

● The UK's No1 slimming magazine

# Slimming World

magazine

JAN/FEB 2021

**Meg lost 4st 4lbs**  
**'How I found**  
**my weight loss**  
**mindset'**

**plus 11 more**  
**real slimmers,**  
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**34**

**warm & cosy**  
**recipes**



Family feasts



Weeknight winners



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# World *feeling!*

You only need to look at this deliciously filling breakfast to know you're going to love every bit(e) of losing weight the Slimming World way. This isn't just about the **most generous, flexible, filling eating plan on the planet**, though – it's about know-how, trust, community and friendship.

- ♥ It's about *support and encouragement* to achieve your goals – not just from your group's highly trained Consultant, but from the many like-minded members who'll inspire, share and motivate you all the way to target.
- ♥ It's about *24/7 inspiration* from the treasure trove of 1,400 recipes, meal plans and features on our website and app – including planning tools, and on-the-go support with healthy food choices from our new barcode scanner.
- ♥ It's about *helping you make eating and activity changes* on a deep, lasting level – changes you'll love for life. And the research shows you're more likely to succeed as part of a Slimming World group, with people who care and share your goals, than if you go it alone.

make this the year you experience  
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*that lasts a lifetime!*

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Pay £5.95/€10 a week, and save £5/€9\*\* when you join. Commit to a motivation-boosting Countdown course and save even more.

For more details, see our website or ask your Consultant.



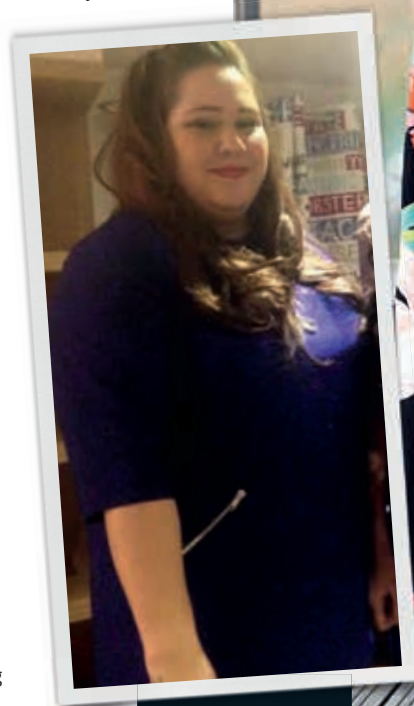
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**THEN** With each dress size I went up, the more self-conscious and unhappy I felt

“  
Weight loss  
has built up  
my confidence  
and my  
self-belief  
”

Emily, p10



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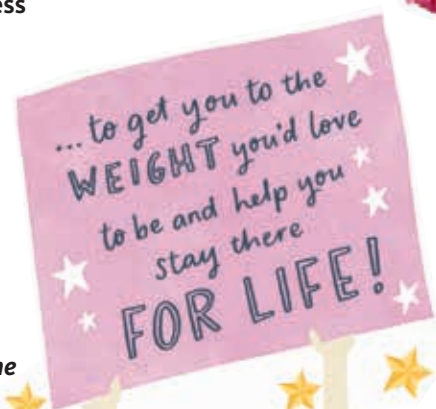
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From lightened-up favourites to exciting new flavours, our generous recipes are designed with you in mind

### WEIGHT LOSS

**LOVING** Slimming World approved and carefully Syn counted, they'll keep you slimming beautifully

### ROAD TESTED

Expertly devised, and double-checked for taste and accuracy by professional home economists

### CHOSEN FOR YOU

Specially selected for every lifestyle, budget and confidence level

### Look out for these symbols on our recipes:

Free Free when Food Optimising  
SP Extra Easy SP recipes packed with Speed Foods and P Foods; perfect when you want to lose a little more in a little less time  
V Suitable for vegetarians  
Vegan Suitable for vegans  
\* Suitable for freezing for up to 1 month

\*Deduct 6 Syns if using the reduced-fat mozzarella/ reduced-fat Cheddar as a Healthy Extra

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• See page 71 for a full list of Syn values of advertised products.



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**Katarina Johnson-Thompson**  
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**BRITISH  
ATHLETICS**



# hello



**T**his is a new year where our hopes and dreams might be simple, but they've never meant more: health, happiness, enjoying time with the people we love... Yet you might be wondering how on earth you can make plans and resolutions when none of us knows what the week ahead will bring, let alone the year ahead.

The great news is we've got a game plan for you. By understanding how you respond to change, you can weather whatever life

throws at you and come through stronger than ever. On page 19, we give you the toolkit to keep your slimming dreams on track, plus reassurance that the emotional roller coaster you might be riding right now is completely normal!

If you're new to *Slimming World Magazine*, you might think that losing weight and enjoying hearty comfort food don't go hand in hand... We're delighted to tell you that you *can* have it all! This issue is packed with generous, filling winter warmers, starting with our oven-baked feasts on page 44.

Let this be the year when you realise just how amazing healthy lifestyle changes can feel – and discover just how amazing you can be. On behalf of all of us at Slimming World, here's to a healthy, happy and empowering 2021.

Sara Ward, editor

**You can trust  
Slimming World  
Magazine to  
bring you the  
best support  
for your weight  
loss, so you can  
make healthy  
changes for life**

#### EXPERT ADVICE

Based on more than 50 years of Slimming World experience, we bring you information and inspiration we know will help you lose weight

#### TESTED RECIPES

All of our recipes are Slimming World approved, Syn counted and road tested to help you slim

#### REAL JOURNEYS

Our first-person stories show true transformations and share the genuine emotions of weight loss

#### GET IN TOUCH!

We'd love to hear what you think about the magazine. Email us at [editorial@slimmingworld.co.uk](mailto:editorial@slimmingworld.co.uk), write to us at *Slimming World Magazine*, Clover Nook Road, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 4SW, or call 01773 546 071



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## MEET SOME OF THIS ISSUE'S SLIMMERS



Ashli Sterling reveals how weight loss and becoming a mum sparked her love of being active.

**Ashli lost  
3st 7lbs – p102**



Losing weight has brought Damian Harriss's blood pressure down, and allowed a dream to take off!

**Damian lost  
4st 8lbs – p97**



Discover how Karen Tucker has maintained her weight loss and healthy lifestyle for 16 years.

**Karen lost  
4st 1lb – p116**



His father's final wish inspired Danny Mann to lose weight, and now he's got loads of energy for his kids.

**Danny lost  
10st 8½lbs – p90**





I worried my girls might have to grow up without their mum

### Meet Emily

Emily Hill, 39, is a Slimming World Consultant. She lives in Shotton, Flintshire, with her partner, Chris, and her three daughters, twins Tiana and Ella, 17, and Evie, 15

Height: 5ft 4ins

Starting weight: 18st 2½lbs

Weight now: 9st 12lbs

**WEIGHT LOST:**  
**8st 4½lbs**

Emily is a target member of Justine Budden's Slimming World group in Queensferry, Flintshire



For Emily Hill, her mental health and weight had always felt connected. Now, by understanding her mind as well as her body, she's found the key to making weight loss stick, and is moving towards a bright and confident future

# 'Losing 8st opened up my world'

**I**t was Saturday night and our kitchen was bustling with fun and laughter as my three girls, twins Tiana and Ella, 17, and Evie, 15, jostled to get the best topping on their pizzas. Lined up were bowls of home-made tomato sauce, grated cheese, sliced mushrooms, sweetcorn and lean ham, with tortilla wraps to use as bases. As I made a salad and a big tray of Slimming World chips to go alongside, I smiled at the scene in front of me. Although we did this at least once a week, I knew I'd never take for granted these joyful family mealtimes, with the kids and my partner, Chris, gathered around chatting and eating healthy food that somehow felt like such a treat. And it reminded me how different things had been once, before I'd gone on a journey to finally fix my relationship with food.

My mental health and my weight had always seemed connected. Even at primary school, I remember being bigger than my friends, and the more I was teased by the other kids, the more I'd reach for food as a comfort – thick slices of buttered white bread, sandwiches, chocolate. Through my teens, I either comforted myself with bread, cheese and sweets, or skipped meals to lose weight.

After I left school and college, and started my first job working with children with autism, I'd have a chocolate bar for breakfast and an egg mayonnaise baguette with chips for lunch, only getting a balanced

meal when Mum cooked dinner in the evening. I began feeling very low and went to my GP, who put it down to tiredness and anaemia. I was convinced it was linked to my weight, though, so when my mum, Jeanne, joined Slimming World, I decided to give it a go, too. I lost 2st and for the first time in years I felt confident, happy and full of energy.

## **An emotional roller coaster**

At 21, I fell pregnant with Tiana and Ella, followed by Evie two years later. They were the best things that had ever happened to me, but life wasn't easy. I found myself raising them on my own, and the emotional ups and downs came with ups and downs for my weight. Then, in 2006, I met Chris. He loved the girls as though they were his own and, at last, I felt settled. Then, when the twins were four, my mental health took a sudden decline. I went back to the doctor and this time I was prescribed antidepressants. They did help for a while, but I'd stop taking them as soon as I felt better, sinking into a low mood again and seeking comfort in food until I went back on the medication.

With each dress size I went up, the more miserable I felt. I stopped going out and never took the girls to the park, to play on our local beach or go swimming. I hated the idea of venturing out in public and became more and more reclusive. Chris was >



# I knew this was my chance to really make a change – I settled on a target weight and I wasn't giving up before I got there



Emily with her daughters (from left) Ella, then Tiana and Evie, and her partner Chris

as loving and patient as he could be. Inevitably, though, I could tell my mood swings and refusals to go out were wearing him down. Then everything finally came to a head on holiday in 2013.

It was meant to be a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Walt Disney World in Florida, but I had never felt so low. I didn't have the energy to go on rides, and refused to have my photo

taken – very different from the magical family holiday I'd imagined. Then, one evening, peering over the side of our hotel balcony to the ground far below, I briefly thought about jumping off it. The impulse really shocked me. When I told Chris, he was at a loss, saying: 'But you have so much to be happy about.' He was right, of course – he and my three girls were my absolute world. Yet that couldn't stop those dark feelings from overwhelming me. I knew then that I needed a better way to manage my mental health, because I never wanted to feel that way again.

This time, alongside a new prescription for antidepressants, my GP referred me for counselling. Talking to a professional made a real difference, and I gradually learnt to rationalise my thoughts. By October 2014, I felt like I'd turned a corner, but there was still something I felt really unhappy about – my weight. When my best friend, Cerys, asked me to go out for her birthday, I felt so uncomfortable in leggings and a size-24 flowy black top that I wanted the ground to swallow me up. 'Let's take a photo!' Cerys said. Seeing my face drop, she put her arms around me: 'Come on, it is my birthday.' Reluctantly, I said, 'OK, but this is the last photo of me, ever, at this size.'

In January 2015, I went back to my Slimming World group. I was nervous about returning, but when I walked in my Consultant, Justine, gave

me such a warm welcome that my fears began to ease. Stepping onto the scales and finding I weighed 18st 2½lbs, I took a deep breath... I knew this was my chance to really make a change. 'Do you know what you'd like to set your target as?' Justine asked. 'Anything but this,' I said. She urged me to think about my dream weight, and I settled on a target of 10st 7lbs – telling myself this time I wouldn't give up before I got there.

And it did feel different. Although I wasn't ready to believe in myself quite yet, I knew this mattered more than ever before. I was bigger than I'd ever been, and I felt desperate. If it didn't work this time, did that mean weight loss surgery would be my only option? And what if even that didn't work? The fear that my children might have to grow up without their mum had become my motivation, and I was determined that I'd involve the whole family in my healthier lifestyle. I was going to give it my all.

## Keeping it simple

I hadn't cooked from scratch for years, so to ease myself in I chose some simple Food Optimising meals that were quick to make. That week I cooked jacket spuds with home-made coleslaw, lean ham and mushroom omelettes, and roast skinless chicken with lots of vegetables. And each morning I looked at myself in the mirror and said: 'You can do this today.'

In my first week I lost 5½lbs, then the same again the following week. I also started to get a bit more adventurous with my cooking, to make sure I didn't get bored of the same meals every day. Every time I went shopping, I bought one new jar of herbs and one new spice, using them in all sorts of recipes, from butternut squash soup to home-made burgers with Slimming World chips, which the girls loved. Each time I got a half-stone award, I treated myself to a charm for my Pandora bracelet – a growing, permanent reminder of how far I'd come.

My self-esteem was gradually rising as my weight was going down. Rather than getting Chris to do the school run, I started going myself – no longer feeling too self-conscious to be seen at the edge of the playground. Then, to get in some Body Magic, I started walking the dog, going a little further every day until I was walking for two hours. When a member at my group suggested trying a couch-to-5K running challenge, despite not being convinced I'd manage it, I decided to give it a go. Nine weeks later I was running the full 5K – and buzzing!

By June 2016, I'd reached my target of 10st 7lbs and felt amazing. So when my mood suddenly dropped again, I couldn't work out what was going on. At group, I confided in the other >

## How are you feeling?

Having good mental health can improve our relationships, our sleep, and how we feel about ourselves, so it's important to check in regularly on how we feel inside. One in four of us will experience a mental health problem, so whether you've been diagnosed with a condition, or you feel you're struggling to cope at the moment, recognising how you're feeling and finding the right support can really help. If you're concerned about any aspect of your mental health, talk to your GP, or visit [slimmingworld.co.uk/mentalhealth](http://slimmingworld.co.uk/mentalhealth) for more information.



I became  
withdrawn  
and often  
refused  
to go out







I thought weight loss surgery might be my only option



## By managing my mental health as well as losing weight, I feel as if two burdens have been lifted from me

with them every step of the way. Even though I was now a Consultant, I still learnt new things from my members. Going to a restaurant had always been a trigger for me to throw caution to the wind. Then, one day, a member in my group was chatting about how she'd overcome the same issue. 'It's all about choices,' she said. 'I look at the whole menu and choose one thing I'd really like to use my Syns on. Then everything else I choose is on plan and I don't feel I'm missing out.' The next time I went out for dinner, the tomato bruschetta was jumping out at me. I counted it in my Syns, then chose a lean meat and veg main. The next week, I'd still lost 3lbs and I'd enjoyed a lovely meal out!

### Believing in myself

With my new target now in sight, I knew what I had to do. Talking to my members each week about how much I believed in them had made me realise something – I needed to have that same unshakeable faith in myself. Feeling fired up, I decided to really go for it, sticking to the plan 100 per cent, and a month after opening my first group, I reached my final target weight.

When lockdown began in March 2020, I worried it could start to affect my weight loss. To motivate myself, I decided to create new recipes with whatever was in the shops, and I made sure I went for a walk every day, too – getting a fitness tracker for my birthday to encourage me to do more steps.

