

Now, eat yourself slim

Marisa Duffy looks at the arguments over weight loss, calorie control and the revolutionary 'junk-food diet'

WHEN Denise Trainer sat her family down to tell them that she wanted to undergo an operation to get a gastric band, she had reached her lowest ebb. "I was at an all-time low over my weight," says Denise, 40, a working mum-of-three from Kilsyth.

"I had tried every diet and every slimming club and my last resort was going for a gastric band. I had spoken about it to my family who weren't very happy about it at all but I thought that was the road I was going to have to take." Denise, who runs her own catering business, reached 15st 7lbs at her heaviest. She managed to lose up to two stones at one point but the weight crept back on. She dates her weight issues from when she became pregnant. "I had always been quite slim. I put on lots of weight when I had my first child and from then it was always a yo-yo experience."

Then she heard David Wilson, a one-time professional footballer, talking on the radio about the controversial diet and fitness regime he had devised. "By that stage, I would have tried anything," she says.

David describes his diet as a "junk-food diet". While he is not advocating junk food per se, he says that the key to motivating people to stick with a diet is to allow them to eat the foods they enjoy but to focus on keeping the calories within a strict 1500 daily limit. He explains: "If you were to ask anyone who has an in-depth knowledge of food, they will tell you that it doesn't matter what you eat. You can take in any proteins, carbohydrates or liquids; with any food source your body has the ability to convert that and store it as fat so it's not what you eat, it's how many calories you consume."

Healthy eating, he argues, can be introduced at a later stage once someone has shifted the weight and therefore feeling motivated to continue. "Until they reach their target weight they've got to eat what they want and when they reach their target weight then they can start implementing more healthy choice food."

"When you try to do both at the same time people will always fail because when you start to deprive yourself of foods you enjoy, then you think you are on a diet."

"I have clients who like a bar of chocolate every day so I suggest to

them that instead of having a bar of chocolate that is 300 calories, pick one that is 100 calories so they are still losing weight but are still eating all the foods they enjoy. Because they are eating less and doing the right type of training, they are getting results."

He is critical of those who advocate healthy eating diets as being the best option for those desperate to lose weight. "We've got into a situation now where people are conditioned to believe a diet is all down to healthy eating and to lose weight you've got to eat healthy to get yourself in shape. I've worked with many people who have effectively not changed their diet - all they have done is eat less and done the proper type of training."

David, who runs his own fitness centre, Rapid Hypno fitness in Bellshill, Lanarkshire, advises the calorie restriction diet along with a programme of interval training for 20 minutes at a time, three times a week. "To lose weight is very simple: you need to burn more calories than you take in. The reason we have been conditioned to believe that it's complicated is because of all the ridiculous programmes out there."

CERTAINLY, for Denise the results were dramatic: she now weighs 9st 9lbs, wears a size eight or 10 dress and is a fitness fanatic. She admits that having to cut back on her food intake was hard but she still enjoyed low-calorie crisps and the odd gin and tonic.

So why does she think that she achieved success with this diet when all the others failed? "Because I was getting results," she says. "My body was changing, my weight was changing, my mindset changed; I've never stuck to anything, but I've stuck to this because it made me feel better physically and mentally."

The debate over the relevance of calorie counting is a hot topic at the moment. Since last summer

Pret A Manger and Wimpy have included calorie counts of all dishes on menus, and other chains, including Pizza Hut, are considering making local trials national. Within two years, calories on menus could be the norm.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is the body behind this initiative and believes that providing calories on menus will help us to make healthy eating choices. A national consultation ended last week and, if there is enough support from health bodies, consumers and



IN TRIM: Denise Trainer lost nearly six stones following the regime provided by David Wilson, below. Picture: James Galloway

restaurants, the FSA will push for a voluntary roll-out in all restaurants later this year.

However, there are many who are not convinced that calorie counting should be the focus for those trying to look after their health. Jenny Hynds, a state-registered dietician based in Stirling, believes that a more holistic outlook is required.

"For long-term weight loss and for an improvement in your health, you need to change your behaviour and correct bad habits. You need to

understand food and the balance of the main building blocks for a diet - protein and carbohydrate and fat - so that you can know how much and what you should be eating."

"Without that understanding, you're just not going to manage to maintain your weight loss long-term."

While she acknowledges that individuals respond to different approaches, she believes that eating for nutrition should be encouraged from the moment someone makes a decision to lose weight, not introduced

later. A healthier lifestyle and keeping active have more bearing on longer-term health issues than weight alone.

What both the healthy eating advocate and the calorie-counter both agree on, however, is that if a diet has any hope of working in the long-term is that it has to be preceded by a radical change in a person's mindset and attitude.

