

Is there an alternative

We gave three readers a Closer diet and workout regime to follow for eight weeks

JUST DIET & FITNESS

'I lost 7lbs'

Natalie Gannon, 27, a 5ft 7 marketing assistant from Milton Keynes

BEFORE	AFTER
Weight: 11st 9lbs	Weight: 11st 2lbs
Size: 14	Size: 12
Chest: 40in	Chest: 39in
Waist: 33in	Waist: 31in
Hips: 38in	Hips: 38in

Before, I wasn't doing any exercise and was unhappy with my love handles and tummy. I didn't eat well - I'd skip breakfast, have a cheese sarnie for lunch, a Chinese takeaway for dinner and snack on crisps and chocolate. The 1,200-calorie plan (from www.closerdiets.com) was easy to stick to because the meals were decided in advance and I could choose between home-made and ready meals. Breakfast was wholemeal toast with low-fat spread, lunch was pitta bread with low-fat cheese, houmous and an apple, and dinner was home-made pasta and salad or a ready meal like cod in parsley sauce. The exercise plan from Harpers Fitness included tricep dips, squats, lunges and jogging. I did it three times a week at home for at least half an hour. I also sat on a giant exercise ball while I was on my computer at home and rocked it from side to side to work my abs. I lost 3lbs in the first week - after that it came off more slowly. Now I feel great - my love handles have gone down, my tummy's shrunk and I've lost 7lbs, going from a size 14 to a size 12. I'll stay on the diet because it's so easy and I'll exercise when I can.

Hannah Davies of Harpers Fitness (www.harpersfitness.co.uk) says: "Teamed with a healthy diet, exercise that increases the heart rate for short periods is good for burning fat long-term. It increases the metabolism so you burn food quicker."



ACUPUNCTURE

'I dropped a dress size'

Gemma Gurvitz, 22, a 5ft 3 events manager from Essex

BEFORE	AFTER
Weight: 10st 10lbs	Weight: 10st 6lbs
Size: 14	Size: 12
Chest: 40in	Chest: 39in
Waist: 33½in	Waist: 32in
Hips: 39in	Hips: 37in

In the last five years I've yo-yoed between a size 16 and a size 10. Before starting the acupuncture I'd lost 1½st in six months through healthy eating and going to the gym, but I'd plateaued and needed a kick-start. Ross Barr, the acupuncturist, said he'd work on my digestive system and energy levels so the weight loss would occur naturally. I lay down and Ross put needles in my feet and forehead. It didn't hurt, and after the 45-minute session I felt relaxed for days. The first session cost £50, then it was £40 for further treatments (I had five in all). I slept better and my digestion improved, so I felt less bloated. I also had so much energy, I started going to the gym more, doing 75 minutes of exercise three times a week. Before, I didn't bother with breakfast, I'd have a sandwich for lunch, curry for dinner and snack on crisps. But this time I followed the Closerdiets.com plan and had porridge for breakfast, pasta salad for lunch and fish with veg for dinner. Although I only lost 4lbs, I went to a couple of weddings during this time so I didn't always stick to the diet. The acupuncture made me feel fab and helped me get to the gym - so my stomach's flatter and I'm much more toned. I've already booked more sessions with Ross.

Acupuncturist Ross Barr (www.rossbarr.com) says: "Acupuncture can help with weight loss by improving the digestive system and making your body work more efficiently. This, in turn, boosts your energy levels, which means you'll work harder at the gym."