

# Tough exercise and diet regime pays off

By DEB TAPP

For the past six years I've lived with more than a few extra kilograms on my frame, thanks to three pregnancies and a busy and stressful lifestyle running a household.

There never seemed to be enough hours in the day for everything, let alone finding the time to exercise.

I was always one of those mums who would grab something on the run – a piece of toast, chocolate, biscuits, anything that was quick and easy.

I would reach for coffee, my vice, when I was sleep-deprived, and a treat as part of a hard day.

So when I tired of this lifestyle and that baby fat refused to budge, I offered myself as a guinea pig to personal trainer Jeff Willoughby.

The last six weeks have truly been a revelation, thanks to Jeff, owner of a Wellington inner-city personal training studio called Studio 41.

But the six-week body transformation hasn't been easy, it's been a big commitment of twice-weekly training sessions in the gym, interval training on Saturdays and Sundays and an eating plan to boot.

Having enjoyed weight training before children and going for the odd run or swim since, the exercise bit didn't worry me, but the first part of the eating plan, basically a 14-day detox, did – no pasta, no potato, no bread, no cereal, no fruit, no takeaways, no wine, no dairy and NO coffee!

It meant eating meat and vegetables for breakfast, meat and salad for lunch and meat and/or vegetables and salad for dinner. It meant snacking on nuts, carrots and celery, and drinking only water or green tea, a far cry from what my body was used to.

I immediately felt for my family – two weeks without coffee, two weeks without any sugar would equal grumpiness. I was afraid of what an ogre I might become.

It seemed completely unnatural to forego my daily fix of Weetbix and instead fill myself up with carrots, celery, avocado, nuts and salmon every morning.

But I stuck at it simply because I could understand Jeff's reasoning behind cutting out foods that release the fat storage hormone insulin.

He argued that eating any food that has an insulin effect on the body sets it up to not only store body fat but to rely on the sugar hit

for the rest of day.

This, in turn, sets up dangerous sugar spiking peaks and then troughs which sends you looking for that mid-morning snack to lift you when your blood sugar levels drop.

As a result people like me live day-to-day moving from one sugar hit to the next, relying on more coffee and more sugar over the years while the whole time their body fat increases.

So it makes sense that for optimal weight/fat loss, anything with a second ingredient of sugar should not be part of that equation.

I must admit, the first few days of this new regime were tough, I didn't suffer withdrawal symptoms as such but I craved both sugar and coffee.

Making kids' lunches every day and preparing family meals with forbidden foods was hard going too, as was driving past my regular cafe without stopping.

Seeing people with their coffees and muffins made my mouth water and stomach rumble, and knowing I was heading home to a lunch of rabbit food and a hunk of meat hardly seemed appetising.

I struggled especially on day three and four when the energy levels took a dive, I was tired, I didn't feel like exercising, let alone face another meal of meat and salad.

The training session that day was the toughest ever. Jeff put me through my paces, three mini-circuits of weights that had had every muscle screaming, my heart racing as I struggled to catch my breath, not to mention legs so like jelly I thought I was going to collapse.

It was probably a combination of low energy and hard-out exercise that made me throw up that day, and I don't consider myself completely unfit.

I wouldn't say it has been plain sailing since then, but my energy levels picked up after day four, and my fitness, or should I say my body's tolerance of Jeff's workouts, improved immensely.

The fact that both my body weight and body fat dropped within two weeks, and in fact every time Jeff took my body fat measurements, made me even more determined to stick to the eating plan and exercise regime even though I was tempted to stray at times.

After the first two weeks I'd lost 2.4kg and almost 1 per cent body fat, by week four I'd lost another 300 grams but more importantly a



**WORTH IT:** Deb Tapp works out at Studio 41 with trainer Jeff Willoughby.

further 1 percent body fat, and by week six I'd dropped another 700 grams and another 0.7 per cent body fat.

I guess it doesn't sound like much but to me results like these meant the intense training sessions, little rest time and sometimes utter exhaustion afterwards, not to mention sticking to that eating plan, was well worthwhile.

The short bursts of cardio activity, or interval training such as 20 minutes of sprints or bike workouts as I have done outside the gym, have obviously also proven more effective than the longer runs I was used to.

Though my muscles felt constantly tired and sore, I can really feel the difference – the flab isn't so flabby, my muscles are harder and more obvious, and I feel fitter, stronger and healthier than ever before.

Despite fewer, or next to no carbs, I've had more energy, I've felt far healthier, slept far better and I haven't experienced any of those dreaded peaks and troughs.

In fact my partner says I've been less grumpy, less up and down and happier.

My eating regime has been fine tuned along the way so that now I'm once again able to enjoy my daily coffee, a bowl of porridge a couple of times a week, and a well-deserved day off where I can eat whatever I want.

Having been deprived of such

foods, I have to say I savour every sip of that daily coffee, enjoy every mouthful of porridge even without the milk and brown sugar, and enjoy the tastes of the usually forbidden chocolate and takeaways.

As Jeff puts it, once we make our body more sugar hungry, as I have following this eating regime, it allows for the muscles to be more receptive to insulin thus reducing how much is stored as body fat.

The last six weeks is proof that theory works, and I have to say the whole experience has had a huge affect on both my lifestyle, and on me.

No longer do I turn my nose up when I prepare my meat and salad breakfast and lunch, it's become the norm now.