The walk I enjoyed most of all, though, was the one back into group in summer to see all my members in person again. We'd made sure all the coronavirus precautions were in place, following government guidelines to ensure everyone was safe. And as each group session began, my excitement levels soared. I felt like a helium balloon after you let go of the string!

It's hard to put into words how different life feels now. The person I used to be, the one who had a difficult relationship with food, and even experienced suicidal thoughts, seems very far away. Since reaching target, I've never been on so many shopping trips with my daughters, or family visits to theme parks. But some of my favourite times are when we just spend time all together. Being with my family is the thing I love the most in the world, and I'm truly treasuring it. ●

#### EMILY WEARS

p10: Dress, Forever Unique. Boots, New Look. Earrings, Jon Richard. Rings, Lovisa

p13: Top, Quiz. Skirt, Dorothy Perkins. Shoes and ring, both ASOS. Earrings, Accessorize. Bag, Sole Bliss

Above: Jacket and top, both Marks & Spencer. Jeans, River Island. Shoes, Sole Bliss. Bag and rings, all New Look

members, who by then felt like my extended family. On the nights I didn't feel like I could say much, they were always there with hugs and words of comfort. With their encouragement, I went back to the doctor and was diagnosed with borderline personality disorder; a condition that can affect how you think, feel and interact with people. The more I learnt about it, the more it helped me manage my mental health ups and downs. Now, along with having lost weight, I felt as if a second burden had been lifted from me and, over time, I gradually came off the antidepressants altogether.

I realised I wanted to help other people find the same self-worth I'd gained, and decided to train to become a Slimming World Consultant. In September 2018, I welcomed my very first new members, explaining I knew exactly how daunting it can feel. At the same time, I set myself a new target of 9st 12lbs, promising my group I would be there



NEW RECIPE

Same deliciousness  
with 30% less sugar\*  
Wild?



HAVE WHAT  
YOU CRAVE

FIBRE  
**One**  
90  
CALORIE



\*vs previous recipe





HANDY TO HAVE  
IN THE FREEZER

GLUTEN  
FREE

AVAILABLE IN THE FREEZER IN  
MORRISONS & ICELAND.



BRITISH POTATOES. BAKED IN YORKSHIRE. FROZEN IN TIME.



# How to set your dream target

Illustration: Liz Kay



\*STUDY OF SLIMMING WORLD MEMBERS LED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM, PUBLISHED IN THE JOURNAL OF HUMAN NUTRITION AND DIETETICS. FOR ADVICE ON CHOOSING A TARGET WITHIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT RANGE, SEE THE BE TOGETHER AT YOUR GROUP BOOK IN YOUR SLIMMING WORLD MEMBER PACK



**We made  
'em thin  
so you  
can fill  
'em in**



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# Transform your change mindset

Making a big life change, such as losing weight, is bound to push us out of our comfort zone. Here, with the help of our slimming curve (and space to scribble), we guide you through the stages of change, so you can go with the flow...all the way to your goals!

Words: **Christabel Smith**  
Illustration: **Silvia Stecher**



**W**e all have our little daily habits, from the first cuppa of the morning while we're still half-asleep, through to brushing our teeth and getting into bed. And taking comfort in our routine is part of what makes us human – so it's completely natural to feel thrown off course by anything new. Big life changes such as a new baby, a house move or starting retirement can pull us out of our familiar routines and affect us much more than we were expecting – and that includes our weight loss.

The coronavirus pandemic is a really clear example of how a big change can knock us sideways. The spring lockdown threw most of our familiar routines out of the window, and the uncertainty and worry meant many of us found ourselves seeking comfort in food or alcohol, or deciding to put weight loss on hold altogether.

While it may have felt an impossible time to stay on plan to begin with, it's likely that in time you realised it was about getting your head around changes, picking yourself up again, and finding new daily routines. Like Ellen Poole-Tonkinson, 34, who's lost 3st 8lbs at Carole Greensill's group in the West Midlands. 'Being at home with my two school-age kids, I found myself reaching for little extras, such as

another slice of bread while I was making our lunchtime sandwiches. My weight started to creep up and I worried about being drawn back into my old pattern of emotional eating. Then, I saw Slimming World's #BodyMagicMoments campaign online and something clicked for me about getting more active. I began walking once a week, enjoying it so much I started going every night, and was soon doing exercise videos at home, too. As I felt better, I found that I wanted to be 100 per cent on plan again. I lost over a stone during the first lockdown, and felt positive and energetic. It meant I was in a much better frame of mind when we locked down again.'

Understanding how you react to change can be a powerful tool for losing

weight. And since weight loss itself can be life changing, it can bring out strong emotions, too. It's reassuring to know there's a reason you're feeling the way you do, and there's a light at the end of the tunnel. Read on to find out more about how to move through change and come out very much on top!

## The emotional shift

Every weight loss journey begins with changes – such as how you cook and shop for food – that push you outside your comfort zone. It might mean changing your usual coffee-shop order, or going for a midday walk to kick-start your Body Magic instead of catching some TV if you're working from home. It could mean batch cooking dinners at weekends if your weeknights are super busy, and staying to group each week to benefit from the support of IMAGE Therapy. Although they're all positive changes that will help you towards your dream weight and beyond, they can still take you through the same emotional process as any sort of change, and there might be a part of you that subconsciously kicks against it! >



# The slimming curve

Our change curve diagram\* across these two pages is a way to pin down the different ways change affects your emotions. Decide which stage resonates most with how you're feeling right now, then pick up a pen... There are no right or wrong answers – just prompts to do a little thinking and planning around what's meaningful to you. Because, believe it or not, you already have what it takes to move along the curve to where you really want to be.



*This is really happening!*

## Shock/Excitement

Some people have a dramatic light-bulb moment that spurs them to lose weight, such as not being able to find trousers that fit, or struggling to do up a seat belt. Some of us come to it more gradually – either way, getting to the point where we make a commitment to slim is a big deal! Deciding to make a life change is inevitably pretty emotional – a bit of a shock, really – and it can hit us in different ways. Whether you feel excited, daunted or, more usually, a bit of both, one thing is certain – you're about to do something amazing!

### Over to you:

One way to get off to a flying start is to list all your reasons for wanting to slim, explains psychologist and author Dr Linda Papadopoulos. 'Everyone is different. Is it a short-term ambition, such as fitting into that dress for your wedding? Or do you want to be active in your grandchildren's lives?' You might have lots of little reasons, or one big one!

**I want to slim because:**

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*Who wants to change anyway?*

## Rebellion

You've made a commitment to yourself, joined group to ensure your success, and started losing weight. Then your inner rebel pops up and says: 'All this change is too hard!' It tries to pull you back into your comfort zone – perhaps by finding ways to play the system, such as telling you certain Syns 'don't count', or that you know what you're doing now, so why bother measuring out those Healthy Extras?

### Over to you:

Consultant Chris Knowles, who runs Slimming World groups in West Sussex and Surrey, says: 'It's normal to feel like this – everybody does it! Note down your inner rebel's little tricks, and to help you feel less like rebelling, think up corresponding ways to make staying on plan easier. Would it help to buy a pub-style wine glass with measures on, choose grab-and-go Healthy Extras that don't need weighing, or stock up on some ready-to-cook frozen veg?'

**What habits have started creeping in and are slowing down my weight loss?**

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**How can I make staying on track easier for me?**

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## Frustration

If the scales don't move, especially when you expected a good weigh-in, it can knock your slimming confidence. Chris Knowles says: 'Understand why it happened, then try not to dwell on it. Don't look back, face forwards instead.'

### Over to you:

Setting yourself up for a good week will help blow away the cobwebs and give you back your slimming mojo. Take a piece of paper and plan yourself a tempting week of Food Optimising breakfasts, lunches, dinners, snacks and treats. Or, save planning time with our ready-to-go eating plan on page 32.



*It's not working*

## Low point

Continuing to feel stuck with your weight loss can leave your motivation at rock bottom. That's when it matters more than ever that you treat yourself with love and respect. 'Being harsh doesn't help, so be kind to yourself,' says Dr Papadopoulos. Remember, this feeling won't last – it's just the point before you rise back up with your motivation firing.

### Over to you:

This is when group support is everything, says Chris Knowles. 'One of my members was on the verge of giving up, when other members' ideas and positive comments boosted her confidence. She's back on track, and making great progress!' Now take a piece of paper, and imagine you're writing to a friend who's about to abandon their weight loss plans. What can you say to help them see their dream is in reach?



*I'm never going to reach target*



## Acceptance

Once you come to accept that you'll get the results you want through long-term healthy habits, the path ahead becomes much clearer. Consultant Aishling Harbott, with groups in County Dublin, says many of her members have found that although lockdowns are hard, they've got into new patterns that actually made life easier. 'Some of my members got really good at meal planning in order to spend less time in the supermarket, and found it helped them to slim. Those who were juggling homeschooling have become batch-cooking experts, discovering that a couple of hours of food prep on a Sunday gives them back so much time in the week!'

*This is starting to click now!*

### Over to you:

'Change happens when you find your rhythm,' says Dr Papadopoulos. Jot down five things you've tried recently that worked for you, or things you've heard at group and you know would fit around your day.

Could they become a regular part of your own healthier lifestyle? 'It might be walking the school run instead of driving, or cooking a Food Optimising recipe instead of ordering a takeaway,' she says. 'A few mini ambitions soon add up to big progress.'

### My mini ambitions are:

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_

*I'm leaping over my weight loss hurdles*

## Getting creative

As you get to know yourself and your habits better, you'll start spotting the things that could knock you off track from a mile away! Again, this is a time when your group will help you come up with some brilliant ideas to clear those obstacles. 'With this support, you can always find solutions that work,' says Aishling Harbott. 'If someone shares they can't resist a slice of cake mid-afternoon, others in group will give them lots of ideas for lower Syn alternatives that hit the sweet spot.'

### Over to you:

Chris Knowles suggests thinking outside of the box if you've got hurdles you know are slowing your weight loss. 'One member in my group who'd stopped going into the office during lockdown found themselves visiting the fridge more often. Now they've moved their computer so they're further away from the kitchen – out of sight, out of mind!' Pick any three hurdles you regularly come across, and see if you can come up with a solution for each that fits your lifestyle. If you get stuck, ask your Consultant and group for help!

**Hurdle 1** \_\_\_\_\_

**What I could do:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hurdle 2** \_\_\_\_\_

**What I could do:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hurdle 3** \_\_\_\_\_

**What I could do:** \_\_\_\_\_

*I'm loving my healthier life*

## Moving on

Often, making healthy living a lifestyle happens long before you get to target – in fact, it's what gets you to target! Aishling Harbott says that members who are really loving healthy eating and being active are a fantastic inspiration for other group members. 'They can share their valuable expertise, and it's a great reminder of how far they've come since joining, too.'

### Over to you:

Take a moment to jot down below how you feel when you have a fantastic day – where you've eaten delicious, healthy meals, and fitted in some activity. Try to sum up that sense of pride and achievement! You can move backwards or forwards along the change curve, or find yourself landing at any point, so this uplifting note to self will be there for you, ready, whenever you need a motivation boost. It could be a sentence or two, or just a few words – it's up to you!

### How I feel after a great day on plan:

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*Wherever you are on your curve right now, there may still be things on your mind. Turn the page for a great way to start thinking around what you can and can't control >*



# The magic circles

Another way to find your balance when you feel out of control is to separate what you *can* change from what you can't. 'You can't control what's in the news,' says Aishling Harbott, 'but you can move your focus onto the habits that will help you to lose, say, five to 10 per cent of your body weight. This is enough to start benefiting your health, and help you towards achieving your target weight.' While the worries may not disappear, putting energy directly towards what you can do is empowering – lifting your self-esteem and your confidence in your abilities.



## What's in your circles?

With the outer part of the circle in your mind, list five things you currently feel you can't influence about your weight loss journey\*\*. Now, step back and imagine you're giving some advice to a good friend rather than yourself – and see if there's a solution you might have been missing... For example:

**If you wrote:** 'I can't stop people giving me foodie gifts, like birthday chocolates!'

**You could add:** 'I can plan them into my Syns and then they'll last longer, too. And I can always share them with my family.'

**If you wrote:** 'I can't go for a walk after work as it's too dark, and it's often raining.'

**You could add:** 'I can walk during my lunch break when it's light, or do an online workout at home if it's wet.'

**1 I can't:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I can:** \_\_\_\_\_

**2 I can't:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I can:** \_\_\_\_\_

**3 I can't:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I can:** \_\_\_\_\_

**4 I can't:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I can:** \_\_\_\_\_

**5 I can't:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I can:** \_\_\_\_\_

You might find all five things can be moved into the inner circle. And if not? Then that's fine, they stay in the outer circle. Letting go of responsibility for the things you can't change and focusing on the 'I can' is liberating, and it does come with

practice. In time, you might find this becomes second nature, forming the foundation of a calmer and more confident mindset.

## Changing the future

We never really know what's around the corner, so becoming resilient to change could help not just with losing weight, but with everything from a relationship break-up or a health concern to taking a course, moving house, or starting a new job.

In fact, one unexpected side effect of embracing change on your weight loss journey is that you're ready to grasp any opportunities that come your way, as you won't feel stuck within your comfort zone. Perhaps that's one of the reasons why many Slimming World target members find they go on to switch jobs, take up new hobbies or give up smoking. Feeling in charge of your destiny is exciting and empowering, and can also be comforting during such a time of major change for us all. You're about to turn a corner to a more confident, healthy you! ●



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All our profits  
go to good causes



# Moreish in Macaroni



Squeeze  
in more  
flavour



# Meg's made it happen!

As her weight crept up, her confidence sank lower...until a shift in thinking turned everything around. Read how Meg Harris overcame her weight loss hurdles and went on to lose over 4st

**My boyfriend's smiling face appeared on the screen of my phone and immediately I felt my spirits lift.**

As for everyone else during the spring lockdown, being separated from loved ones was the hardest part – and I lived for video calls with Jake, my boyfriend of five years. I was living at home with my mum and dad, and although Jake didn't live far away, we had to get used to being apart. The days and weeks had started to drag, and it was getting to me. 'I really miss you,' I sighed, 'this already feels like it's been going on forever.' Jake nodded and said, 'It's OK, we'll be back together soon.' I smiled to myself as I ended the call. 'I wonder what you'll think when you do see me,' I thought. What Jake didn't realise was that some changes had been taking place in those months that we'd been apart, and he was in for a little surprise...

**Jake and I met at college, then in 2016 we had to be apart for the first time since we'd started going out together as we went to different universities.** I headed off to Liverpool to study psychology and Jake went to Derby. The two cities

were close enough that we could visit each other every two weeks, while throwing ourselves into student life when we weren't together.

