

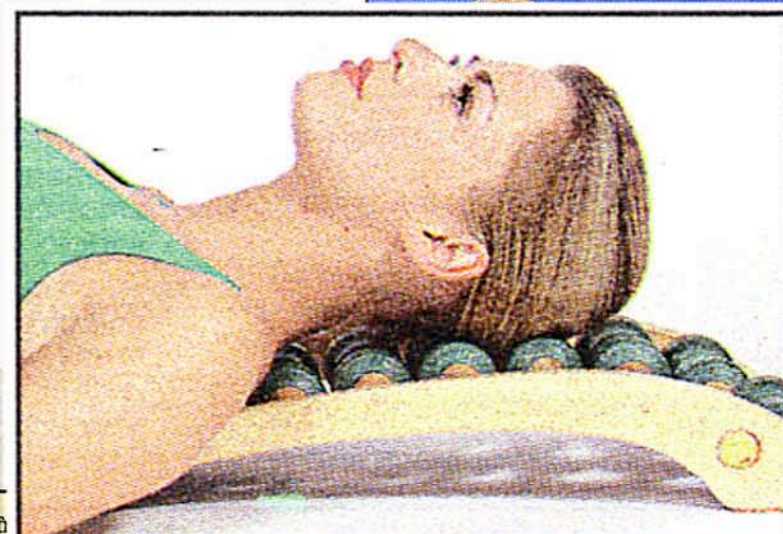
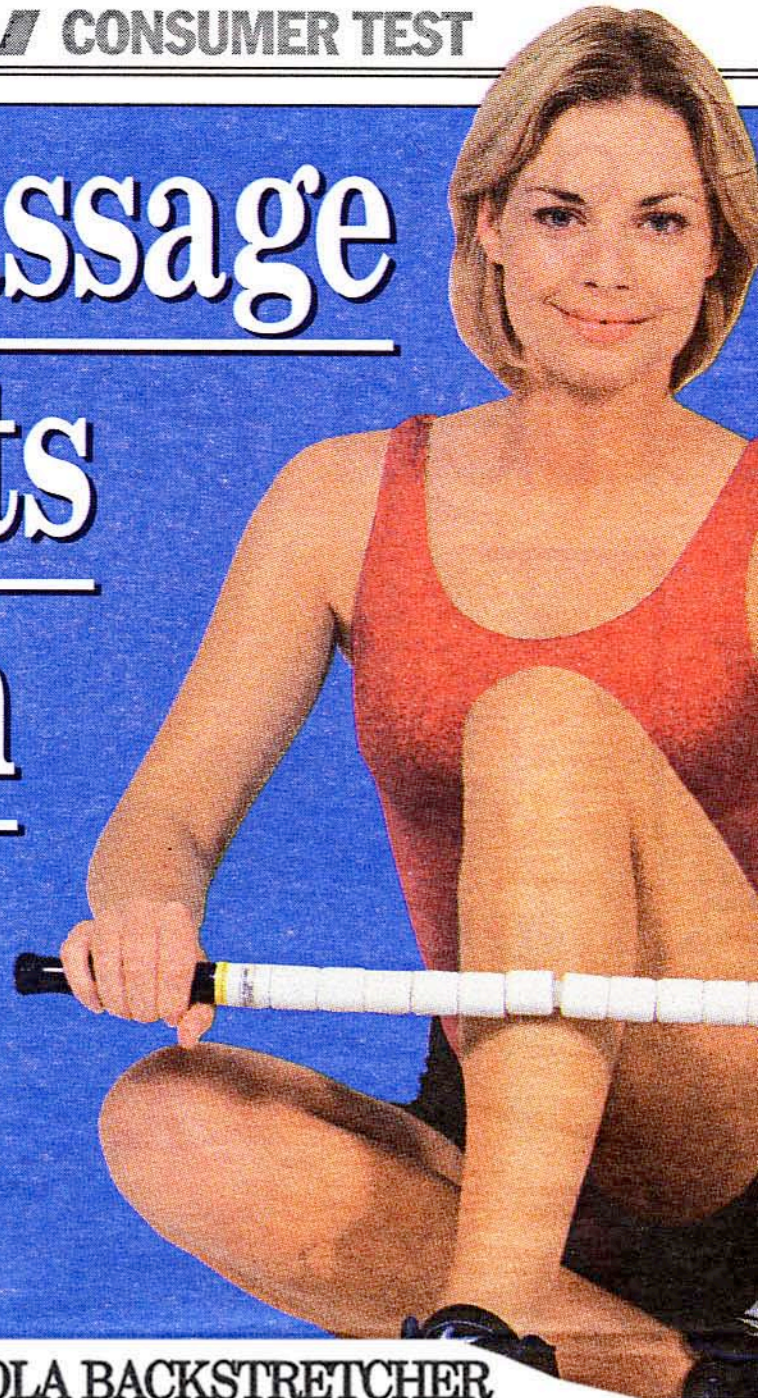


## GOOD HEALTH / CONSUMER TEST

**A**BOUT a third of adults suffer backache in any given fortnight and 80pc of people will have back pain at some time in their lives. Little wonder then, that more people are seeking relief from an increasing range of self-massage tools which aim to relieve dull aches and muscular tension. Therapists believe it is vital the tight, muscular areas around the neck and limbs are massaged regularly. There are 33 pairs of spinal nerves that fan out from the spinal chord, each with a stimulating action for a particular area of the body. It is thought that massaging the back, arms and legs will improve other body movements.

Angela Templeman, a chartered physiotherapist who works in the Physiotherapy Unit at The London Clinic, believes that self-massage can be beneficial if you are prone to frequent, but not severe, back pain. 'The general rules if you are massaging yourself or someone else are to aim for the muscles at the side and base of the back and to rub over the spine,' she says. 'Any self-massage tool is suitable only for minor aches. Seek medical advice if you have varicose veins, severe back pain (caused by a slipped disc or trapped nerve etc), raised body temperature or if you are pregnant. Here, PETA BEE tests seven of the most popular massage devices ...

# Do massage gadgets banish back pain?



### ROLA BACKSTRETCHER

£79 (tel. 0700 222 5724) Star rating: ★★★★★  
THIS tool (left) was developed by Neil Summers, who, when diagnosed as suffering from a debilitating back condition, designed a product that would enable anyone to stretch their spine by lying down. It won him the British Inventor of the Year Award. It is simple to use: you lie on top of the shiatsu-style revolving rollers that stretch and massage as you move backwards. Your back automatically curves to its shape and frees the discs that become compressed. After a few minutes of lying on it, backache had improved.