

In the home straight

With only one week remaining, our five weight-loss champions are into the final stretch

» Louise Baker



Lost: 8.7kg
Starting weight: 111.6kg
Method: The Biggest Loser Club

Two weeks ago I found it difficult to exercise and stick to my diet because I was holidaying in Queensland.

There was a sporting event to attend for five days and friends to catch up with, so even though I didn't get to follow my fitness regime properly and I had a couple of restaurant meals, I was not too disappointed to see that I'd gained only 500g.

It was back to work last week and back into my usual exercise regime.

Fortunately the local council has set up an outside exercise station at the park along the usual route of our daily walk. The added benefit of stationary bikes, steppers, rowers and other exercise devices has improved a variety of muscles.

I can now conveniently exercise during my lunchtime walk.

The only downside is the extra pain I get to experience afterwards.

It's all worth it though — I lost 1.5kg last week so that made up for the little gain I had the previous week.

» Amanda Weisz



Lost: 7.5kg
Starting Weight: 125kg
Method: Curves Gym

I've lost another 1.5kg over the past two weeks, bringing my total weight loss to 7.5kg.

I'm quite pleased to have lost those 1.5kg because I've been finding it particularly difficult to keep myself motivated lately, especially over the past week.

Luckily I have the lovely women from Curves looking out for me and they always give me a call to see how I am if they haven't seen me for a few days.

I also started the Curves Six-week Solution program about two weeks ago, but I found the food/diet element was too restrictive for me and I've given up on it for the moment.

Right now I'm happy to continue just doing three or four workouts a week with Curves and to let my weight loss continue at a slow and steady rate.

I'll be really pleased if I can manage to lose 10kg by the end of winter.

» Katie Rees



Lost: 12.9kg
Starting weight: 85kg
Method: Tony Ferguson Weight-Loss Clinic

Well the penny has finally dropped. I've realised that I will never be able to go back to my old way of eating.

A lifetime of eating whatever I wanted (usually junk) whenever I wanted (too often) has taken its toll on my body. It was what got me into this predicament in the first place, and now that I'm getting a glimpse of what it's like to be slim and fit, I never want to go back there.

But it's not all doom and gloom. I'm only human, and it's natural to want to eat all those yummy foods like chocolate, cakes and chips. We associate so many experiences with these sorts of foods that trying to cut them out altogether only leads to disaster. It's just a matter of eating them in moderation.

They say new habits take about three weeks to form — maybe I'm slow learner. Or maybe just a lifetime of bad habits takes longer to change.

But it's finally working.

» Pamela Harkin



Lost: 6.5kg
Starting weight: 95.3kg
Method: Think Slim Self Hypnosis

I've been ill for a few weeks, so it was really difficult to maintain the fitness level.

But I've managed to perform light exercises and have done lots of walking.

I've still managed to lose some kilograms and some centimetres off my body.

I'm still enjoying the program and healthy lifestyle and hope to keep losing more weight than I already have.

» Cheryl-Ann Hawkins



Lost: 7.1kg
Starting weight: 85kg
Method: Heavy Haulers

I'm in the final days of my 12-week program with Heavy Haulers. Having lost 7.1kg, I'm feeling

strong and fit and looking toned and happy. My body is agreeing with my new lifestyle, even though I'm still going through a reduction phase.

I'm happy with my .6kg average weight loss each week. I am, however, more happy with my fat loss and my muscle development which is not portrayed on the scales.

I've learnt that scale weight is almost irrelevant. I didn't think I'd ever admit that, but it's true. The jeans I'm now wearing, I was wearing when I was 6kg lighter, but I was not nearly as toned or fit then.

I'm skiing for the next week and am really looking forward to wearing my new ski outfit from five years ago that again fits. I'm also looking forward to challenging my new level of fitness on the slopes.

I know I'm now sending my daughters a positive message regarding food and exercise and they will grow up with a healthy respect and association with food.

They won't see their mum eating pre-packaged low-fat meals or shakes anymore.

I've enjoyed being able to share the same food with them and my husband and we are all now eating healthy well balanced food.

I'm proud of what I've been able to achieve in such a short time. I couldn't have done it without the program the guys at Heavy Haulers designed.

Do you want sugar with that?



Mac attack: new research from the US confirms we should be more concerned about sugar than fat.

FAST-FOOD chains are working hard to provide health-conscious Australians with an alternative to the fatty, energy-dense food they have sold for so long.

But in their haste to remove fat and salt, some may have missed an important ingredient in many people's battles to lose weight: sugar.

David Gillespie, a former lawyer and author of *Sweet Poison: Why Sugar Makes Us Fat*, investigated McDonald's tick-approved (approved by the Heart Foundation) meals and was shocked by what he found.

"Some of the worst choices on the main menu are the newly introduced 'tick-approved' items. The tick-approved chicken sweet chilli wrap, garden salad and Italian dressing delivers almost three times as much

sugar as the worst burger (McFest Deluxe)," he says. "A medium orange juice would add another 8½ teaspoons of sugar to the meal."

McDonald's traditional menu has much lower levels of sugar.

"None of the 17 types of burger on offer contain more than 1¼ teaspoons of sugar," Gillespie says.

"The chicken options all contain one teaspoon or less.

"The lowest sugar burger is the Filet-o-Fish at a mere half a teaspoon. A serve of fries doesn't add anything to the sugar count and neither will tea, coffee, Diet Coke or water."

Gillespie says new research confirms we should be more concerned about sugar than fat.

"A study out of the University of California names the fructose found in

sugar (and fruit juice) as the culprit behind the obesity epidemic and a raft of other health problems," he says.

"In the study, obese individuals consumed drinks sweetened with fructose for 10 weeks. They ended up with increased (1.5kg) stomach fat, higher fatty triglycerides (which leads to heart disease) and 20 per cent higher insulin resistance (which leads to Type II diabetes). None of this happened to the control group.

According to Gillespie's report, a large Fanta at McDonald's contains 16 full teaspoons of sugar and a McFlurry with M&Ms serves up just over 11 teaspoons of table sugar. The best option on the dessert menu is the apple pie with just 1½ teaspoons of sugar.

DANIEL HOY

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