**As it was so cheap to make, large platefuls of pasta with high Syn supermarket sauces became my staple in between lectures and nights out, and Chinese takeaways on the way home from the pubs and clubs rounded off my evenings.** Happy-hour cocktails were my favourite, especially porn star martinis – a sweet, passion fruit-flavoured concoction with a side of Prosecco. To be fair, I could happily enjoy just about anything on the many cocktail menus of Liverpool, and while I noticed my weight creeping up, it didn't seem like a big deal – I was having too much fun.

## Meet Meg

**Meg Harris, 22, is a sales administrator and lives in Catshill, Worcestershire, with her mum, dad and sister**

**Height: 5ft 6ins**

**Starting weight: 14st 3lbs**

**Weight now: 9st 12½lbs**

**WEIGHT LOST:  
4st 4½lbs**

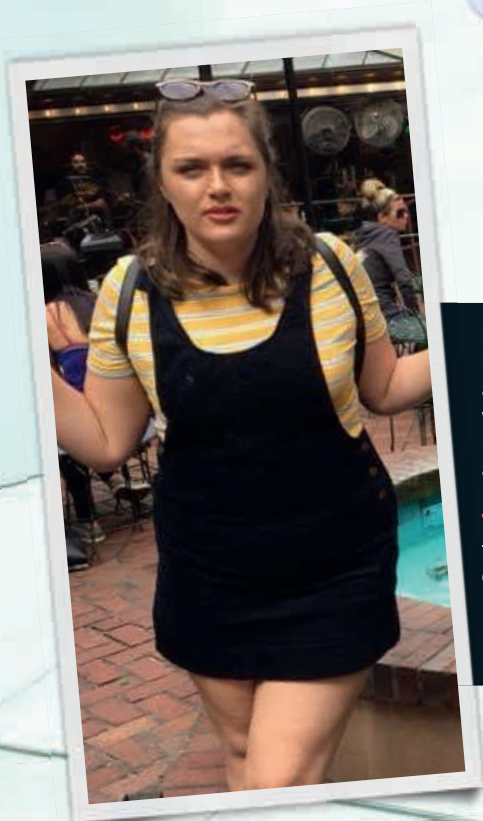
*Meg is a target member of Tracey Gardner's Slimming World group in Catshill*

**Sometimes, there'd be a moment when I suddenly wouldn't feel OK about my increasing size.** Turning from the mirror to Jake one evening in my room at uni, I sighed and waved a despairing hand at my dress. 'I can't even fasten this one up any more,' I said. As ever, Jake said he loved the way I looked, and while his reassurances were good to hear, I'd started feeling less and less happy about getting dressed up to go out.

**Then, in my first summer break from university, I pulled out the shorts, tops and dresses that had looked good on me the previous year, only to find that nothing fitted.** Having a drink in a beer garden with my mum, Ellie, I grumbled about my summer wardrobe – that basically,

I didn't have one – and we started talking about my weight. 'I'm thinking of joining Slimming World,' she said. 'Why don't you come with me?' It seemed well worth a try, and I liked the idea of going back >





**NOW** I feel like my new attitude will help me achieve anything

**THEN** When things got on top of me food was my coping mechanism





**NOW** I get a buzz out of feeling fit and healthy

**THEN** The social side of uni was fun, but the cocktails and takeaways all added up



to Liverpool at the end of the summer feeling confident again.

**In July 2017, Mum and I joined the group in our village, and I went home the first night thinking that, actually, it sounded like a bit too much food – surely I couldn't eat all that and lose weight?**

Not believing it, I only semi-followed the plan, restricting myself to salads rather than enjoying all the other Free Food I was being told about in group. All the same, I lost 12lbs over the summer and I did feel better about myself when I went back to start my second year.

**That's when things started to go off track – because I hadn't been making the most of Food Optimising, I didn't have any warming, hearty meals that would see me through autumn.** I'd also decided that I'd just weigh myself instead of finding a new group in Liverpool. I soon slipped back into the previous term's routine of takeaways and cocktails, and it wasn't long before I was putting the pounds back on again. The stresses of trying to do well on my course were starting to get on top of me, and my coping mechanism was to comfort myself with food. And as my weight crept up further, my mood became lower.

**When I went to see my GP for a general check-up, part of the process was to get weighed – and that was quite a shock.** In my head I was around 11st, but the scales told a different story. At 13st, I'd not only regained the weight I'd lost over the summer, I'd added on a further stone, too.

**In December 2017, I made the difficult decision to leave my course and return home to look for a job.** For four months I couldn't find work, and my weight was still climbing steadily as I ate to try to feel better. Eventually, I was delighted to be offered a role as a sales administrator with a lighting manufacturer. I enjoyed the job, but I did find sitting at a desk all day meant I often turned to snacks.

**As my 21st birthday approached in February 2019, I made a real effort to stay positive and embrace my curvy shape.** For my party I deliberately chose an outfit that would show my friends and family that I was feeling fabulous. The stripy black mesh trousers and lacy top definitely signalled 'I'm brimming with confidence', but inside I knew I was putting on a front. I loved the celebrations – I had great fun with all my friends and family – then the next day, once the excitement was over, I felt quite low. Scrolling

***When I started to believe I really could enjoy my food, that's when weight loss truly clicked for me***

through my phone I tried to pick out the best pictures to post on Instagram and Facebook to show how fantastic the party had been...but I couldn't find a single one I liked, or wanted my friends to see.

**Mum could see the way I was feeling and suggested we go back to Slimming World together.** It was June when we eventually walked back through those doors and I already knew that this time it was going to be different.

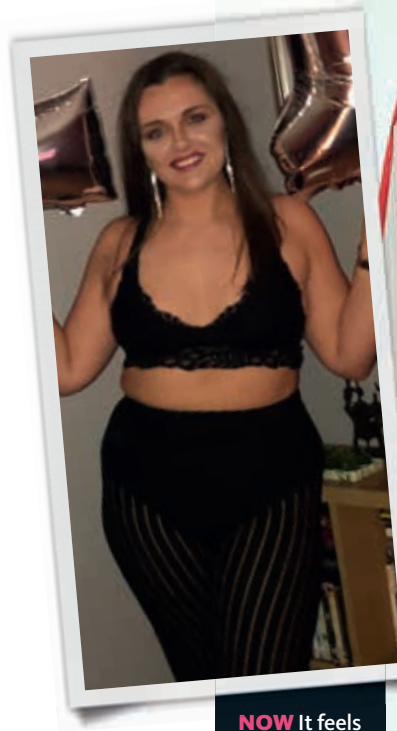
**I'd gained over a stone since that doctor's appointment, and although at 14st 3lbs I was heavier than I'd ever been, I felt like I could tackle it.** This time, I listened intently to the new-member talk and before I left to go home, I told my new Consultant, Tracey, 'I'm really going to get the most out of the plan this time!'

**When I'd first joined, even though I knew I could eat pasta – one of my favourite things – I'd still avoided it thinking it was too good to be true.** Tracey explained again that I hadn't needed to deny myself. Dried pasta was a Free Food, so I could eat as much as I liked. She said if I ate things I enjoyed and that satisfied my hunger, I'd be much less likely to want to give up. It made a lot of sense and I promised myself I'd follow Food Optimising to the letter. This time, rather than just eating salads, I took a close look at all the food I could have and started cooking my own meals. I'd always loved my dad's legendary spaghetti bolognese, so discovering that I could make a Slimming World version with just a few simple changes was quite a moment!

**Putting all my faith in the plan and really enjoying my food was the thing that turned everything around for me.** I was never hungry or bored, I was eating my favourite foods and I was steadily losing weight. Then, in March 2020, my heart sank as the national lockdown was announced. Along with the many other worries that it brought for me and my family, I wondered if it would undo all my progress. I'd lost 2½st by now, but I still had more to go to get to target.

**Furloughed from my job, I could easily have spiralled back into comforting myself with food, so I was surprised to find that I didn't feel the urge as much as I thought.** Speaking with Jake I said, 'I'm going to treat every day as though I'm getting up for work.' Each morning, I'd get up at 8am and head out on a 5K power walk for my daily exercise. Then when the rules relaxed a bit and unlimited outdoor exercise was allowed, I started doing another 5K walk with >





**NOW** It feels great to be happy in my own skin

**THEN** I did my best to pretend I felt good about my shape



**MEGAN WEARS**

p25: Dress, Goddiva. Shoes, New Look. Earrings, Accessorize

p26: Top and bracelet, both ASOS. Jeans, New Look. Earrings, Jon Richard

Left: Jumpsuit, Goddiva. Shoes, New Look. Earrings, Lovisa. Necklace, Accessorize. Bracelet, Jon Richard

my sister Celine when she came home from work. I started getting creative with Instagram, posting pictures of my Food Optimising breakfasts, lunches and dinners, with updates on how my weight loss journey was going. As I started picking up more followers, I got some lovely messages. And I loved sharing my experiences with people who were struggling with their weight and finding it inspiring that I was carrying on through that difficult time.

**In July, after more than three months without seeing Jake – the longest it had ever been – I could feel butterflies in my tummy as I waited for the door to open.** The separation had been hard to bear at times, and now it was coming to an end. As well as being thrilled to see him, I'd lost a further 1st 8½lbs since he'd last seen me just before lockdown and I hoped he'd notice how different I looked.

**Finally, as Jake walked into the house and stood in the hallway staring at me with his mouth wide open, I blinked back the tears.** 'You look absolutely amazing,' he said. That afternoon I kept catching him staring at me and eventually burst out laughing. 'You're making me feel as though I've got something on my face!' Jake grinned in response and told me I looked incredible for the umpteenth time that

day. His compliments meant being reunited was even better than I'd imagined!

**Seeing Jake had been such a boost, so when I had my biggest ever weekly gain of 3½lbs, instead of throwing me off course it only spurred me on.** I planned in my meals and Syns, having learnt that feeling deprived wasn't a sustainable way to live. I'd have a bag of Skips (4½ Syns) mid-afternoon, and a low Syn chocolate bar after my evening meal with a cuppa. I also went out for a walk every day no matter what – and four weeks later I got to my target weight.

**Recently, Jake and I were out on a run when I sped up a hill forcing him to up his pace to keep up with me.** My lockdown walking had steadily progressed to running, and Jake and I have now taken to using part of our weekends to go out on an extended run. It's a great way to spend time together, and a bigger buzz than a porn star martini!

**Now Jake and I are closer than ever, and I know we'll keep smiling through whatever life throws at us.** Finding a new mindset around weight loss has changed my whole outlook on life, and being happy in my own skin has filled me with energy and positivity – I love the way it feels. ●



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\*Using 100g plain boiled potatoes (74kcal) oven roasted with 15 sprays of Frylight (15kcal) = 89kcal vs. 100g plain boiled potatoes oven roasted in oil = 161kcal. Source: McCance & Widdowson Composition of Foods 7th edition.



# UNIQUELY THIN AND CRISPY

## FINNISH CRISPBREAD



HIGH  
FIBRE

100%  
WHOLE  
GRAIN

20 KCAL  
PER SLICE



# ‘Our weight loss secret weapon’

Here’s why staying to group with people who care and share your goals could make all the difference to your weight loss

Slimming World groups are where the magic happens and, whether your group is happening in the real world or virtually, it’s always the very best place to get and share support. You’ll pick up invaluable advice, you’ll be inspired (especially if you’re having a tough week), and you’ll inspire other members when you’re ‘on it’ and can’t wait to share that feeling. No wonder you’re more likely to succeed when you’re part of a group! These members and some of the Slimming World team explain why there’s nowhere like it...



**Jacqueline Goodwin**  
is Slimming World’s  
Training and  
Development Manager

‘Slimming World groups are like being part of a family – everyone’s in it together. The clapping, the celebrating, the feeling chuffed to bits for each other, it makes you realise you’ve got all these people genuinely behind you, who want you to be successful. And that means you start to believe in yourself.’



**Target member Rachel Smith, 36, from Wiltshire**  
has lost 4st 11lbs

‘Stepping onto the scales at group keeps me on track in a way that weighing myself at home never could. It’s too easy to tell yourself that your own scales must be inaccurate, even if deep down you know exactly why they’re saying what you don’t want them to! That’s why I always stay to group, too – no matter what the scales say. I know I’ll get amazing support and lots of ideas, and sometimes I’ll discover I’ve been eating something that I thought was on plan, but is actually slowing down my weight loss. During lockdown I really missed seeing everyone in person, and I couldn’t wait for the moment I was able to be back with my friends again... and back on those scales!’



**Slimming World member Alisha Byers, 21, from West Yorkshire**  
has lost 4st 7lbs

‘I love hearing what meals other members are planning and making – it’s one of the best things about staying to group. I come home with so many different ideas for cooking with my favourite ingredients. I’ve also stuck all my half-stone certificates from group on the wall, to keep me motivated and remind me how far I’ve come!’



**Brian King, 63, from Greater Manchester**  
has lost 17st 9lbs

‘My Consultant, Gail Taylor, seems to have a sixth sense when it comes to making sure any little gains don’t become a downward trend. I’m sure it helps that, like all Consultants, she’s been in my shoes and knows just how I’m feeling.’



**Casey Cawthra is a Slimming World District Manager**  
in East and North Yorkshire

‘A Slimming World group is a place where there’s no judgement and no criticism, ever. If you stay to group, you’ll leave with a personalised plan for the week ahead, from practical everyday strategies to tips on overcoming your personal danger zones. And if you’re not sure what those are, we have the motivational tools to help you open up and be honest with yourself about anything that might be getting in your way.’





**'I lost  
6lbs in one  
week!'**

### Taste tester

Dawn Marinopoulos, 35, got fab results by following this plan. A clinic nurse manager and Slimming World Consultant, Dawn attends Jan Winters' group in Edmonton, London, and runs her own group in Wood Green, London

# The new you starts now

Fire up your 2021 reboot with our deliciously filling meals

#### ✓ **Fill up on Free Food®**

All our meals are based on Slimming World Free Food – nutritious, everyday foods that fill you up for fewer calories, meaning they're great for weight loss! Free Food includes lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, pasta, rice, potatoes, pulses, fruit, veg and more. And you can eat these foods freely, making them perfect for satisfying the biggest of appetites. Some Free Foods have the extra bonus of being Speed Food – fruit and veg that are super-low in calories and keep you slimming beautifully. For the best results, always reach for Speed Food first in between

meals and include at least a third of a plate of Speed Food at every meal, where it makes sense.

