



Tried & tested



IT'S not often we allocate this whole column to one range of products but this brand new Live Native range deserves one hell of a mention.

The collection of seven high quality, hand made skin foods are perhaps the best we have sampled this season.

Coconut oil, shea butter and aloe vera juice are just some of the natural, organic ingredients.

And each has been specifically created to address a particular skin and hair care need, for both men and women, mums and babies.

Hand made on the Isle of Skye by young partners Vicki Eubank and Ian Ryder, Live Native products are made up of raw-blended creams to create exceptionally rich, 'live' recipes of naturally occurring enzymes, phytonutrients, antioxidants, essential fatty acids and active healing plant phytochemicals. They are so fresh they need to be kept in your fridge once opened.

● **THE RANGE:** (prices for 15ml, 30ml and 120ml respectively).

The entire range is raw, vegan, organic and with fairly traded ingredients where possible. No animal products (or testing), alcohol or unnatural stabilisers have been used.

TRIED AND TESTED:

● **ESSENTIAL Woman with frangipani (£10.99, £17.99, £34.99):** This smells like you've stepped into the middle of Sri Lanka the frangipani aroma is so fresh and it's texture is akin to that of a light but luxurious custard — we just love it.

It also contains rose oil for its relaxing and therapeutic properties. It leaves skin revitalised, and beautifully nourished and soft.

Rating: 10/10

● **FRESH Feet (£9.99, £15.85, 120ml not available):** If I tell you I used this balm to massage my partner's feet after he successfully completed the infamous Commando Course and also drop in the fact that this left his 'battered' feet feeling 'fantastic', that pretty much sums up this product.

Its aroma-therapeutic revitalising qualities are also naturally anti-fungal and anti-bacterial — perfect for massaging, moisturising and reviving over-walked feet. I haven't ever found a product so wonderfully rich but equally refreshing.

Rating: 10/10

● **BUY** on-line at www.livenative.co.uk or call 07912 978 608.

These shoes are made for walking



An explanation is in order for all those people who have noticed that I have been somewhat unsteady on my feet for the past couple of weeks.

Whatever the nasty rumours, it's down to some adverts in the Sunday newspapers.

The adverts were for new shoes which are supposedly 'anti shoes'. They described MBTs as 'physiological' shoes.

After several weeks wearing a pair of black leather MBTs for work, I have to say they are very comfortable. It does feel strange at times, particularly walking, or rather rolling, down steep slopes and steps.

The shoe is set on a sole which is curved at both ends, so they roll under you as you walk along. The sole at the heel and toe are cut away, and there is a fat wedge under the heel, the 'sensor'.

After a week wearing them all day, my legs were certainly feeling a

tad tired. I could feel the muscles in my posterior had had something of a workout, but not enough to make them ache.

Walking uphill is when you really feel how they are challenging your muscles.

After six weeks I really think my legs feel stronger, I get the impression I am standing taller (that could be the thick soles) and more upright. And I could swear the sides of my thighs are somewhat flatter. But maybe I have been taken in by all the promotional literature.

What I am hoping is that they will help me pass the shorts test on my summer holiday, to be able to sit down without your thighs melting in a heap all over the chair.

Then they will be worth the price, most models cost more than £135 and the black leather Amali pair I have been testing cost £149.

But how else do you get maximum benefit from a fitness shoe unless you wear them most of the day?

MBTs are what you might call chunky and I wouldn't dream of wearing them with skirts. But with long trousers nobody notices, especially as the leather uppers are really quite smart. They certainly look better in reality than they do on the website. You notice the chunkiness less on the trainers.

Having had to wear ordinary trainers for six weeks after an injury to my knee in the first hour of skiing in March, it's nice to be able to wear some smarter shoes which still don't put strain on the knees, but still make me as tall as if I was wearing heels.

But no doubt these are not the models that the celebrities have been spotted wearing.

The one thing people might notice is the rocking, trying to stand still while talking to (or interviewing) someone is surprisingly challenging.

Other people are probably wondering why you are wobbling in the middle of the day, and coming up with all sorts of explanations.

Going down steep slopes is also interesting and also going down

stairs, as it feels as if a bit of the sole is missing.

But you soon get used to it and after only a few hours' wear, you forget the shoes are any different — until you take them off and you suddenly feel flat footed.

The DVD guide (from America) explains that Masai warriors walk long distances barefoot on uneven terrain.

As a result they have toned lean leg muscles, a perfect posture and suffer few back or joint complaints.

MBTs are designed to imitate different ground that the Masai walk over, turning the hard, even surfaces we walk over every day into softer more uneven ground.

Just think of the amount of time we spend walking on concrete floors and pavements and hard flat floors.

MBT says wearing the shoes means your muscles work harder, develop better and provide more natural support.

The heel 'sensor' and pivoting sole apparently encourage us to balance and straighten up.

They say: "With a more upright posture we not only look better but are healthier and automatically stronger. The design improves posture, strengthens the back, tones the muscle and constantly works the abdominals, buttocks and legs. As such MBTs are recommended by orthopaedic and physiotherapy specialists across the world."

After days wearing the shoes, you do notice that your point of balance has changed. It is further back down the foot, nearer the heel than usual.

MBTs also come in different styles and colours, and even sandals.

They recommend wearing the shoes up to an hour a day for the first week and then building up, rather like any exercise.

MBTs were initially developed as medical equipment and are certified as such. However if you have a medical condition, then you have to take medical advice from trained advisers.

They are not designed for 'off road' conditions and can slip on wet surfaces.

The nearest stockist where you can try MBTs on before buying and have them specially fitted is The Studio, Ebford near Topsham (within half a mile of Darts Farm). Telephone 01392 873178.

Alternatively visit www.swissmasai.co.uk

TINA CROWSON



'PHYSIOLOGICAL' SHOES: Tina Crowson tries out the MBTs
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