The day-to-day routines aren't an effort anymore, I'm no longer out of breath walking up the 60-odd steps to our house, and I don't run out of puff walking my eldest son home up the hill from school while pushing my almost two-year-old in her buggy.

I have energy left at the end of the day. I don't complain about being tired, nor do I reach for the chocolate for that sugar-hit to perk me up.

Most of all, this has taught me that it is possible to lead a healthy lifestyle, factor exercise into your daily routine and still have enough time and energy for family and work. The key to it all is being organised.

## ► NUTRITION

### Food diary before eating/exercise regime:

**Breakfast:** Weetbix with low-fat milk

**Morning tea:** Coffee and muffin or muesli bar

**Lunch:** Vegemite and cheese toasties or buns with margarine and cheese

**Afternoon tea:** Banana or chocolate/biscuits

**Dinner:** Spaghetti Bolognese with garlic bread or roast chicken meal with potatoes, kumara, pumpkin, broccoli and cauliflower

**Dessert:** Icecream

**Supper:** Milo with chocolate/biscuits

### Food diary during 14-day challenge:

**Breakfast:** Salmon with sliced celery, tomato, carrots, cucumber, avocado and nuts (walnuts, cashews, almonds, brazil nuts)

**Morning tea:** Carrots/celery and handful of nuts

**Lunch:** Chicken salad with balsamic vinegar

**Afternoon tea:** Cucumber dipped in peanut butter, carrots with hummus

**Dinner:** Stir fry, steak, broccoli, cauliflower, mushrooms, onions, carrots, courgettes cooked in butter

**Supper:** Green tea and handful of nuts

### Food diary after 14-day challenge and now:

**Breakfast:** Salmon with sliced celery, tomato, carrots, cucumber, avocado and nuts OR porridge

**Morning tea:** Protein drink (on workout days), then carrots/celery and handful of nuts and coffee

**Lunch:** Bacon and eggs cooked in butter or chicken salad

**Afternoon tea:** Carrots/celery, handful of nuts

**Dinner:** Steak, chicken or pork chops, whatever meat plus loads of veges

**Supper:** Green tea and handful of nuts

**PLUS** a day off once a week, which for me means on Saturdays I eat takeaways for dinner, be it Chinese or Burger Wisconsin for example, chocolate, icecream, and enjoy a few wines.

## ► EXERCISE

### Example of workout (all 15 reps)

3 x mini-circuits, 3 sets of each, with 1 min rest between sets

Back squats

Neutral grip lat pulldown

Lunges

Back extension

Dumbbell press, flat

Leg curl on swiss ball

Seated row

Reverse crunches

Prowler (a conditioning tool that looks like a scum machine that you push in short bursts)

EXERCISE before Jeff

1 x swim

1 x run (30 min)

1 x walk (1hr)

EXERCISE post Jeff

Tues/Thurs, weight training at gym, up to an hour a time

Sat, sprints, 20min

Sun, stationary bike, intervals, 35min

# Salon has unique take on beauty for men and women

Unique Nails and Beauty has a unique perspective on both women and men's wellbeing, and it starts from the ground up. From pedicure to manicure, it's all about health, relaxation and beauty to leave a client feeling well groomed and genuinely cared for.

Mercy Sneddon has gained a fresh unique perspective with the arrival of assistant Katherine Wu, a Paris-trained beautician specialising in massage, acrylic and sculptured acrylic nails and professional makeup.

Katherine arrived from Beijing last year and has fresh ideas and designs for eye-catching acrylic nails, some sculpted in rock crystal or using UV gels.

An intensive part of Katherine's training has been relaxation massage.

Mercy is delighted to be able to offer Katherine's services to her existing clients and to those in need of deep relaxation and de-stressing.

Clients can choose from a full body massage or concentrate on a head, neck, face or shoulder massage.

"The head, face and neck massage relaxes stress lines and helps give a more youthful appearance," Katherine says. It is an anti-aging therapy available to both men and women and feedback suggests it never fails to improve your day.

Katherine also offers a full breast massage, not a common therapy in New Zealand, but it can be an important part of breast health. Katherine says breast massage plays a part in improving lymphatic drainage and it assists circulation and supports

good breast tone.

For many people, the ultimate is a professional scalp or face massage. Having a scalp massage is absolutely divine because it also relaxes your facial and neck muscles and restores a level of tranquility as nothing else can. A face massage helps release the fine lines from squinting, laughing and frowning.

"Any time you are worried about wrinkles," Katherine says, "a face massage makes you feel so much better and it makes your skin more youthful by improving circulation."

A tummy and hip massage can help improve muscle tone and stimulate detoxification.

Mercy Sneddon does wonderful Filipino manicures, pedicures and specialises in the care of feet. She is

renowned for her ability to restore foot health and people travel long distances to receive her expert care.

Unique Nails and Beauty can offer an excellent beauty package for every day, any day, weddings, balls and special occasions. Massage, spray tan, manicure, pedicure and beauty make-up; that's a combination to set Unique Nails and Beauty apart. Mercy and Katherine at Unique Nails and Beauty have many strings to their bows, they can enhance your appearance and health in many ways and they love to serve and care for their clients.

**Nail art:** Unique Nails and Beauty presents Katherine Wu, an internationally trained beautician from Beijing specialising in acrylic nails and massage.