#### ✓ **Add in Healthy Extras®**

To help provide a good balance of nutrients, enjoy two measured portions of milk or cheese each day – your Healthy Extra 'a' choices. Options include 350ml skimmed milk or 250ml semi-skimmed milk; 400ml plain and unsweetened almond or soya drink, with added calcium; 40g reduced-fat or 30g full-fat hard cheese, which can be eaten as part of a meal or snack. Also add in one portion of wholemeal bread or breakfast cereal each

day, your Healthy Extra 'b' choice. To keep things simple, we've built your Healthy Extra 'b' choice into the menu plan each day.

#### ✓ **Choose your Syns®**

Foods and drinks that pose a risk to your weight loss – those high in fat or sugar, as well as alcohol – can be enjoyed as carefully counted Syns. We recommend you plan between 5 and 15 Syns into your day (see the bottom of the next page for some ideas).

#### ✓ **Make simple swaps**

To help protect your weight loss, choose the leanest meats

and trim off any visible fat – cut the white bits off bacon and remove skin from poultry. Dry-fry meat, sauté veg in water, and use low-calorie cooking spray rather than fat or oil. Switch sugar for sweetener, and swap cream and crème fraîche for fat-free natural yogurt or plain quark.

**So that's Food Optimising® in a nutshell.** You'll find all you need to know about Free Food, Healthy Extras and Syns in your Food Optimising book, available from group, or to Slimming World Online members (as part of the Gold package or through the eshop). Ready? Let's get started...

# Your seven-day guide at a glance

From easy midweek meals to something special at the weekend – we've done the planning, so you don't have to...

	BREAKFASTS	LUNCHES	DINNERS
Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Berry bowl:</b> pour milk from your Healthy Extra 'a' allowance over 2 wholemeal biscuits (a Healthy Extra 'b'), such as Weetabix, then top with fresh or defrosted frozen mixed berries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Med-veg frittata:</b> fry sliced pepper, red onion and courgette in low-calorie cooking spray until softened, then add 2-3 lightly beaten eggs. Cook until the bottom has set, then finish under the grill and top with fresh basil. Serve with a mixed salad dressed with fat-free vinaigrette</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Sausage, mushroom &amp; broccoli carbonara,</b> recipe p34 <span>Free</span></li> </ul>
Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Tropical overnight oats:</b> the night before, layer 40g plain porridge oats (a Healthy Extra 'b') with fat-free natural yogurt and chopped fresh pineapple. Cover and chill overnight. Stir and top with more fresh pineapple in the morning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Cheese &amp; onion potato salad:</b> mix 40g finely diced reduced-fat Cheddar (a Healthy Extra 'a') with 2 finely sliced spring onions and 1 level tbsp extra-light mayonnaise (1 Syn). Make up a mixed salad of lettuce leaves, chopped cucumber and tomato, and halved canned potatoes, then top with the cheese mixture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Chicken &amp; chips with tomato salsa,</b> recipe p34 <span>Free</span></li> </ul>
Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Veggie scramble:</b> fry finely chopped onion, spinach and red pepper in low-calorie cooking spray until softened. Pour in 2 lightly beaten eggs, season and stir until cooked through and scrambled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Tuna &amp; cucumber sandwich:</b> mix drained canned tuna in spring water with a little fat-free natural fromage frais, lemon juice and a twist of black pepper. Fill 2 slices wholemeal bread from a small 400g loaf (a Healthy Extra 'b') with the tuna mixture and sliced cucumber</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Piled-high pizza potato skins,</b> recipe p35 <b>6 Syns</b> <i>Deduct 6 Syns if using the reduced-fat mozzarella</i></li> </ul>
Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Bircher muesli:</b> the night before, mix 40g plain porridge oats (a Healthy Extra 'b') with fat-free natural yogurt, chopped apple and a pinch of ground cinnamon. Cover and chill overnight. Stir and top with fresh or defrosted frozen berries in the morning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Chicken couscous:</b> make up plain dried couscous according to the pack instructions (without butter or oil). Stir in chopped boiled mangetout and green beans, shredded cooked skinless chicken, fresh chopped chives, lemon juice and a pinch of smoked paprika</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Fish pie with celeriac &amp; butter bean mash,</b> recipe p35 <b>1 Syn</b></li> </ul>
Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Egg bap:</b> fry an egg in low-calorie cooking spray until cooked through. Split a 60g wholemeal roll (a Healthy Extra 'b') and fill with the egg, and lots of sliced tomato</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Jacket with baked beans:</b> cook a baking potato until soft. Heat baked beans until piping hot, add halved cherry tomatoes, and pile into the split potato. Top with 40g grated reduced-fat Cheddar (a Healthy Extra 'a'), if you like, and serve with a mixed salad dressed with fat-free vinaigrette</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Beef in black bean sauce,</b> recipe p36 <b>2 Syns</b></li> </ul>
Saturday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Mushrooms on toast:</b> fry lots of sliced mushrooms with a little dried thyme in low-calorie cooking spray until tender. Tip onto 2 slices wholemeal toast from a small 400g loaf (a Healthy Extra 'b'). Top with fat-free natural fromage frais mixed with chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Smoked salmon pasta salad:</b> mix cooked dried pasta with sliced smoked salmon trimmings, spinach, chopped cucumber and halved cherry tomatoes. Stir through fat-free natural fromage frais, lemon juice and a twist of black pepper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Squash &amp; aubergine tagine with couscous,</b> recipe p37 <span>Free</span> <span>V</span></li> </ul>
Sunday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Cooked brekkie:</b> grill back bacon rashers (visible fat removed), large flat mushrooms and halved tomatoes. Heat baked beans until piping hot and fry an egg in low-calorie cooking spray until cooked through</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Soup &amp; a roll:</b> select a frozen Slimming World soup of your choice (from Iceland) and heat through according to the pack instructions. Serve with a 60g wholemeal roll (a Healthy Extra 'b')</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Roast chicken with cheesy potato &amp; parsnip bake,</b> recipe p37 <b>1½ Syns</b></li> </ul>

**SNACKS & TREATS** ● Carrot sticks, FREE ● Lean cooked meats (visible fat removed), FREE ● Melon slices, FREE ● Pickled onions, FREE ● Guacamole, reduced fat, 1 Syn per level tbsp ● Tomato ketchup, 1 Syn per level tbsp ● Chocolate finger, 1½ Syns ● Large poppadom, 2 Syns ● Plain meringue nest, 2½ Syns ● Rum (25ml) and diet cola, 2½ Syns ● Custard cream, 3 Syns ● Plain fairy cake, 4 Syns ● Deglet Nour dates, 4½ Syns for 2 ● Jelly beans, 4½ Syns per 25g ● Baked potato crisps, 5 Syns per 25g ● Salted pretzels, 5 Syns per 25g ● White wine (10.5-12.5% ABV), 5 Syns per 125ml ● Cheese puffs, reduced fat, 5½ Syns per 25g ● Chocolate mini roll, 5½ Syns



**HEARTY  
PASTA  
WINNER**



## Monday

### Sausage, mushroom & broccoli carbonara

#### EVERYDAY EASY

Serves 4

Free

Ready in 45 minutes

6 frozen Slimming World  
Pork Sausages  
(from Iceland)

250g chestnut  
mushrooms, sliced

Low-calorie cooking spray

400g dried linguine

1 large head of broccoli,  
cut into florets,  
stalk chopped

2 large eggs, plus 4 yolks

2 garlic cloves, crushed

Juice of ½ lemon

**1** Lay the sausages and mushrooms on a non-stick baking tray in a single layer, and spray with low-calorie cooking spray. Cook in the oven according to the sausage pack instructions. Chop the sausages into 1cm slices and cover the tray with foil to keep warm.

**2** Cook the linguine according to the pack instructions, adding the broccoli to the pan for the last 3 minutes of cooking time. Meanwhile, mix the eggs, yolks, garlic and lemon juice in a large mixing bowl, and season well.

**3** When the pasta has cooked for 6 minutes, remove a ladleful of water and leave it to stand for 4-5 minutes. Gradually add the water to the egg mixture, stirring continuously to prevent the eggs from scrambling.

**4** Add the drained linguine and broccoli to the egg mixture with the sausages and mushrooms, and mix well to coat the pasta. The heat from the pasta will cook the eggs. Divide between 4 bowls and top with a twist of black pepper.

**TWIST ON  
A CLASSIC**



## Tuesday

### Chicken & chips with tomato salsa

#### SUPER SIMPLE

Serves 4

Free

Ready in 1 hour

4 chicken legs, skin and  
visible fat removed

1kg floury potatoes, such  
as Maris Piper or King  
Edward, cut into chips

Low-calorie cooking spray

2 tsp cumin seeds

1 red onion, finely chopped

6 medium tomatoes,  
finely chopped

2 tsp red wine vinegar

10g fresh flat-leaf parsley,  
finely chopped

1 large head of broccoli,  
cut into florets

**1** Preheat your oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6. Cut 3-4 slits in each chicken leg, then lay them on a large, non-stick baking tray. Add the chips to the tray in a single layer around the chicken and spray with low-calorie cooking spray – you may need 2 trays. Scatter the cumin seeds over the chicken.

**2** Roast for 40 minutes, or until golden and the juices run clear when a skewer is inserted into the thickest part of the chicken. Turn the chips halfway through the cooking time, and swap the trays over after 20 minutes, if necessary.

**3** Meanwhile, for the salsa, mix together the onion, tomatoes, vinegar and parsley, and season well. Just before the chicken and chips are ready, boil the broccoli for 2-3 minutes, then drain.

**4** Spoon the salsa over the chicken legs, leaving any leftover on the side. Divide the chicken and chips between 4 plates, and serve with the broccoli and remaining salsa, if you have some.



## Wednesday

### Piled-high pizza potato skins

#### EVERYDAY EASY

**Serves 4**

**Syns per serving 6**

*Deduct 6 Syns if using the reduced-fat mozzarella as a Healthy Extra*

**Ready in 1 hour 45 minutes**

**4 large baking potatoes**

**6 back bacon rashers, visible fat removed**

**2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes**

**2 tsp dried oregano**

**3 garlic cloves, crushed**

**2 x 198g cans sweetcorn, drained and rinsed**

**280g reduced-fat mozzarella, grated**

**Bag of mixed salad leaves, to serve**

**1** Preheat your oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6. Prick the potatoes all over with a fork, place directly on the oven shelf and bake for 1 hour 20 minutes, or until tender when pierced with a knife. When the potatoes have been baking for 1 hour, arrange the bacon on a non-stick baking tray and cook on the shelf below for 20 minutes, or until cooked through.

**2** Meanwhile, put the tomatoes, oregano, garlic and sweetcorn into a pan and bring to the boil. Season, then simmer for 5 minutes, stirring frequently, until slightly thickened. Transfer to a mixing bowl.

**3** Cut the potatoes in half lengthways and scoop out the flesh, leaving a little potato inside the shells so they keep their shape. Stir the potato flesh through the tomato mixture. Snip the bacon into small pieces and add to the tomato mixture with most of the mozzarella.

**4** Divide the mixture between the shells, and divide over the remaining mozzarella. Bake for 15 minutes until the mozzarella has melted and the tops are golden. Divide the potatoes between 4 plates and serve with the salad.



## Thursday

### Fish pie with celeriac & butter bean mash

#### EVERYDAY EASY

**Serves 4**

**Syns per serving 1**

**(SP)**

**Ready in 1 hour 10 minutes**

**Low-calorie cooking spray**

**1 onion, finely sliced**

**3 celeriac sticks, finely sliced**

**3 leeks, rinsed and finely sliced into rings**

**½ celeriac, peeled and chopped into chunks**

**2 x 400g cans butter beans, drained and rinsed**

**3 tbsp fat-free natural Greek yogurt**

**20g fresh chives, finely chopped**

**3 level tbsp cornflour**

**600ml hot fish stock**

**350g skinless and boneless smoked haddock fillets, cut into chunks**

**150g raw peeled king prawns**

**200g boiled or steamed green beans, to serve**

**1** Preheat your oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6. Spray a large, deep, non-stick frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium heat. Add the onion, celery and leeks, and fry for 8-10 minutes, stirring frequently, until softened.

**2** Meanwhile, put the celeriac in a saucepan, cover with boiling water and season with a little salt. Boil for 10 minutes, then add the beans and simmer for a further 5 minutes, or until everything is tender. Drain, then return to the pan, stir through the yogurt and season well. Using a stick blender, blitz until smooth. Stir through the chives and set aside.

**3** Stir the cornflour into the leek mixture and cook for 1-2 minutes. Add the stock, bring to a simmer and cook for 4-5 minutes, or until the sauce has thickened enough to lightly coat the back of a spoon.

**4** Add the haddock, bring to a simmer, add the prawns, then transfer to a medium baking dish. Top with the mash, and bake for 25 minutes until golden and the sauce is bubbling through. Leave to stand for 5 minutes, then divide between 4 plates and serve with the beans.





**Friday**

## Beef in black bean sauce

### SUPER SIMPLE

**Serves 4**  
**Syns per serving 2**  
**Ready in 30 minutes**

250g dried long-grain rice  
500g lean beef rump steak, visible fat removed, cut into strips  
200g black bean sauce  
Low-calorie cooking spray  
2 x 320g packs stir-fry vegetable mix  
2 x 225g cans water chestnuts, drained and rinsed

4 spring onions, finely sliced, reserving some to serve  
1 or 2 red chillies, sliced (optional)  
1 lime, cut into wedges, to serve

**1** Cook the rice according to the pack instructions. Drain, return to the pan and keep covered so it stays warm. Meanwhile, put the beef and 2 tsp black bean sauce in a bowl and mix well.

**2** Spray a large, non-stick wok or frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium-high heat. When the pan is hot, add the beef and fry in two batches for 1-2 minutes on each side until caramelised and lightly charred. Transfer to a plate.

**3** Spray the wok or pan with a little more low-calorie cooking spray. Add the stir-fry vegetables and water chestnuts, and stir-fry for 3-4 minutes. Pour in the remaining black bean sauce with a large splash of water, stir well and simmer for 1-2 minutes. Add the spring onions and the beef, and stir-fry for a further minute.

**4** Divide the rice between 4 bowls, then top with the stir-fry. Scatter over the reserved spring onions and chillies, if using. Serve with the lime wedges for squeezing over.

## Weekend specials...



## Saturday

### Squash & aubergine tagine with couscous

#### SUPER SIMPLE

Serves 4

Free

V \*

Ready in 40 minutes

1 butternut squash, halved, seeds scooped out and chopped into chunks, or 800g-1kg ready-prepared butternut squash chunks

2 medium aubergines, chopped into chunks

2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes

3 garlic cloves, crushed

2 red onions, finely sliced

2 tsp ground cumin

1 tsp ground coriander

250g plain dried couscous

30g fresh coriander, leaves roughly chopped, reserving some to serve

Fat-free natural Greek yogurt, to serve

**1** Put all the ingredients except the couscous, fresh coriander and yogurt into a large, lidded, non-stick saucepan. Bring to a gentle simmer, cover and cook for 20 minutes. Uncover, stir well and simmer for a further 10 minutes.

