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{ Getting Better }

Performance Enhancer of the Month: LifeWave Energy Patches

The Overstimulated Girl



Recently, I was intrigued by an article about a new energy patch being worn by swimmers at the U.S. Olympic trials. No one had thought to run the patches by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency beforehand, and there was subsequent concern about what kind of smack might be in them. Absolutely none, apparently.

The organic biochemicals in the patches, their inventor claims, influence chemical reactions in your body by acting as a transmitter to rev up your electron flow. All this happens on such a microlevel that you sort of have to take the patches on faith, along with a handful of studies touting promising results (and an endorsement from renowned swim coach Richard Quick). All very weird and interesting. Complete snake oil? Or, as the

tributor claims, a bold new application of nanotechnology?

—SUSAN CASEY

What they are: A pair of adhesive-backed circular patches that you affix on either side of your body in one of four places: wrists, chest, outside the knees, or inside the ankles. They're color coded for placement: The right patch is white, the left is tan. According to the manufacturer, they contain amino acids, water, and oxygen sealed in a polymer shell.

What they claim to deliver: A 20 percent increase in endurance, stamina, and strength after first ten minutes of use. Promise to "awaken the giant within you!"

But do they work? I wore the patches for a month. During the first week, I put them on my wrists and felt nothing but irritation. Plus, they kept falling off. Then I switched to the chest placement and had some of my best workouts in recent memory. I also wore them throughout a physically demanding overseas trip and could absolutely feel a steady increase in energy. (Bonus: They seemed to help overcome a bad case of jet lag exacerbated by no sleep, plenty of stress, and copious alcohol.) In short, I'm all for the patches.

More info: lifewave.com; \$79.95 for a thirty-day supply.

Susan Casey (not pictured at right) is an overworked executive and former internationally ranked athlete who continues to compete against college-age punks.