The Weight Loss Illusion by David Wilson is out now, priced £12.99. Visit www.theweighlossillusion.com.

my health |
Ali Park,
comedian



I ONCE had Bell's Palsy [muscle weakness affecting one side of the face]. It happened on a girl's weekend to Dublin. I was having a pint of Guinness and suddenly my face changed. You look like you've had a stroke.

I went to the doctor when I got home and he couldn't believe I didn't go to casualty. I had to take steroids and tape down my eye when I went to bed because it didn't close. My husband woke up to the sound of me pulling it off, going "a-ya, a-ya". It lasted a month or so.

Everyone said I didn't look that bad, but then when it got better, they were saying: "Ohmigod, it was really bad".

Three years ago, I did the women's 10K and have kept doing it since then. Running is an excuse to go out for a giggle with friends. The more of a gossip you have, the longer you run.

I'm a gym member, but don't go into the gym itself because it intimidates me. I go to classes, which I love. My yoga class is full of OAPs.

I'm coming up to do a show at the Comedy Festival and stress is bubbling away. I dabble in a bit of Rescue Remedy. You're supposed to put a couple of drops on your tongue, but I take the dropper off.

I'm petrified of dentists, my husband has to take the kids. I grew up in an area where they pulled out your teeth or put metal fillings in them. I had a lot of work done when I was younger.

I'm a big believer in manuka honey. It's meant to have antioxidants and healing properties. I'm also a part-time reiki practitioner and found out about manuka honey through someone I treated. They told me this bizarre story of someone who had rubbed it on a scab and it disappeared overnight.

Ali Park is in the *Company of Women* is on at Oran Mor on Thursday and Friday. Visit www.glasgowcomedyfestival.com.



Fashion What to wear ... and how to wear it. With Elizabeth McMeekin



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Make yourself popular and pass those pastels round

THE sun is out, the clouds are (temporarily) gone, which means one wonderful thing: it's spring. It also means - oh, joy of joys - that the new-season collections are starting to make sense. Two weeks ago if someone had wheeled out a selection of pastel garments, I would have probably scrunched up my nose and headed straight for the nearest black dress.

Now, with the sub-zero temperatures and grey skies of winter finally abating, it feels like the time is right to embrace some pretty spring clothes. Pastels, florals, pinks and lace are all perfect for ushering in the new season.

So long as they still keep you warm, of course.

The trick to spring dressing is mixing summery looking pieces with knits for warmth to create a soft and pretty look. The latest nude-coloured dresses might look appealing on the rails, but wear them alone at the moment and you're more likely to catch a chill rather than any admiring glances.

Skip into spring this year by layering up lots of pretty pastel colours to create a multi-textured look. Soft ivory and nude colours look great paired with lilacs, peaches and baby pinks. Add a bit of attitude with some serious high heels.

Those cloudless skies haven't convinced you it's spring yet? These three outfits should change your mind.



Spring-balance

Looking pretty in pastels this spring isn't as easy as it looks. While the temperature remains low, it can be hard to work out how to wear floral dresses and still stay warm. While black opaques might be the solution to the problem of cold winter legs, it's time to try lighter hosiery hues. Tights aside, this pretty nude, floral Topshop dress (£50) is fantastic. It has an old-fashioned tea dress shape and is perfect for wearing this spring. Add this tan and metal belt from Reiss (£49) and this pink cardigan from Topshop (£35).
Topshop: 0845 121 4519,
Reiss: 0141 204 1449/0131 557 5008.



Spring-loaded

This floral Topshop dress is a great spring staple. Pretty, feminine looks were a big hit on the spring/summer catwalks so it's not a bad idea to invest in the kind of dress that you'll be able to wear for the next five or six months. That said, too much pastel can look a bit saccharine sometimes, so to avoid that sweetie look try pairing this dress with some sharp accessories. These dark grey Topshop sandals (£70) are a great way to add some rock'n'roll to this girly dress. Finish the outfit off with this lace and lilac cardigan from Topshop (£38).
Topshop: as before.



Spring-heeled

While pretty floral prints are a mainstay of fashion, and have been for decades, that doesn't stop them from looking directional from time to time as well. Taking the same Topshop dress, try pairing it with this Reiss cardigan with shoulder tassels (£159). This cardigan is heavy, but it looks fantastic on and much more expensive than its price tag. Indeed, it's the kind of thing one would expect to see on the backs of hip editors at fashion week. Add to the trendy look of this outfit with these tan and white leather sandals, also from Reiss (£159).
Reiss: as before.