**2** Meanwhile, make up the couscous according to the pack instructions (without butter or oil). Stir through the fresh coriander and season.

**3** Once the vegetables are tender and the sauce has thickened, season to taste. Divide between 4 bowls with the couscous. Scatter over the reserved coriander and serve with a dollop of yogurt on top.

*'I was excited to cook and try a tagine for the first time! It was easy to make and the flavours were delicious'*

DAWN

## Sunday

### Roast chicken with cheesy potato & parsnip bake

#### EVERYDAY EASY

Serves 4

Syns per serving 1½

Ready in 1 hour

45 minutes

1.5-1.7kg whole chicken

1 lemon

600g floury potatoes, such as Maris Piper or King Edward, peeled and very finely sliced

600g parsnips, peeled and very finely sliced

4 sprigs of fresh rosemary

500ml chicken stock

160g plain quark

¼ tsp ground nutmeg

25g fresh Parmesan, finely grated

500g Brussels sprouts, halved or quartered

300g broccoli florets

**1** Preheat your oven to 220°C/fan 200°C/gas 7. Place the chicken in a non-stick baking tin and put the lemon in the cavity. Evenly layer the potatoes, parsnips and rosemary in a 30cm square baking dish, and season. Gradually whisk the stock into the quark, add the nutmeg, then pour over the potatoes and parsnips. Cover with foil and place on the bottom shelf of the oven, putting the chicken above it.

**2** Roast for 25 minutes. Reduce the oven to 180°C/fan 160°C/gas 4, and roast for a further 40 minutes, or until the juices run clear when a skewer is inserted into the thickest part of the chicken. Set aside to rest.

**3** Increase the oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6. Evenly scatter the Parmesan over the potato bake and cook uncovered for a further 20-25 minutes, or until the Parmesan is golden. Leave to stand for 5 minutes.

**4** Meanwhile, put the sprouts and broccoli in a colander, pour over a full kettle of boiling water and leave to steam for 1 minute. Spray a large, non-stick wok or frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium-high heat. Stir-fry the veg for 5-8 minutes, or until they have some colour and are just cooked through. Discard the skin and any visible fat from the chicken, and slice the meat. Divide between 4 plates with a quarter of the potato bake per person and the veg.

## Shopping list\*

### Fruit & vegetables

- ☐ Aubergines, 2
- ☐ Baking potatoes, 4 large
- ☐ Broccoli, 2 large heads, plus 300g
- ☐ Brussels sprouts, 500g
- ☐ Butternut squash, 1, or 800g-1kg ready-prepared butternut squash chunks
- ☐ Celeriac, ½
- ☐ Celery sticks, 3
- ☐ Chives, 20g fresh
- ☐ Coriander, 30g fresh
- ☐ Flat-leaf parsley, 10g fresh
- ☐ Garlic cloves, 8
- ☐ Green beans, 200g
- ☐ Leeks, 3
- ☐ Lemons, 2
- ☐ Lime, 1
- ☐ Mixed-leaf salad, 1 bag
- ☐ Mushrooms, 250g chestnut
- ☐ Onions, 1
- ☐ Parsnips, 600g
- ☐ Potatoes, Maris Piper or King Edward, 1.6kg
- ☐ Red chillies, 1 or 2 (optional)
- ☐ Red onions, 3
- ☐ Rosemary, 4 sprigs fresh
- ☐ Spring onions, 4
- ☐ Stir-fry vegetable mix, 2 x 320g packs
- ☐ Tomatoes, 6 medium

### Meat, poultry & fish

- ☐ Back bacon rashers, 6
- ☐ Beef rump steak, 500g lean
- ☐ Chicken legs, 4
- ☐ King prawns, 150g raw peeled
- ☐ Smoked skinless and boneless haddock fillets, 350g
- ☐ Whole chicken, 1.5-1.7kg

### Dairy

- ☐ Fat-free natural Greek yogurt, 200g
- ☐ Parmesan, 45g fresh
- ☐ Plain quark, 160g
- ☐ Reduced-fat mozzarella, 280g

### Frozen

- ☐ 6 Slimming World Pork Sausages\*\*

### Store cupboard

- ☐ Black bean sauce, 200g
- ☐ Butter beans, 2 x 400g cans
- ☐ Chopped tomatoes, 4 x 400g cans
- ☐ Eggs, 6 large
- ☐ Linguine, 400g dried
- ☐ Long-grain rice, 250g dried
- ☐ Plain couscous, 250g dried
- ☐ Sweetcorn, 2 x 198g cans
- ☐ Water chestnuts, 2 x 225g cans

### Check you've got

- ☐ Chicken stock
- ☐ Cornflour
- ☐ Cumin seeds
- ☐ Dried oregano
- ☐ Fish stock
- ☐ Ground coriander
- ☐ Ground cumin
- ☐ Ground nutmeg
- ☐ Low-calorie cooking spray
- ☐ Red wine vinegar

\* This shopping list is for dinner recipes only

\*\* Available from Iceland

PHOTOGRAPHS: SAM FOLAN. RECIPES: REBECCA WOOLLARD. FOOD STYLING: LOTTIE COVELL. PROP STYLING: MORAG FARQUHAR



# FOOD

*That Makes You  
Happy as Heck!*



**NOW** I'm fitter, happier and more confident than I've been in years, and it feels amazing

**THEN** I couldn't work out why I felt so anxious all the time and I'd eat to help me cope

**3½st lost!**



## “Freedom is... feeling fab in my 50s”

After losing 3½st, Katie Taylor has discovered there are no limits to what she can achieve and knows her best years are yet to come

Katie, 51, is founder and CEO of The Latte Lounge, an online network for women over 40. She lives in London with her husband, Hugh, and they have four children. Katie is 5ft 4ins tall and weighs 9st 7lbs, having lost 3½st as a Slimming World Online member

**P**osing for the photographer in a gym top and tiger-print leggings, I had one of those moments when you catch yourself and think: ‘Is this really me?’ In my 40s I wouldn’t have dreamt of wearing gear like this, let alone posing in it for a photo shoot to promote my website. Yet, here I was aged 51, a little bit camera shy, but happier, fitter and more confident than I could ever remember.

At 43 I had developed severe anxiety. I was diagnosed with depression, and over the next four years I gained over

3st and lost my confidence. Because of my age, the real cause had been missed – I was actually going through perimenopause. Finally, help for my low mood, brain fog and anxiety came after I was correctly diagnosed by a specialist and prescribed HRT. Thinking there must be other women feeling the same, in 2016, I set up a Facebook support group called The Latte Lounge, which then became a thriving website.

As I turned 50, feeling so much stronger, I was ready to lose that 3st. I had friends who’d done well with Food Optimising, so in January 2020 I joined Slimming World Online. Using the app and website, I soon got into new eating habits. I’d have my Healthy Extra cereal for breakfast, tuna salad with couscous for lunch, and jacket potato with steak and veg for dinner, still enjoying my favourite lattes in between using my

Syns. When lockdown struck in March, I realised that while the old me would have sought comfort in food, the new me didn’t want to give up on my weight loss. I also found a full-body workout online to keep up my Body Magic. Then my son, Sam, 19, bet me £100 I couldn’t hit my target weight of 9st 7lbs by his birthday in October. The challenge was on!

Each week I lost a little more weight, which soon added up. As the weather got warmer, my family were astonished when I bought my first ever bikini and sunned myself in our back garden. To Sam’s amazement, I won our bet (I’m still waiting on my winnings...). These days, whether I’m having promotional shots taken for my website, or getting dressed in the morning, I feel happy in my own skin. And I’ve discovered there really are no limits to feeling good about yourself – wherever you are in life! ●

**#ThatFeeling** Share a photo of a special moment since hitting target on social media, or email it to us at [editorial@slimmingworld.co.uk](mailto:editorial@slimmingworld.co.uk)



**SKIMMED  
MILK**

**TASTES  
LIKE**

**SEMI**



**GLUG IT,  
POUR IT,  
SPLASH IT  
OR DASH IT**



**Perfect on top of your  
morning cereal or in  
your favourite hot  
drinks, Arla B.O.B is a  
great way to have less  
fat but the same taste.**



\*Comparative test results with 208 consumers of semi-skimmed milk.





**Say YES to Pudding!**

**Find us in the jelly aisle this January**

Hartley's  
**10  
CAL**

# love food

DISCOVER A WORLD OF FRESH, FILLING MEALS AND DELICIOUS INSPIRATION






**Our food section will delight your taste buds and see you slimming beautifully**

**TAILOR-MADE RECIPES** specially selected to boost your weight loss and fit into your life

**TIPS & TECHNIQUES** to build your cooking confidence and Food Optimising know-how

**BEST BUYS** for your shopping trolley, accurately Syn counted

Look out for these symbols on our recipes:

-  Free | Free when Food Optimising
-  SP | Extra Easy SP recipe
-  V | Suitable for vegetarians
-  Vegan | Suitable for vegans
-  \* | Suitable for freezing for up to 1 month

#### COOK'S NOTES

- When cooking with shop-bought spice mixes or blends, choose brands without Synned ingredients such as sugar, flour and oil. Otherwise, count ½ Syn per level tsp or 1½ Syns per level tbsp
- When using low-calorie cooking spray in our recipes, choose brands with one calorie or less per spray as they're Syn free. See page 6 for a complete list of recipes and Syn values. For an introduction to Food Optimising, turn to page 32

#### WHAT'S COOKING?

Share your photos of this issue's recipes on social media: #SWMagazineMakes



*Baked Alaska,  
recipe p83*

**82**  
**brilliant  
ideas, recipes  
& tips**



# Dinner's *in the* Oven!

Let these delicious, easy-to-make recipes bubble away  
while you spend time with family

Photographs: Alex Luck



'As a mum of seven children, aged between six and 18, I'm always looking for ideas to feed a big family! Could you

show me some recipes that are easy to double, save me time and we'll all enjoy?'

Debbie Foreman, 40, is a lunchtime supervisor and newly qualified teaching assistant. She lost 4st 6lbs at Sarah Bryant's Slimming World group in Bristol

## Sweet potato sloppy Joes

We've switched out the bun to give this American favourite a tasty twist

### EVERYDAY EASY

Serves 4

Syns per serving 6

Deduct 6 Syns if using the reduced-fat Cheddar as a Healthy Extra

✳️ (chilli only)

Ready in 1 hour 30 minutes

500g lean beef mince (5% fat or less)

1 onion, finely chopped

2 garlic cloves, crushed

2 red peppers, deseeded and finely sliced

2 tsp ground coriander

2 tsp ground cumin

2 tsp hot smoked paprika

2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes

2 tsp Worcestershire sauce

1 beef stock cube

8 small sweet potatoes

160g reduced-fat Cheddar, grated

Chopped gherkins, to serve

Fat-free natural Greek-style yogurt, to serve

For the coleslaw:

½ white cabbage, shredded

2 carrots, coarsely grated

1 red onion, finely sliced

60g fat-free natural yogurt

1 small garlic clove, crushed

Juice of ½ lemon

**1** Preheat your oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6. Place a large, shallow, lidded, flameproof casserole dish over a medium-high heat. Dry-fry the mince for 2-3 minutes until browned, breaking it up with a wooden spoon. Drain off any liquid, then add the onion, garlic, peppers, spices, tomatoes, Worcestershire sauce and the stock cube with 200ml water.

**2** Bring to a simmer and cover. Place in the oven and cook for 1 hour, or until reduced and bubbling. At the same time, put the sweet potatoes on a non-stick baking tray and bake for 50-60 minutes, or until soft.

**3** Meanwhile, to make the coleslaw, mix together all the ingredients. Season to taste and set aside.

**4** Set aside the cooked potatoes. Heat your grill to high. Remove the lid from the casserole dish, evenly scatter over the cheese, then grill for 3-4 minutes, or until the cheese has melted.

**5** Scatter over the gherkins. Divide between 4 plates. Serve with 2 sweet potatoes per person, some coleslaw and a dollop of yogurt.





fuss free

“An easy  
after-school  
meal... I can  
see it becoming  
a favourite”

DEBBIE

Satisfyingly  
cheesy





# Veggie shepherd's pies

Winter veg are the stars in this hearty, meat-free main

## EVERYDAY EASY

Serves 4

Syns per serving ½



Ready in 1 hour 30 minutes

Low-calorie cooking spray

1 onion, finely chopped

250g mushrooms, finely diced

2 garlic cloves, crushed

3 carrots, finely diced

2 celery sticks, finely diced

2 leeks, rinsed and finely sliced

6 Linda McCartney's Vegetarian Red Onion & Rosemary Sausages, defrosted

400g can green lentils in water, drained and rinsed

400g can chopped tomatoes

300ml vegetable stock

1 tbsp Marmite, or other yeast extract

1kg floury potatoes, such as Maris Piper or King Edward, peeled and diced

5 tbsp fat-free natural fromage frais

2 level tbsp wholegrain mustard

4 spring onions, finely sliced

200g spring greens, chopped

200g runner beans, sliced

**1** Spray a large, deep, non-stick frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium heat. Add the onion and mushrooms, and fry for 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Add the garlic, carrots, celery and leeks, and fry for 5 minutes.

**2** Crumble in the sausages, then stir in the lentils and cook for 2 minutes. Add the tomatoes, stock, Marmite

Great  
for batch  
cooking





or other yeast extract, and season. Bring to a simmer and gently cook for 25 minutes. Preheat your oven to 220°C/fan 200°C/gas 7.

**3** Meanwhile, place the potatoes in a pan of water and bring to the boil. Simmer for 20 minutes until tender, then drain. Add the fromage frais and mustard. Season, then mash until smooth. Add the spring onions.

**4** Divide the filling between 4 individual pie dishes and top with the mash (you can use 1 large pie dish, if you like). Bake for 30-35 minutes until bubbling and golden. Remove from the oven and allow to stand for 5-10 minutes. Meanwhile, boil the spring greens and runner beans for 2-3 minutes, then drain. Serve 1 pie per person with the veg.



**“I love  
that these  
pies are made  
with veggie  
sausages”**

**DEBBIE**



**fuss free**

**Easy  
and oh-so  
tasty!**

## Salmon & lemon tray bake

Golden roasties and caramelised onions go beautifully with citrusy fish

### **SUPER SIMPLE**

**Serves 4**

**Free**

**Ready in 1 hour 5 minutes**

**1kg new potatoes, halved**  
**3 red onions, cut into 1-2cm wedges**  
**Low-calorie cooking spray**  
**4 skinless and boneless salmon fillets**  
**2 lemons, 1 unwaxed**  
**200g green beans, trimmed**  
**200g boiled broccoli, to serve**

#### **For the dill sauce:**

**150g fat-free natural fromage frais**  
**2 lemons, unwaxed**  
**1 small garlic clove, crushed**  
**15g fresh dill, finely chopped, plus extra to serve**

**1** Preheat your oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6. Spread the potatoes and onions in a single layer on 1 or 2 large, lipped, non-stick roasting trays and spray with low-calorie cooking spray. Season and roast for 35-40 minutes, or until golden, turning halfway.

