

Extreme Weight loss

'WE LOST 18 STONE

Shedding those stubborn pounds takes time and discipline, right? Not if you're one of these women – they transformed their figures without dieting or exercise *By Caroline Reid*

1 'I DROPPED 9ST IN 10 MONTHS'

Mum-of-four Fiona Holdcroft, a 42-year-old care worker from Stoke-on-Trent, had a gastric band fitted in September 2005. She shed 9st and eight dress sizes while continuing to eat the food she enjoyed.

I've tried every diet going, from meal replacements to calorie counting, plus appetite suppressants

It all started when I was pregnant with my first son. I developed a craving for salt and vinegar crisps and ballooned from 10½st to 13½st.

I couldn't stop eating them. By the time I gave birth to my fourth boy in 1993, I would eat 30 bags a day and wore a size 26. At 19st and only 5ft 4in, I was so fat my reflection didn't fit inside a full-length mirror.

Once lost 4st on slimming pills, but piled it all back on again six weeks later.

Even slimming clubs made me fat. I'd comfort eat to cope with the pressure of the weekly weigh-ins.

Then I read about Sharon Osbourne losing weight after gastric band surgery. The technique involved inserting a small hollow ring around the top of the stomach to make it smaller, meaning that I'd feel

fuller after eating less.

The operation was risky given my size and, at £7,500, it was not a cheap option, but I knew it could be the answer to all my problems.

For the first month I was on a liquid diet – Cup-a-Soups, milkshakes and yoghurt.

After that, I had small amounts of mashed potato and scrambled egg, until I could cope with solids.

I lost 2½st in the first four weeks and within 10 months, I had slimmed down to 9st 7lb and a size 10. It was incredible.

I was literally half the woman I had been and people often didn't recognise me.

Even my three eldest children did a double take when they returned from a nine-month army tour of Iraq. I was so happy, I burst into tears.



FOR MORE INFO ON GASTRIC BAND SURGERY CALL THE HOSPITAL GROUP ON 01832 338 885. OR VISIT WWW.HOSPITALGROUP.CO.UK. PHOTOS BY LARSON AND MAKE-UP BY SARA BOWEN. COUCH COMPART BY NINE. STYLING BY VICKI HELLMAN

the lazy way'

2 'I THOUGHT MYSELF THIN'

Claire Singh, 31, a midwife from London, dropped 8st and seven dress sizes with self-hypnosis.

I was a chubby child and weighed 13st by age 13. Growing up, I was obsessed with dieting. I was always on one, but by my late 20s, I was 5ft 6in, 21st and a size 28. I had no confidence or social life – I'd never had a boyfriend.

For Christmas 2003, my mum bought me a £200 ticket to Paul McKenna's Easy Weight Loss seminar. I only went because it was so expensive.

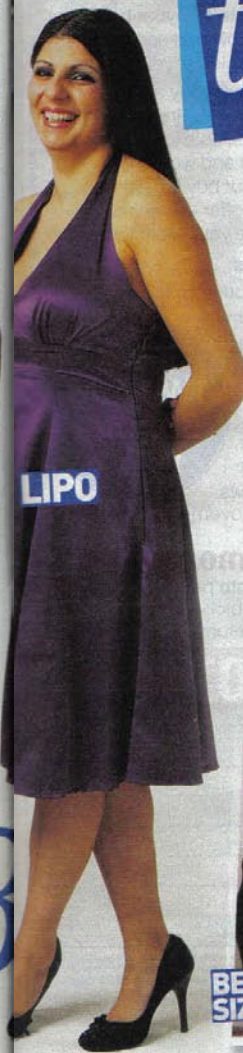
Paul talked about reprogramming our subconscious minds not to overeat. I sat there thinking: "What a con". Then Paul put everyone into a trance. I thought it was a waste of time and consoled myself with a huge tuna mayo baguette for lunch. But halfway through,

I couldn't eat another mouthful. It was the first time I hadn't finished a meal.

It was like Paul had handed me a magic key. All I had to do was follow rules such as eat when you're hungry and stop when you're full, and listen to his self-hypnosis tape daily.

I lost a stone that first month and after four months was down to 17st and a size 18. There were no banned foods – if I fancied chips, I'd have them – I just stopped when I was full.

Now, I'm down to 13st and a size 14. I'd like to lose more, but there's no rush. I'm just enjoying eating what I want without the guilt.



3 'I LOST TWO DRESS SIZES IN AN HOUR'

Kathy Sykes, 26, went from a size 14 to a size 10 after liposuction. Kathy, a restaurant manager from Sidcup, Kent, is married to Gary, 25. They have two children.

I've always had a bit of a tummy and two kids took their toll. I was a slim 14 everywhere else, but my big belly stuck out.

So when, late in 2006, Gary and I set a date for our wedding, I dreaded dress shopping. I tried dozens of designs but none hid my paunch. Then I found my dream gown – white chiffon, tight and strapless. I thought:

"I'll get into this if it kills me".

The assistant suggested a 14, but I insisted on a 10 because I had six months to slim into it.

As I stood there bulging, the assistant said: "You know, a lot of brides have plastic surgery". It got me thinking. My boobs could do with a lift, and what if I could fix my tummy as well?

Online, I found a clinic, Mills and Mills, in Marbella. It was just £1,500 for tummy liposuction. Gary wasn't impressed. He said: "Why don't you just diet?" But I needed a quick fix – and I knew I wouldn't stick to a weight-loss plan.

I went for surgery in March.

During the hour-long operation, the surgeon made small punctures round my belly button and sucked out over a litre of fat – around 5-7lb. I also had breast implants inserted, going from a 34B to an E.

My silhouette was now much slimmer. At my dress fitting in June, my stomach was the flattest it had ever been – my gown had to be taken in!

I looked fantastic on my wedding day and everyone was amazed when I told them how I'd done it. I'd recommend lipo to anyone – why waste energy dieting when you can shift the flab for good?



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