

And Helen Lederer tries an alternative...

I have 20 years' worth of failed diets under my bulging belt. This one, though, sounded intriguingly different. I would be hypnotised into thinking I was wearing a gastric band. Genius! Why risk the scalpel when your mind can do it all for you?

And so I handed my mind over to Marion and Martin Shirran, who have pioneered this method at their clinic in Spain. The treatment would take four days—but could a virtual rubber tourniquet really replace years of unhappy (and happy) indulging?

Marion and Martin's approach is about getting "into your mind", using neuro-linguistic programming and cognitive behavioural therapy to find out and treat what makes

you eat inappropriately.

The first session was about what I want and need: two very different things. In the second we looked at all the food-related thoughts we have in the course of a day. Most are positive and logical; others, quite negative. How we react affects our behaviour.

I felt very at home here, because I can be very negative—as in "Omigod! I've eaten three Kit Kats, so what's the point of anything, I'm disgusting." But after hypnosis with Marion, I felt it would be possible to press a "pause" button before I began a Kit Kat spiral—and even change the outcome.

Before long, I was ready for my "op". After watching footage of a real gastric band being fitted, I went

"under" to instil the feeling of going through the stomach-reducing process. It reminded me of having a Caesarean under

COULD A VIRTUAL TOURNIQUET REPLACE YEARS OF INDULGING?

anaesthetic, but with no post-operative bandages to worry about.

The question is, have I—a lifetime cake, cheese and wine consumer—been programmed to exert control? Well, I've lost nine pounds so far. But I'm not complacent. This is just the beginning of my mind-altering journey, and I have a "reinforcing CD" to listen to when I feel flaky. Did you know one glass of wine equals four fish fingers? Just a mind-altering thought to conjure with while you lose weight...

For more on the Shirrans' work, go to gmband.com



BAND ON THE TUM?
Helen (left) meets "virtual" diet hypnotherapist Marion