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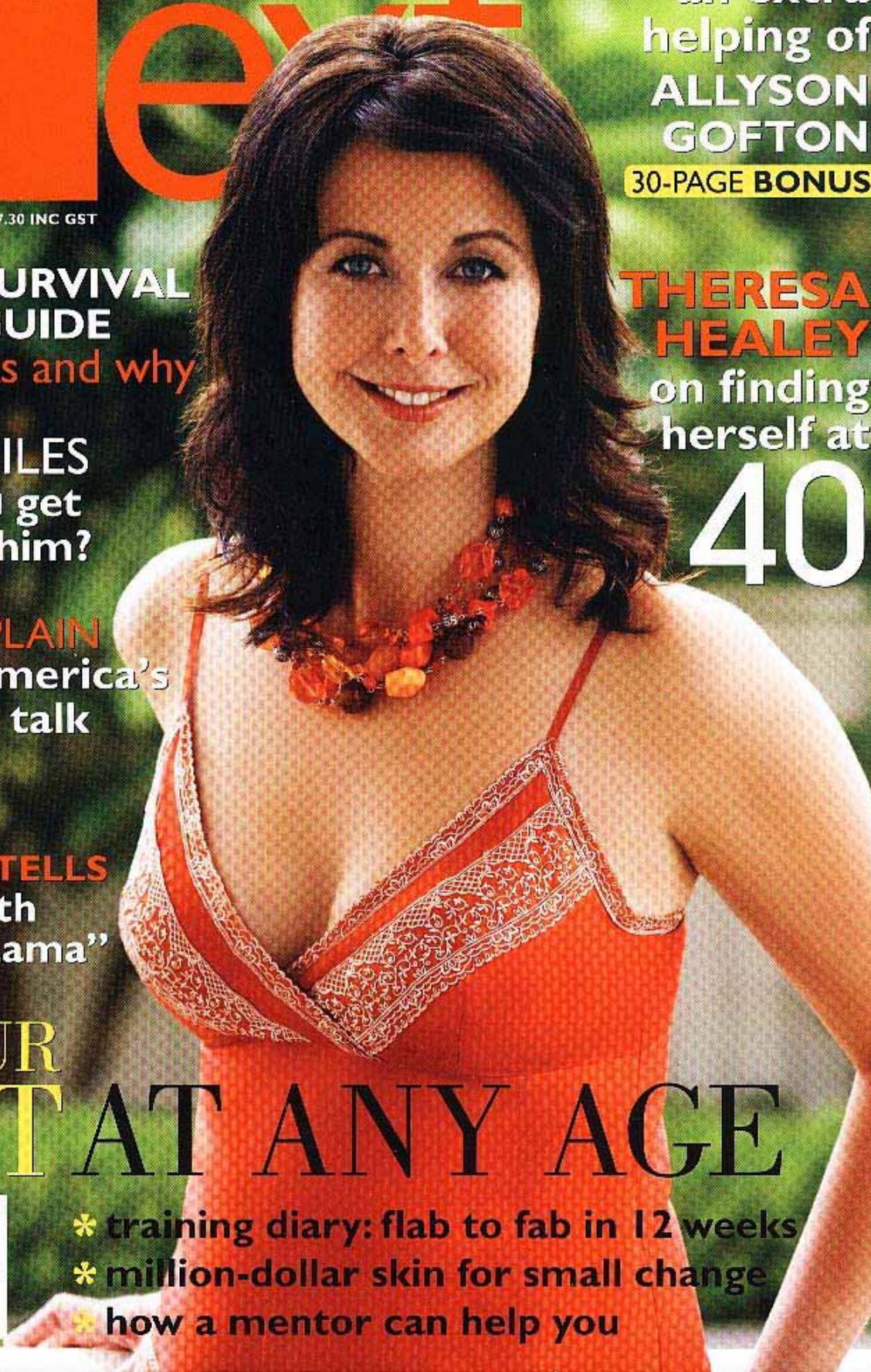


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HOME *improvement*

What happens when a 40-year-old with an aversion to exercise and a weakness for red wine and hot chips signs up for a 12 week challenge with a personal trainer?

STORY SUSANNAH WALKER PHOTOGRAPHS TODD EYRE



Exercise bores me to death. I've done the gym thing before to keep the kilos at bay, as well as my share of dieting. But really get serious about health and fitness? Its always seemed to hard. Yet Hitting mid-life with weight creeping on and motivation gone AWOL. Paying someone to bully me into it suddenly has a twisted kind of appeal. I assumed it would be as easy as climbing a mountain. I was right.

The Week Before

My HealthMastery personal trainer Nalisha Patel rings to complete a phone assessment before the first 12 sessions. Finally return her Calls (reluctant? Moi?). Asked to list Goals: 10 kilos; uncover previously undetected exercise addiction; get hooked on eating healthy stuff. "Yes a few challenges there!" chirps Nalisha in a perky, personal trainer kind of way. Pretend to be enthusiastic. Shocked to learn that trainer will conduct one on one torture session only once a week, am expected to exercise on own five other days. In the same week! Told to buy exercise ball. Forget to ask why. Advised not to use scales because how you feel

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when you look in the mirror is more important". Rush home and step on scales. Fatter than at any time except when working on food magazine. No, not divulging just how fat.

Week One

Prepare for first session by spending weekend on couch eating chips and guzzling red wine. Email Nalisha three times to delay first session. She emails back nutrition guidelines which will compliment exercise programme. Please to note eating every two to three hours is essential. Nalisha is part of HealthMastery's Mobile service so comes to office with all equipment needed for session. Seen by colleagues in exercise gear. Long to be someone else, somewhere else. Resolve to meet trainer at home next time. Adjourn swiftly to board room, where nalisha takes measurements and blood pressure and pinches fat bits with mean tong-like things. Go through programme of six exercises she has designed based on phone assessment. Quickly work up sweat hefting weights and falling of exercise ball but do not pass out as feared. Appalled to be told to a strenuous 30 minute walk that night despite having to work late. Two workouts in one day-madness!

