

YES YOU CAN!



NICKI & AMANDA'S WEIGHT-LOSS ADVICE

TV health gurus Nicki Waterman and Amanda Ursell are here to help you stay in shape with the latest news and advice

How can I diet and prepare for pregnancy?

Q I'm 35, overweight by about 4st, and have been trying to get pregnant for over a year. My GP says I need to lose weight, but how can I do this and get my body ready for pregnancy at the same time?

A *Amanda says:* Losing weight before trying to conceive will enable your body, including your reproductive system, to work more efficiently. Pollutants in our bodies from sources like make-up, food additives and pesticide residues are stored in our fat cells. When you lose weight, these pollutants are liberated along with the fat. So after shedding weight, it's best if you allow a month or so for your body to remove these pollutants. Try taking the seed psyllium to help your body do this.

A 400-microgram supplement of the B vitamin folic acid taken daily can help reduce the risk of spina bifida in your baby once you conceive. It also makes sense to lower your intake of toxins by having organic foods and drinks where possible.

Keep your diet healthy: never skip breakfast – a sugar-free cereal with soy or organic milk is perfect. Go

for fruit mid-morning, then a lunch of pitta stuffed with salad and houmous. A yogurt and a handful of almonds make a great mid-afternoon snack, and choose a dinner of a lean protein like tofu in a vegetable-rich stir-fry. Best of luck!

Nicki says: To lose weight safely and steadily before conceiving, your primary goal should be to burn calories by doing as much cardio as you can. The recommendation from the American College of Sports Medicine is to do moderate intensity cardio for half an hour, five days a week. To maximise each session, choose an exercise that uses the most energy – walking, running, cycling and dancing burn the most calories per minute. If you're new to exercise, take it more slowly, then gradually build up to the highest intensities you can handle. It's better to squeeze in little bits of exercise and make the most of them. Do these super-short workouts at home:

- if you have a cardio machine, like a bike or treadmill, jump on;
- if you have a fitness DVD, push 'play' and start a workout segment;
- if you have an iPod, dance vigorously to a few songs. Otherwise, briskly walk or jog around the block. Go for it!



Nicki's tip

Exercising to music can improve performance. Here's my pick of the best sport MP3 players:

BEST FOR POWER-WALKING
Philips GoGear Spark 2GB, £39.99

You can't fault this little gadget. It's the size of a matchbox, the sound is excellent and it's easy to use. It can store up to 450 songs and has 27 hours of playback. www.philips.co.uk



BEST FOR RUNNING
Nike+ iPod Sport Kit, £18.60

Although not a music player in itself, the plug-in receiver communicates with a foot sensor (to use with compatible Nike shoes), turning your iPod into a pressure-sensitive pedometer. www.nikestore.com



BEST FOR SWIMMING
Speedo LZR Aquabeat 2GB MP3 player, £100

You can even listen to music in the pool with this special-edition waterproof MP3 player. It has waterproof earphones and a 2GB built-in memory, so it holds about 500 songs. www.speedo.com



Amanda's tip

The golden rule with losing weight is to focus on what you want to achieve. Try these tips to help you get to your goal weight and, crucially, stay there:

- Get your mind around the fact you are not 'going on another diet' (which you will then 'come off' again), but rather that you are 'changing the way that you eat' for life.
- When other people say, 'But you don't need to lose weight,' just ignore them. They're either being 'kind' or have their own agenda for not wanting you to shed the excess pounds. Stick to your guns.

- Work out why you have overeaten in the past. Maybe it is simply because you love food or perhaps something in your childhood sparked it off. Try to understand the reasons, make peace with them and release yourself from their grip.
- Consistency is key. People who keep weight off adopt healthier habits all the time. They don't, for instance, 'take weekends off' but do think in the long term.
- Finally, remember every small weight loss adds up to better long-term health. Pat yourself on the back as you head towards your goal, however big or small.



TRIED & TESTED...

Hannah Fox tries: GI Jane Bootcamp

Crawling out of bed at 5.30am to the shouts and whistles of two Royal

Marine physical training instructors (PTIs), I wondered what I'd let myself in for by signing up for the GI Jane Bootcamp. It helps you drop pounds and inches (many women lose an average of 8lb), kick-start a healthy lifestyle and improve your mental and physical strength. The week-long course, for up to 12 women, takes place in a large country house in Kent. Everyone follows the low-calorie BodyChef diet (www.bodychef.com). Portions were smaller than I was used to, but it showed me that I was probably over-eating, and the food was tasty.

The beauty of bootcamp is that it's your decision how much you push yourself. There was no competitiveness – our group varied

in age, background and fitness level – but we were encouraged to act like a team and drive each other on. The PTIs were supportive, keeping us going so that we got the most out of it, but never forcing us to do anything we couldn't manage. The activities were very varied, so we never got bored. They included everything from circuits, runs, hikes and cycle rides, to army assault courses, boxing, netball and cricket. At the end of each day, I was aching in places I never thought possible, but I also felt a tremendous sense of achievement. I only stayed for three-and-a-half days but lost 5lb, which was great. Our group lost a combined weight of 56lb. However, the best thing was the knowledge that I could push myself to my physical limits. I felt stronger, fitter and happier than I had done in ages.

• For more information about the course, phone 020 8301 4353 or visit www.gjjanebootcamp.co.uk

I did it!

NAME Natasha Cavey
AGE 30
BEFORE 26st
AFTER 12st

Natasha, a single mum and account manager from Birmingham, had been overweight from childhood, weighing 20st when she was 13. But one day she had a wake-up call: 'At the school gates I caught another mum staring at me. I was popping out of size 32 clothes and saw myself through her eyes.'

Amanda says: 'Natasha skipped breakfast then drank 10 cups of hot chocolate, each with two sugars. She had toast and butter mid morning, a tuna mayonnaise sandwich and two packets of crisps for lunch, then two Mars bars at 3pm. Dinner was a huge lasagne with half a loaf of garlic bread; while cooking, she ate a pack of 12 mini Scotch eggs. Natasha then snacked on a 200g bar of chocolate, three cans of cola and a packet of biscuits. This added up to a

whopping 7700 calories a day. She went on the Cambridge Diet meal-replacement plan, and dealt with childhood issues that had sparked her overeating.

'When Natasha reintroduced food she gradually built up to porridge and a cup of green tea for breakfast, an orange mid morning, a Quorn stir-fry for lunch and salmon with lots of vegetables for dinner. She now drinks only water and four cups of tea a day. Natasha accepts her changes are for life and that she is likely to live longer as a result of her improved health.'

Nicki says: 'As exercising was difficult for Natasha, I advised her to wait until she had lost 4st on the meal-replacement diet, when she would feel more able to be active. She began with a gentle daily walk and a few swims a week, exercising for 10 minutes, and built up to 45 minutes' walking and 30 minutes in the pool. I also recommended an "at-your-desk" workout: to sit up straight and pull her belly button towards her spine for 10 counts.'

Natasha says: 'I'm now a size 12 and feel amazing. What's more, I'm no longer embarrassed to go out.'

BEFORE



AFTER