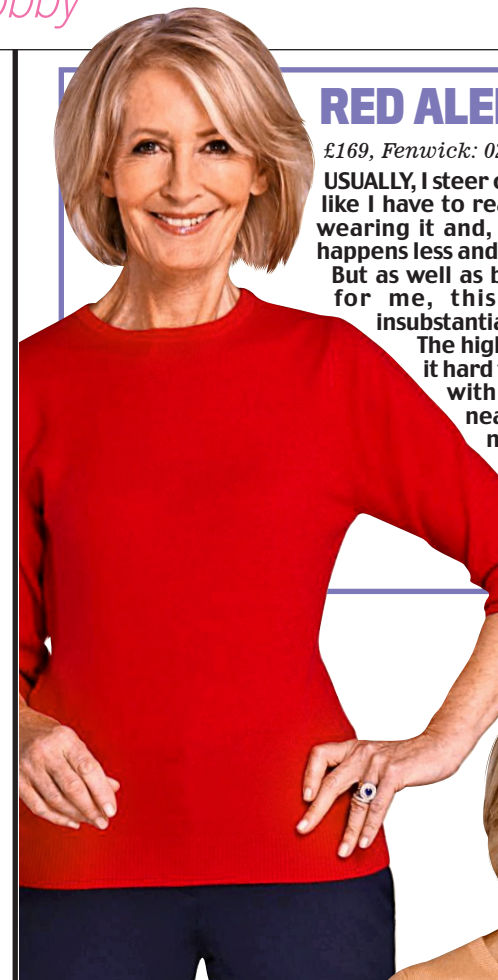
Although Kennie insists that wasn't the case, 14 months after their wedding, he told Susan he was leaving. 'I don't think he'd have had the confidence to leave me if it wasn't for the boost to his self-esteem the operation gave him,' she says.

Eight months later, she discovered Kennie was in a new relationship with a recruitment consultant in her 20s.

Kennie denies his ear operation caused the breakdown of their marriage. 'It gave me more confidence, but it wasn't a factor in us splitting up,' he says.

Susan isn't convinced. 'Our divorce would never have happened without his operation,' she says. 'I'm happy he's found his confidence — it's just a shame he didn't stick around so I could reap the benefits.'

A cautionary tale for any woman whose husband dreams of going under the knife.



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