**2** Meanwhile, to make the dill sauce, mix together all the ingredients. Season to taste and set aside.

**3** Add the salmon to the tray or trays. Halve 1 lemon and squeeze the juice over the salmon, then add the squeezed halves to the tray. Add the beans in a single layer. Return the tray to the oven for a further 10 minutes, or until the salmon is cooked through and flakes easily.

**4** Zest the remaining lemon and scatter over the salmon. Divide the salmon and roast veg between 4 plates, and serve with the dill sauce with the extra dill scattered over and the broccoli.





Dinner time  
winner

“I’d make  
this at the  
weekend as  
an alternative  
to our pizza  
night”

DEBBIE

## Chinese-style pulled pork

Slow cooking makes this Asian-inspired dish a melt-in-the-mouth delight

### A LITTLE EFFORT

Serves 4-6

Free

\* (pork sauce only)

Ready in 3 hours 20 minutes

1 onion, finely sliced

4cm-piece fresh root ginger, peeled and finely sliced

3 garlic cloves, crushed

1 tsp Chinese five-spice powder (see Cook's note on p43)

2 star anise

1.2kg pork shoulder, visible fat and skin removed, cut into 3cm chunks

1 litre chicken stock

### For the stir-fry:

4 dried medium egg noodle nests

Low-calorie cooking spray

1 red onion, finely sliced

1 head of broccoli, cut into small florets and stalk finely sliced

2 tbsp reduced-salt soy sauce, plus extra to serve

4 small pak choi, sliced

Juice of 2 limes, plus extra wedges to serve

15g fresh coriander, leaves chopped

Deseeded and sliced red chillies, to serve

**1** Preheat your oven to 160°C/fan 140°C/gas 3. Put the onion, ginger, garlic, five-spice powder, star anise, pork and stock in a large, lidded, flameproof casserole dish – the stock needs to cover the pork so add a little more if it doesn't. Bring to a simmer, cover and transfer to the oven. Cook for 2 hours 30 minutes. If the pork is tender and can be shredded with a fork, leave it to stand while you prepare the noodles. If the pork isn't quite tender, return to the oven for a further 30 minutes.

**2** To make the stir-fry, cook the noodles according to the pack instructions, then rinse well with warm water. Toss with a few sprays of low-calorie cooking spray and set aside.

**3** Using 2 forks, roughly shred the pork into the sauce, keeping the chunks bite-size. If the sauce doesn't lightly coat the back of a spoon, return the dish to the hob and simmer for a few minutes until it's reduced, glossy and coating the

pork. Cover and keep warm over a very low heat. (At this point, you can chill or freeze the pork for another day – see Cook's note.)

**4** Meanwhile, spray a large, non-stick frying pan or wok with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium-high heat. Add the onion and broccoli, and stir-fry for 4-5 minutes. Add a splash of water and the soy sauce. Add the pak choi in a couple of batches, and fry until wilted. Add the noodles, lime juice, and 100ml water. Stir-fry everything for a few minutes until hot, then stir in the coriander.

**5** Divide the noodles between 4 bowls, top with the pork and a few spoonfuls of the sauce. Serve with the extra soy sauce, the lime wedges for squeezing over and chillies.

### COOK'S NOTE

To chill or freeze the pork sauce, leave to cool, then transfer to a sealable container. Seal and chill for up to 3 days, or freeze for up to 1 month



## Spicy tuna pasta bake

A little chilli livens up this comfort-food staple

### **SUPER SIMPLE**

**Serves 4**

**Syns per serving 1**

**Ready in 1 hour 10 minutes**

350g dried fusilli pasta

Low-calorie cooking spray

1 onion, finely sliced

2 red peppers, deseeded and finely sliced

2 garlic cloves, crushed

1 tbsp balsamic vinegar

1½ tsp dried oregano

½ tsp dried red chilli flakes

3 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes

3 x 110g cans tuna in spring water, drained and broken into small chunks

25g reduced-fat Cheddar, grated

Green salad, to serve

**1** Cook the pasta for 3 minutes less than the pack instructions, drain and set aside. Preheat your oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6.

**2** Meanwhile, spray a large, non-stick frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium heat. Add the onion and peppers, stir-fry

for 5-8 minutes, or until starting to soften. Add the garlic, vinegar, oregano, chilli and tomatoes with 200ml water. Bring to the boil, then gently simmer for 10-15 minutes. Season to taste, then stir in the pasta and most of the tuna.

**3** Pour everything into a 2-litre ovenproof dish and scatter over the remaining tuna and cheese. Bake for 30-35 minutes. Divide between 4 plates and serve with the green salad.



Filling  
and flavour  
packed



# Chicken & chickpea curry

Oven baking helps to bring out the rich aromatic flavours

## EVERYDAY EASY

Serves 4

Free

SP \*

Ready in 1 hour 10 minutes

1 onion, roughly chopped  
3 garlic cloves, peeled  
7.5cm-piece fresh root ginger, peeled and grated  
1 red chilli, roughly chopped  
15g fresh coriander, plus extra sprigs to serve  
Low-calorie cooking spray  
4 cardamom pods, lightly crushed, the seeds extracted and the pods discarded  
1 tsp mild chilli powder  
1 tsp ground cumin  
1 tsp ground coriander  
400g can chopped tomatoes  
2 x 400g cans chickpeas, drained and rinsed

Fantastic  
fakeaway

4 skinless and boneless chicken breasts  
125g fat-free natural Greek yogurt  
500g plain ready-prepared cauliflower rice, to serve  
Lemon wedges to serve

### For the salad:

1 red onion, finely sliced  
1 cucumber, halved lengthways, deseeded and sliced into half rounds  
250g tomatoes, roughly diced  
Juice of 1 lemon

**1** Preheat your oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6. Put the onion, garlic, ginger, chilli, fresh coriander and 3 tbsp water in a food processor and blitz to a paste.

**2** Spray a deep, ovenproof, non-stick, lidded frying pan or a shallow casserole dish with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium heat. Add the paste, cardamom seeds, chilli and ground spices, and fry for 2-3 minutes until

fragrant. Add the chopped tomatoes, chickpeas and 200ml water. Bring to a simmer and cook for 5 minutes. Add the chicken breasts, pushing them into the sauce so they're lightly covered. Bring back to a simmer, cover and transfer to the oven for 40-45 minutes, or until the chicken is tender and cooked through.

**3** Meanwhile, for the salad, soak the onion in water for 5 minutes to make it a little less strong. Mix together the cucumber, tomatoes and lemon juice. Drain the onion, squeezing out any excess water, and add to the salad with a twist of black pepper.

**4** Transfer the chicken to a plate and cover with foil to keep warm. Add the yogurt to the sauce in 2 batches, stirring well, and season to taste. Cook the cauliflower rice according to the pack instructions. Divide between 4 bowls. Slice the chicken and add to the bowls with the sauce, then scatter over the extra coriander. Serve with the salad and the lemon wedges for squeezing over.

“My lot love  
curry so this  
would be right up  
their street”

DEBBIE

RECIPES: LOTTIE COVELL, FOOD STYLING: NICOLA ROBERTS, PROP STYLING: OLIVIA WARDLE, FAMILY PHOTOGRAPH: FUN 'N' FOTOS PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO





# Lunchtime express

Dreaming of a midday meal that's tasty, meat free and ready in minutes? Cue the store-cupboard selection from Quorn

When you've got a hectic weekday routine it's easy to find yourself eating the same lunch every day. And because many of us find weight loss more enjoyable when we mix things up, Quorn's convenient slimming-friendly meal options could be just what you're looking for.

Quorn is made using mycoprotein – a nutritious and sustainable protein source that's high in fibre and low in fat that's great if you're vegetarian, or cutting back on meat. And with Quorn's food-cupboard range of strips, bowls and pouches, you can enjoy a different low Syn lunch every day.

Quorn Smoky Fajita or Spicy Tikka Strips are ideal whether you're eating at

home or prepping a lunch box – both are Free and easily turned into a satisfying meal. Stir-fry Smoky Fajita Strips with chopped onion and pepper, canned kidney beans and cooked dried rice for a Mexican-style dish that's ready in minutes. Or simply stuff Spicy Tikka Strips into a Healthy Extra wholemeal pitta bread with plenty of salad.

Serve a pouch of Quorn Classic Chilli – just 2 Syns – with your favourite Speed Food veg and cooked dried rice for a lunch that packs a spicy punch. And when you are really short on time, a Quorn Bowl is a handy go-to. Try the Chilli Bean Bowl (2½ Syns) with Speed Food veg on the side for a quick winter warmer that's bound to brighten up even the busiest day!



## DISCOVER THE RANGE

Quorn Strips: Chinese Salt & Pepper, Smoky Fajita, and Spicy Tikka, all Free, RRP £2.99 per 180g pack ● Quorn Pouches: Classic Chilli, 2 Syns, and Tasty Tikka Masala, 4½ Syns, RRP £2.19 per 225g pouch ● Quorn Bowls: Spiced Chickpea & Lentil, 2 Syns, Chilli Bean, 2½ Syns, and Biryani, 4 Syns, RRP £2.49 per 300g bowl ● All found in the food-cupboard aisle at most major supermarkets. Visit [quorn.co.uk](http://quorn.co.uk) for more information.



With our ingenious tips, tricks and shortcuts, your cooking confidence will be flying high

# Let's cook!



3 ways with

## ...mustard powder

**BURGER MIX:** combine 500g lean beef mince (5% fat or less) with ½ tsp mustard powder, 1 egg yolk, 1 tsp dried oregano and 1 crushed garlic clove. Season, form into 4 patties and fry in low-calorie cooking spray until cooked through. Serve each burger in a 60g wholemeal roll (a Healthy Extra 'b') with lettuce, tomato, and extra-light mayo (1 Syn per level tbsp) if you like.

**ROAST BEEF SEASONING:** mix 1 tbsp mustard powder with 1-2 tsp red wine vinegar and some seasoning until it forms a paste, then rub over a lean beef joint before roasting.

**SOUTHERN CHICKEN MARINADE:** mix 1 tsp each of mustard powder, dried thyme, smoked paprika and ground allspice, plus a pinch of salt, then stir into 300g fat-free natural yogurt. Add 4 skinless and boneless chicken breasts flattened slightly with a rolling pin, and marinate for 24 hours in the fridge. Grill until cooked through, turning once.

## GRATE IDEA

If you find peeling fresh ginger a chore, simply use a teaspoon to scrape off the skin instead. Or, as the skin is edible, just wash it well before grating or chopping. The texture will be slightly different, but if it's going into something like a curry, you won't notice!

## LOVE YOUR:

### leftover pasta!

If you've cooked too much dried pasta, here are a few ideas to turn it into a quick, tasty meal

● Reheat your pasta briefly in boiling water, then toss through your favourite Free sauce.

● For spaghetti or linguine, spray a non-stick frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium heat. Spread the pasta like a pancake. Cook for a few minutes, without moving, until golden and crisp on the underside. Flip and repeat. Top with cooked lean bacon (visible fat removed), fresh sliced tomato and a poached egg.

● Add cold to soups and stews. If you've got leftover

long pasta, like spaghetti, snip it into shorter lengths before reheating.

## COOK'S NOTE

Cooked dried pasta will keep in the fridge for up to 3 days. After cooking, spray with a little low-calorie cooking spray, leave to cool completely, then seal in an airtight container and chill



## SNACK IN A SENTENCE

Boil frozen peas for 3 minutes, drain and blitz in a food processor with fat-free natural Greek yogurt and chopped fresh mint, and serve with veg stick dippers – plus a Healthy Extra wholemeal pitta bread, if you like.

## Slice a pepper like a pro



**1** Stand the pepper on its end, then slice down through each quarter, close to the stalk, so you're left with the core and 4 'cheeks'. Discard the core.



**2** Lay each cheek skin-side down. With the blade of your knife flat to the pepper, carefully slice out the white pith and any seeds.



**3** Still skin-side down (it's easier to cut through the flesh), slice the pepper into thin strips, keeping the fingertips of the hand holding the pepper tucked in.



**4** If the recipe calls for it, once you've sliced each cheek, turn the pepper horizontally. Hold it with the same grip and chop into small cubes.



# THE TASTIER WAY TO SPRAY.

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# Chicken & prawn pad thai

Pad thai is Laura Newman's favourite dish, so we showed her how to make one that's low in Syns and still bursting with the fresh, zingy flavours she loves

Photographs: Gareth Morgans



Laura Newman, 33, is a fair trading officer. She lives in Eastbourne, East Sussex, with her husband, Adam. She's lost 1st 11½lbs at Becky Smeath's Slimming World group in Eastbourne

## EVERYDAY EASY

Serves 4

Syns per serving 2

Ready in 50 minutes

200g dried flat rice noodles

Low-calorie cooking spray

2 skinless and boneless chicken breasts, sliced into 1cm-thick pieces

250g raw peeled king prawns, defrosted if frozen

1 onion, finely sliced

200g sugar snap peas

2 large eggs, beaten

3 garlic cloves, crushed

200g bean sprouts

4 spring onions, finely sliced

20g fresh coriander, leaves roughly chopped, reserving a few whole leaves to serve

20g Thai basil, roughly chopped (if you can't find Thai basil, you can use extra fresh coriander or mint leaves)

25g unsalted peanuts, dry-fried stirring continuously until beginning to turn brown, then finely chopped

## For the sauce:

Juice of 2 limes, plus extra slices to serve

3 tbsp reduced-salt soy sauce

3 tbsp Thai fish sauce

½ tsp mild chilli powder

1 tbsp rice vinegar

1½ level tbsp sweetener granules



**1** Soak the noodles in cold water for 10 minutes, then rinse thoroughly in a colander with cold water. Soak again in just-boiled water for 10 minutes, then rinse in lots of warm water. Prise apart any noodles that are stuck together, then rinse in cold water and set aside to drain.



**4** Push the onion and sugar snap peas over to one side of the wok. Spray the empty side of the wok with low-calorie cooking spray and pour in the beaten eggs.



**2** Mix together all the sauce ingredients and set aside. Spray a large, non-stick wok with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium-high heat. When hot, fry the chicken for 1 minute on each side, then transfer to a plate. Add the prawns, fry until pink, then add to the plate.