Week Two

Reality bites- again. Almost impossible to fit in two workouts and three walks on own, as well as come up with weekly goals ("improve attitude") and fill out food diary. Go away for weekend and had to sacrifice precious suitcase space to dumbbells and deflated exercise ball. Nalisha sends encouraging emails and a success planner with weekly motivational exercises to complete. Bleat about never wanting to eat canned tuna again and am given tips on how to vary meals. Told to eat more protein- it seems weird to be eating more to lose weight. Walk in the park near

Opposite Page:
As well as walks and workouts, a key part of HealthMastery's 12 Week Challenge is setting new goals each week, and reviewing progress during every personal training session.
Left: Grin and bear it – Nalisha puts Susannah through her paces.

work at lunchtime. Pretend to be pounding pavements in the name of shopping. Fail



Week Three

Is it over yet?

Week Four

Actually enjoy walking on the beach on a perfect Sunday morning at a time often still asleep(and, decades past, often time of arriving home)

Week Five

Strangely obsessed with food. Nalisha listens patiently to moans about having to plan meals days in advance to avoid temptations. She giggles at the weekly food diary and suggests bacon and eggs for breakfast, fish and chips for lunch and pizza for dinner on "food day off" may be over doing it. Notice that despite this, body has definitely toned up and



clothes that were too tight now fit nicely. Attitude improves instantly.

Week Six

Halfway through challenge. Nalisha introduces tougher exercise routines. Crack and step on scale. Loss of four kilos is a huge motivator. Still a big ask to finding time to exercise six days a week, but making it a must-do is becoming a habit. Don't enjoy it but admit to feeling good afterwards.

NALISHA'S EATING TIPS

- * Plan your meals weekly/daily.
- * Have at least one day off each week to eat as you wish.
- * Eat six meals a day, two to three hours apart.
- * Eat high quality carbohydrates and protein at every meal.
- * Eat three servings of vegetables a day (one cup equals one serving).
- * Eat oily fish such as salmon, tuna and sardines at least three times a week.
- * Prepare your food the day before if this helps to eliminate hassles.
- * Drink about 10 glasses of water a day.

Susanrah found squeezing six workouts a week into her busy schedule one of the toughest aspects of the challenge. But even harder was completing weekly written motivational exercises – she stopped doing them after six weeks, finding the physical results she was getting were motivation enough to keep on going.

HOW TO STICK TO A WORKOUT PLAN

- * Schedule your workouts. Put them in your diary at the start of the week as appointments you must keep.
- * Be prepared. If you plan to work out in the morning, lay out your gear the night before. If you work out in the evening, keep your trainers out and put them on as soon as you get home.
- * Pick a time of day that suits you and stick with it. Avoid promising yourself you'll work out in the morning if you always rush to get to work.
- * Cross your workouts off the calendar and savour the sense of achievement.
- * Measure your results by noting how clothes fit and the muscle definition you gain. Be wary of weighing yourself.
- * Clear junk food and nutritionally empty foods from your fridge and pantry. Don't go to the supermarket when hungry.
- * Be trustworthy. Set a plan and a goal and stick to it. Ask a friend or trainer to hold you accountable.
- * Remember to congratulate yourself for the effort you are putting into your health and fitness.

Week Seven

Go to posh lunch for work and order grilled hapuka and salad. Bite lips while others feast on huge steaks with chips. Share with the group that regime limits alcohol to two glasses a week ("How big can the glass be?") someone asks). Get wonderfully plastered on two large glasses of fine Malbourough red – body is not used to booze anymore. Get dry horrors that night. True!



TWO MONTHS AFTER THE CHALLENGE

Susannah continued to follow the exercise programme and nutrition guidelines on her own and lost a further three kilos, taking the total to 13kg. Agreeing with Nalisha that she shouldn't lose any more weight, she has now signed up for HealthMastery's monthly maintenance programme." I'm healthier than ever before and feel better than I ever have. So I'd hate to backslide now"

"Have you lost heaps of weight?" asks Arthur at the water cooler. "Oh about 10 kilos." But who's counting?

walks are out of the question. "Walk anyway," she says. Get caught in thunder storm but to slim to be struck by lightning.

Week Ten

Most clothes now too baggy to wear. Officially shape shifting into smug health bore, and although stunned and amused, cant stop. Confidence and energy climbing everyday. Finally realise what glowing skin is. And that vanity is a great motivator.

Below left: Nalisha advises her clients to stick their 'before' photo on the fridge as a motivational tool. Below right: by the end of the 12 Week Challenge, Susannah had lost 10 kilos, dropped two dress sizes and her waist had shrunk 7cms.

Week Twelve

Monday morning: "Wow, you look fantastic!" Says Anna at the start of a meeting. Monday lunch time: "You have a beautiful body." Says the new massage therapist. Monday afternoon: "Have you lost heaps of weight?" asks Arthur at the water cooler. "Oh, about 10 kilos," But who's counting?

By the end of the 12 week challenge, Susannah had lost 10 kilos, dropped two dress sizes and her waist had shrunk 7cm.

THE CHALLENGE

- * HealthMastery's Get the Body you Desire 12 Week Challenge costs from \$780. For more information contact HealthMastery, ph (09) 266 3662 or see www.healthmastery.co.nz
- * Extras include an anti-burst exercise ball and weights for home workouts, exercise gear, and a new wardrobe for the new, slimmer you.