**5** Tilt the wok to one side, and gently scramble the eggs, using a spatula to keep the chunks big, until they're completely set. Then stir the eggs, onion and sugar snap peas together.

## A twist and a side

**MAKE IT VEGGIE...** swap the chicken and prawns for 280g extra-firm plain tofu, and the fish sauce for vegetarian fish sauce. Cut the tofu into 1.5cm-thick slices. Fry in low-calorie cooking spray according to the pack instructions. Set aside and add to the wok in step 6. Syns stay the same. **[V]**

**SERVE IT WITH...** a cool, spicy cucumber and chilli salad. Deseed and slice a cucumber, then toss with deseeded and finely chopped bird's eye chillies (to taste), finely sliced red onion, and shredded fresh mint leaves. Season with a pinch of salt and add lime juice to taste. **[Free]** **[V]**



“  
I'm known as the  
fakeaway queen at  
group, and I can't  
wait to add this to  
my go-to Saturday  
night recipes  
”



**3** Wipe out the wok with kitchen paper. Spray with low-calorie cooking spray and return to a medium-high heat. Add the onion and sugar snap peas, and stir-fry for 4-5 minutes, or until just coloured.



**6** Increase the heat to high. Add the noodles, sauce, garlic and bean sprouts. Stir-fry for 3-4 minutes. Add the chicken, prawns and spring onions. Fry for 1-2 minutes until everything is piping hot. Add the chopped coriander and basil. Divide between 4 bowls, then divide over the nuts and coriander leaves. Serve with the lime slices.



#### COOK'S NOTE

Because pad thai is mostly noodles, it's really important they're properly cooked and not claggy, hence all the rinsing! Timing is important with this dish, too, so it's good to prep and line everything up in dishes in the order that they're added to the wok



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*Lime and ginger give this dish a delicious zing*

# Eat well, spend less

Meals that are full of flavour, easy to whip up midweek and, best of all, under £1.50 a serving

Photographs: Toby Scott

## STORE-CUPBOARD STAPLES

There are just three ingredients we haven't counted in the cost for each serving:

- Black pepper (freshly ground, if possible)
- Salt (sea salt for the best flavour)
- Low-calorie cooking spray

## Asian turkey stir-fry

### SUPER SIMPLE

Serves 4

Free

SP

Ready in 25 minutes

400g lean turkey mince (5% fat or less)

2 garlic cloves, crushed

4cm-piece fresh root ginger, peeled and grated

2 tsp Chinese five-spice powder (see Cook's note on p43)

Juice of 1 lime

2 tbsp soy sauce

200g carrots, peeled and finely sliced

1 sweetheart cabbage, finely sliced

1 red onion, finely sliced

250g mushrooms, sliced

Fresh coriander leaves, to serve

**1** Place a large, non-stick wok or frying pan over a high heat. Dry-fry the mince for 3-4 minutes until lightly browned, then drain off any liquid. Add the garlic, ginger and five-spice powder with a splash of water, and fry for 3 minutes. Add 150ml water, then simmer for 5 minutes. Add the lime

juice and 1 tbsp soy sauce. Transfer the mince mixture to a bowl, then return the pan to a high heat.

**2** Add the carrots, cabbage, onion and mushrooms. Stir-fry with a little water for 4-5 minutes. Add the remaining soy sauce along with the mince mixture. Stir-fry everything together for 1-2 minutes until piping hot. Divide between 4 bowls and scatter over the coriander to serve.

**£1.37**  
per serving





**£1.32**  
per serving

*This revamp of the traditional cooked breakfast can be enjoyed any time of day*

## Fry-up frittata

### EVERYDAY EASY

Serves 4

Free

Ready in 55 minutes

400g floury potatoes, such as Maris Piper or King Edward, quartered

200g back bacon rashers, visible fat removed

Low-calorie cooking spray

400g chestnut mushrooms, sliced

4 medium tomatoes, halved and sliced into wedges

12 medium eggs, beaten

**1** Boil the potatoes for 15 minutes, or until tender, and preheat your oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6. Meanwhile, place a large, ovenproof

non-stick frying pan over a medium-high heat. Dry-fry the bacon for 3-4 minutes, or until golden and starting to crisp, then transfer to a plate. Spray the pan with low-calorie cooking spray and repeat the process with the mushrooms and tomatoes, frying for 3-4 minutes a batch at a time and re-spraying the pan when necessary.

**2** Drain the potatoes well, then cut into small cubes. Add to the pan and fry for 3-4 minutes, then transfer to a plate. Wipe out the pan with kitchen paper. Spray with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium-low heat. Return the cooked ingredients

to the pan, then pour in the eggs, rotating the pan to make sure the eggs are evenly distributed. Cook gently for 5-6 minutes, or until the sides are set. Transfer the pan to the oven and cook for 20 minutes, or until the centre is just cooked through (a skewer inserted into the middle should come out clean).

**3** To serve, carefully turn out onto a chopping board and slice into 4 wedges.

### COOK'S NOTE

You can keep the frittata in a sealed container in the fridge for up to 3 days



## Creamy chicken pasta

**EVERYDAY EASY**

Serves 4

Free

Ready in 50 minutes

 1kg chicken drumsticks,  
skin and visible fat removed

Low-calorie cooking spray

1 large onion, finely sliced

2 large garlic cloves, finely sliced

600g courgettes, finely diced

350g dried pasta spirals

 150g fat-free natural fromage  
fraîs or plain quark

Juice of 1 unwaxed lemon and zest of ½

**1** Preheat your oven to 200°C/  
fan 180°C/gas 6. Put the drumsticks  
on a non-stick baking tray and cover  
with foil. Roast for 35-40 minutes,  
or until cooked through and the meat  
comes away easily from the bone.

**2** Meanwhile, spray a large, lidded,  
non-stick frying pan with low-calorie  
cooking spray and place over  
a medium heat. Add the onion and  
garlic with 2 tbsp water. Cover,  
reduce the heat to low and cook for  
10 minutes until softened, stirring  
occasionally and adding a little more  
water if the onion and garlic start  
to catch. Remove the lid, add the

courgettes and stir-fry for 5 minutes.  
Cook the pasta according to the  
pack instructions, then drain and  
reserve a little of the cooking water.

**3** Remove the foil from the  
drumsticks, and pull the meat from  
the bones. Stir the meat into the  
courgette mixture along with 2 tbsp  
pasta cooking water. Remove from  
the heat, then stir through the  
fromage fraîs or quark, and lemon  
juice and zest. Stir through the  
pasta, then divide between 4 bowls  
or plates and season.

*An indulgent, lemony sauce with no signs in sight!*

**£1.25**  
per serving



Hearty, veggie comfort food that won't break the bank!



81p  
per serving

## Mildly spiced dhal with coddled eggs

### EVERYDAY EASY

Serves 4

Free

  (dhal only)

Ready in 50 minutes

Low-calorie cooking spray

1 large onion, chopped

2 garlic cloves, crushed

2 tsp dried garam masala (see Cook's note on p43)

2 tsp ground cumin

1 tsp dried turmeric

15g fresh coriander, leaves and stalks separated and roughly chopped

200g dried red lentils, rinsed

400g can chopped tomatoes

600ml vegetable stock

200g broccoli, finely chopped

4 large eggs

200g dried basmati rice

Juice of ½ lemon

**1** Spray a deep, lidded, non-stick frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a low heat. Add the onion and a splash of water, then cover and leave to cook for 5 minutes until softened. Remove the lid, increase the heat to medium, then add the garlic, spices and coriander stalks with a splash of water. Cook for 1 minute, stirring.

**2** Stir in the lentils, tomatoes and stock, and season. Bring to the boil,

then simmer very gently for 25 minutes, stirring occasionally and covering the pan halfway through the cooking time.

**3** Add the broccoli and half the coriander leaves, and stir well. Make 4 wells in the dhal and crack an egg into each. Cover and cook for 7-8 minutes, or until the egg whites are just set. Meanwhile, cook the rice according to the pack instructions, then drain.

**4** Top the dhal with the lemon juice and remaining coriander, then divide between 4 plates with the rice.

### COOK'S NOTE

To chill or freeze the dhal, leave to cool at the end of step 2, then transfer to a sealable container. Seal and chill for up to 3 days, or freeze for up to 1 month. Defrost, reheat to simmering, then continue from step 3

COSTINGS BASED ON MAJOR SUPERMARKET PRICES AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS. EGGS: LUCY O'REILLY; BROCCOLI: LUCY O'REILLY; CORIANDER: LUCY O'REILLY; TOMATOES: LUCY O'REILLY; RICE: LUCY O'REILLY; LENTILS: LUCY O'REILLY; STOCK: LUCY O'REILLY; PROP STYLING: WEI TANG



# Pasta pronto!

Italian-style dinners are easy-peasy with just five simple ingredients, plus a bottle of Frylight



## Crab linguine

**SUPER SIMPLE**

Serves 4

Free

Ready in 25 minutes

350g dried linguine

Frylight Extra Virgin Olive Oil

500g cherry tomatoes

½ tsp dried red chilli flakes,  
plus extra to serve

2 x 145g cans crabmeat, drained

30g fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves  
chopped, reserving some to serve

**1** Cook the linguine according to the pack instructions. Drain and set aside, reserving 200ml of the cooking water.

**2** Meanwhile, spray a large, non-stick frying pan with Frylight and place over a medium heat. Cook the tomatoes for 10 minutes, or until they start to soften and break down. Add the chilli flakes and crabmeat, and cook for 3-5 minutes until the crab is heated through.

**3** Add the pasta and reserved cooking water to the frying pan with the parsley. Toss everything together and season to taste. Divide between 4 bowls, and top with the extra chilli flakes and reserved parsley to serve.

### COOK'S NOTE

If you're not a fan of crab, canned tuna will work just as well. Swap the canned crabmeat for 2 x 145g cans tuna in spring water – the recipe remains Free



**D**elicious, filling, quick to cook... there are so many reasons to love pasta. From spaghetti, linguine and tagliatelle to penne, farfalle and orzo – whatever variety you choose, all dried pasta is a Free Food at Slimming World, meaning you can eat it freely to satisfy your appetite and still lose weight. Pick your shape, add a few Free store-cupboard ingredients, and you've got the makings of an Italian-inspired meal that can be on the table in minutes.

And with Frylight in the equation, you'll be safe in the knowledge that you

won't be adding Syns. In fact, switching to Frylight saves 6 Syns for every tablespoon of oil you replace. Get started with our quick and tasty crab linguine (left) and discover the joys of cooking with Frylight for yourself. Then as you build your kitchen confidence, you can begin experimenting with recipe ideas of your own. A few sprays of Frylight can help set you on the road to pasta-perfect results!

*Slimming World, Free, Free Food and Syns are registered trademarks of Miles-Bramwell Executive Services Ltd trading as Slimming World.*

● Frylight is available from most major supermarkets. For more information, visit [frylight.co.uk](http://frylight.co.uk).



You've  
got to try  
this!

# Hunter's chicken lasagne

We've all got food we absolutely love to cook and recipes we can't wait to share! Our brand-new series showcases the slimming-friendly meal ideas that everyone's talking about – first up, a twist on a favourite chicken dish...

Photographs: Yuki Sugiura



Rachel Whittle, 33, is a demand planner for an automotive company and lives in Sandhurst, Berkshire. She has lost 3st 10lbs at Emma Evans's group in Crowthorne, Berkshire

“When I first joined Slimming World the food tips and tricks we swapped in group each week opened up a whole new world for me – like discovering how lovely celeriac was when someone suggested using it as an SP topping for cottage pie instead of potato. As my confidence grew, I started sharing my own recipe ideas with the other members. I loved coming up with new ways to enjoy chicken: I'd marinate it in Cajun spices, or fat-free natural yogurt and Chinese five-spice powder, before baking it and making a filling chicken salad for lunch. For dinner I'd make low Syn chicken Kiev with Slimming World wedges and veg, or my absolute favourite – hunter's chicken. Just a few weeks into my weight loss journey, the country went into lockdown and, like many people, I started working from home full-time. As I was still pretty new to Food Optimising I worried I'd find it hard to stay on track, but with inspiration from my virtual group, I started to use the extra time I had to try out new recipes. And when I heard there was such a thing as a Food Optimising hunter's chicken lasagne I couldn't wait to make it – or to tell the rest of my group about it! I still have around 2st to lose, but I've got a very special reason to get to target. My twin sister Faye is getting married in June and she's asked me to be her maid of honour. I'm really close to my family and can't wait until I can have them all round for dinner again – this lasagne will be the first thing I cook for everyone.”

Hunter's chicken lasagne *Turn the page for the recipe...* >





*I love hunter's chicken, so this pasta version caught my eye. And I wasn't disappointed – it's amazing!*



## Rachel's day on a plate

### THEN

#### ● Breakfast

I never had any!

#### ● Lunch

Burger and chips, or a meal deal with a prawn mayo sandwich, a bag of crisps and a chocolate bar

#### ● Dinner

High Syn ready meal, pizza or a takeaway

#### ● Snacks

More crisps and chocolate

### NOW

#### ● Breakfast

Healthy Extra bran flakes or porridge topped with fresh berries

#### ● Lunch

Large mixed salad with beetroot, pepper, radishes and crab sticks or skinless chicken

#### ● Dinner

Food Optimising hunter's chicken, beef ragu pasta bake or salmon curry with plenty of Speed Food veg

#### ● Snacks

Home-made houmous with carrot or cucumber sticks, fresh fruit, a no-added-sugar jelly pot (½ Syn), or a Hi-fi bar (3 Syns) from group

## Hunter's chicken lasagne



### EVERYDAY EASY

Serves 6

Syns per serving 2

Ready in 1 hour 40 minutes

Low-calorie cooking spray

1 onion, finely sliced

2 red peppers, deseeded and finely sliced

1kg skinless and boneless chicken thighs, visible fat removed, roughly chopped

6 smoked back bacon rashers, visible fat removed, roughly chopped

4 garlic cloves, crushed

½ tsp smoked paprika

690g jar passata

1 chicken stock cube

20g fresh chives, finely chopped, reserving some to serve

200g plain quark

9-12 dried lasagne sheets

6 level tbsp barbecue sauce

75g reduced-fat mozzarella, cut into small pieces

Mixed salad leaves dressed with balsamic vinegar, to serve

**1** Preheat your oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6. Spray a large, deep, non-stick frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium heat. Fry the onion and peppers for 5 minutes until softened, stirring frequently. Add the chicken and bacon, increase the heat to medium-high and stir-fry for 2-3 minutes until the chicken has browned a little. Add the garlic and smoked paprika with a splash of water, and cook until fragrant.

**2** Add the passata and half a jarful of water, and stir well. Crumble in the stock cube, bring everything to a gentle simmer and cook for 20 minutes until the sauce has reduced by about a third. Season to taste and stir through the chives.

**3** Spread one-third of the chicken and sauce mixture over the base of a large baking dish. Add a few spoonfuls of quark and top with a layer of lasagne sheets, breaking them up if needed to cover all of the sauce. Repeat twice, leaving some sauce to cover the final layer of lasagne sheets. Spread the remaining sauce over the top, then evenly dollop over the barbecue sauce and scatter with the mozzarella.

**4** Cover the lasagne with foil, then bake for 30 minutes. Discard the foil and bake for a further 10-15 minutes, or until the mozzarella is golden. Remove from the oven and leave to stand for 5 minutes. Scatter over the reserved chives. Divide the lasagne between 6 plates and serve with the salad.



## Tell us about the recipes you love

Have you got a must-try Food Optimising dish you want everyone to know about? A Saturday special that's low in Syns and hits the takeaway spot, a twist on a classic that's even better than the original, or maybe a Slimming World recipe that's the talk of your group? We want to hear from you! Email your recipe to [editorial@slimmingworld.co.uk](mailto:editorial@slimmingworld.co.uk) and you could be featuring in a future issue.



“A low Syn version of my takeaway fave: taco fries”  
PIPPA



“This doner kebab has become a family tradition”  
RONA



“When I discovered this katsu curry I had to make it!”  
DIUTO



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# foodnews

We've searched the shelves to bring you three pages of tasty inspiration



READY  
IN 10!

## Smoked salmon & chive omelette

Free

To serve 1, lightly beat 3 large eggs with a fork and season. Spray a small, non-stick frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium-high heat. Once hot, pour in the eggs. As the base begins to set, push the cooked egg into the centre

of the pan using a wooden spatula or spoon, allowing the uncooked egg to coat the rest of the pan. Repeat for 1 minute, or until there is no runny egg left, but the surface of the omelette is still moist. Remove the pan from the heat. Spread 3 tbsp fat-free natural fromage frais down

the centre of the omelette. Then top with 50g smoked salmon sliced into strips or salmon trimmings. Scatter over chopped fresh chives and a pinch of dried dill, then add a twist of black pepper. Carefully slide the omelette onto a plate and gently fold over to serve.

OMELETTE PHOTOGRAPH: NASSIMA ROTHACKER  
ILLUSTRATION AND PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES

## SEASON'S PICK Mushrooms

SPEED  
FOOD  
STAR

Veggies and vegans often use the 'meaty' texture of mushrooms to create satisfying meals – a trick that's not just for meat-free eating! Chopped and fried in low-calorie cooking spray, these fabulous fungi add hidden Speed Food to a spag bol – try replacing half the mince with them for a weight loss boosting twist. Or go full 'shroom and swap your burger bun for two juicy grilled portobellos.

LOVE  
YOUR  
FOOD

### 3 SUPER-EASY FLAVOUR TRICKS

Add a drop or two of these Free store-cupboard staples to turn your dinner into a taste sensation!

**Worcestershire sauce** – a moreish addition to all sorts of soups and stews, plus pasta sauces and tomato-baked eggs.

**Soy sauce** – try it stirred through fine green beans or stir-fried greens, or sprinkle over baked fish for a major flavour makeover.

**Tabasco pepper sauce** – a tiny dash spices up anything from pasta salads to skinless chicken legs!



Morrisons On Market Street  
Hot & Spicy Stir-Fry, Free  
£1.20 for 320g, V

## 5 FREE FOOD FINDS

Save your Syns for later –  
these buys are all Free!

Sainsbury's  
Five Beans in  
Tasty Tomato  
Sauce, Free  
45p for 400g,  
Vegan



Morrisons  
Vegetable  
Mix with  
Pasta, Free  
70p for 500g,  
Vegan

Yorkshire Tea  
Toast & Jam  
Brew, Free  
(without milk),  
£1.50 for  
40 teabags,  
Asda, Vegan



Slimming World Braised Steak  
& Root Vegetable Mash, Free  
£3 for 550g, Iceland, \*

\* You'll find these products in the freezer cabinets – look out for the symbol across the Food news pages





**Tesco Mussels, King Prawns & Squid in a Tomato & Herb Sauce**, 2½ Syns per 450g pack; £3.50. [V]

## 5 FAB SYN STRETCHERS

Make your Syns go even further with these top supermarket picks...



**Sainsbury's Ready to Eat Lemon, Garlic & Herb Chicken Breast Mini Fillets**, 1 Syn per 120g pack; £1.90.

**Asda Vegetarian Chickpea & Lentil Dhal**, 1 Syn per 400g can; £1.20. [V]



**The Turkey Kitchen Katsu Steaks**, 3 Syns per steak; £3.75 for 2, Sainsbury's.

**Co-op 2 Kiln Roasted Salmon Fillets in a Sweet Chilli Marinade**, 1½ Syns per ½ pack; £5 for 180g.



## Your favourite comfort food!

**Slimming World members tell us the meals that hit the spot on chilly days**

- My family love roast chicken (skin and visible fat removed), with skin-on potatoes cooked in my air fryer in low-calorie cooking spray, broccoli, carrots, sweetcorn, cauliflower and 150ml gravy made up from granules (2½ Syns).  
**Leann Ormesher, Lancashire**
- Creamy mushroom pappardelle from Slimming World's website [right]. If I want to make it even more filling, I'll add cooked skinless chicken thighs (visible fat removed).  
**Colin Petchey, Tyne and Wear**
- I top baked potato wedges with lots of red onion and gammon cubes (visible fat removed) stir-fried in low-calorie cooking spray, then add a Healthy Extra portion of reduced-fat Cheddar and cook until melted.  
**Louise Sparks, West Sussex**



*Of claws we can't resist this handy spoon rest!*

**Crabby Spoon Holder**, £12, Red Candy

## WHAT'S THE BUZZ...?

### Alcohol-free tipples

Non-alcoholic drinks are everywhere at the moment, especially with the popularity of Dry January, and some do a pretty good job at mimicking the real thing! As well as being high in Syns, alcohol can also lower our resolve around high Syn foods, so cutting back can make a significant difference. If you choose to switch in alcohol-free drinks, do check the Syns, though, as some are high in sugar. Other ways to cut down the booze include using a measure, and having a soft drink between every alcoholic one.

## HEALTHY EXTRAS

**Just a few more of the latest 'a' and 'b' options added to our growing list**

**Alpen Chocolate Swiss Style Muesli**, 40g is a Healthy Extra 'b'; £2.50 for 550g, most major supermarkets. [V]



**M&S Food Lighter Greek Salad Cheese**, 65g is a Healthy Extra 'a'; £1.35 for 200g. [V]



**Aldi Acti Leaf Oat UHT Drink**, no added sugar, 250ml is a Healthy Extra 'a'; 85p for 1 litre. [Vegan]





# ENJOY THE TASTE OF WHITE BREAD, WITHOUT THE GLUTEN.

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\*2 slices from a Wholesome White Loaf 120 kcals, 1 x Ciabatta Roll 116 kcals

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SAME GREAT  
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# SWEET-SPIRATION!

ONLY 50 CALORIES\*

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(\*per wafer)





**Baxters Butternut Squash & Lentil Dhansak Soup and Jackfruit, Three Bean & Chipotle Chilli Soup**, 2½ Syns per 380g can; £1.55, Sainsbury's.



**HECK Vegan Italia Chipolatas**, ½ Syn each; £2 per pack of 10, Asda, Sainsbury's and Tesco.



**Naked Glory Tikka Tenderstrips**, Free £3.30 per 280g pack, Asda and Tesco.

## If you're doing Veganuary...

...or if you'd just like to add more plant-based meals to your week, Food Optimising is the perfect fit. Lots of Free Food staples are naturally vegan, including all Speed Foods, potatoes, rice, pulses, couscous and pasta (just check it's made without egg). Plain and unsweetened almond, soya and rice milks (with added calcium) are all Healthy Extra 'a' choices – check your Food Optimising book or app for the correct amounts of each – and many 'b' choices will also be suitable. For more advice and tasty tips, visit [member.slimmingworld.co.uk/features/vegan-diet](http://member.slimmingworld.co.uk/features/vegan-diet). You could also try these options (right) – they're Free or low Syn!



**Sainsbury's Moroccan Style Vegetable Couscous**, 1 Syn per 135g steam bag; £2 for 4.

**Linda McCartney's Vegetarian Meatballs**, 1½ Syns per 4 meatballs; £2.50 per 240g pack, most major supermarkets.



## Advert Syn values

Find the Syn values of all advertised products here

- **Arla**, B.O.B skimmed milk, 300ml counts as a Healthy Extra 'a' or 2 Syns per 100ml.
- **Bannisters**, 8 Baked Jacket Potatoes, ½ Syn per potato (without butter); 4 Baked Jacket Potatoes, 1 Syn per potato (without butter).
- **Eatlean Cheese**, 70g counts as a Healthy Extra 'a' or 6 Syns.
- **Fibre One**, Chocolate Fudge Brownies, 4 Syns per bar.
- **Filippo Berio**, Extra Virgin Olive Oil Spray and Mild & Light Olive Oil Spray, both ½ Syn per 7 sprays.
- **Finn Crisp**, Original Sourdough Rye Thins, 6 thins

count as a Healthy Extra 'b' or 1 Syn each.

- **Frylight**, Rapeseed Oil, low-calorie cooking spray, Free.
- **Hartley's**, 10 Cal Strawberry Flavour Jelly, ½ Syn per 175g pot.
- **Heck**, Chicken Italia and Vegan Italia, both ½ Syn per chipolata; Reduced Fat Pork Sausages, 1½ Syns per sausage.
- **Heck Seasoned Mince**, Spring Chicken, 1½ Syns per 100g; Chicken Italia and Simply Chicken, both 2 Syns per 100g.
- **Hellmann's**, Fat Free Original Vinaigrette, Free; Lighter than Light Mayonnaise, ½ Syn per level tbsp.

- **Hi-fi**, Dark Choc Mint, 2 bars count as a Healthy Extra 'b' or 3 Syns per bar, available to members of Slimming World groups and Slimming World Online.
- **Müllerlight Skyr**, Salted Caramel, ½ Syn per 150g pot.
- **New York Bakery Co.**, Soft Seeded Bagel Thins, 1 bagel thin counts as a Healthy Extra 'b' or 6 Syns.
- **Pink 'n' Whites**, 2½ Syns per wafer.
- **Primula**, Light Cheese, 75g counts as a Healthy Extra 'a' or 6 Syns.
- **Promise Gluten Free**, Multi Seeded Rolls, 1 roll counts as a Healthy Extra 'b' or 4½ Syns; Soft White Rolls, 1 roll counts as a Healthy Extra 'b' or 4½ Syns.
- **Richmond**, Chicken Sausages, frozen, 2½ Syns per sausage; Chicken Sausages, chilled, 3 Syns per sausage.

- **Schär Gluten Free**, Ciabatta Rolls, 1 roll counts as a Healthy Extra 'b' or 5½ Syns; Wholesome White Loaf, 2 slices count as a Healthy Extra 'b' or 6 Syns.
- **Slimming World**, All Day Breakfast, Beef Tagliatelle, Beef Quarter Pounders, Chicken & Sweetcorn Chowder, Chips, Tomato & Basil Sauce, and Vegetable Biryani, all Free, from Iceland.
- **Sweet Freedom**, Caramel Syrup, Fruit Syrup, Gingerbread Syrup and Golden Syrup, all ½ Syn per level tsp.
- **Wilson's Country**, You Say Potato Fresh Cut Chips, Free.

*Slimming World, Food Optimising, Free, Free Food, Healthy Extra, Healthy Extras, (SP), Speed Foods, Syn and Syns are registered trademarks of Miles-Bramwell Executive Services Ltd trading as Slimming World.*



# Liven up lunch

Make your midday meal something to really look forward to with these five delicious ideas



Easy-bake  
family pleaser



## Ratatouille frittata with chips

**EVERYDAY EASY**

Serves 4

Free

Ready in 1 hour 45 minutes

2 onions, thickly sliced  
 2 large courgettes, thickly sliced  
 2 red peppers, deseeded and diced  
 1 large aubergine, diced  
 Low-calorie cooking spray  
 16 cherry tomatoes on the vine  
 6 large eggs  
 800g floury potatoes, such as Maris Piper or King Edward, peeled and cut into chips  
 1 tsp dried oregano  
 150g lean cooked ham, visible fat removed, chopped  
 6 large basil leaves, shredded  
 Mixed salad leaves, to serve

**1** Preheat your oven to 220°C/fan 200°C/gas 7. Spread the onions, courgettes, peppers and aubergine on 2 large, non-stick baking trays in a single layer and spray with low-calorie cooking spray. Season and bake on the top shelf of the oven for 35-40 minutes, adding the tomatoes to the edges of the trays for the final 15 minutes.

**2** Meanwhile, beat the eggs in a measuring jug with some seasoning. Line a 22cm-square baking tin with baking paper.

**3** Transfer the roasted tomatoes to a plate, and cover tightly with foil and a tea towel to keep warm. Leave the rest of the veg to cool. Reduce the oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6. Spread the chips on a large, non-stick baking tray in a single layer and spray with low-calorie cooking spray. Season, sprinkle with the oregano and bake for 20 minutes.

**4** While the chips are cooking, arrange the vegetables, ham and basil in the baking tin. Pour over the eggs, gently shaking the tin a few times to help the eggs spread through the vegetables.

**5** Turn the chips, then place on the top shelf of the oven. Put the frittata on the bottom shelf. Bake the chips and frittata for 30-35 minutes until the frittata is set and golden (if the chips need a further 5 minutes to crisp up, you can remove the frittata and leave to stand while they finish cooking). Slice the frittata into 4 and serve with the tomatoes, chips and salad.



Flask friendly,  
feel-good food

## Corn & jalapeño chowder

**EVERYDAY EASY**

Serves 4

Free

Vegan

Ready in 50 minutes

3 medium floury potatoes, such as Maris Piper or King Edward, peeled and cut into 1cm cubes

Low-calorie cooking spray

1 medium leek, rinsed and finely chopped

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

1 carrot, cut into 1cm cubes

2 celery sticks, finely chopped

1 fresh green jalapeño chilli, finely diced

2 tsp ground cumin

2 tsp dried oregano

1 green pepper, deseeded and diced

900ml hot vegan vegetable stock

340g can sweetcorn, drained

1 large tomato, deseeded and diced

Juice of 2 limes

Tabasco red pepper sauce, to taste (optional)

**1** Boil a third of the potatoes for 10 minutes, or until tender. Drain, mash and set aside. Spray a large, non-stick saucepan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium heat. Fry the leek, garlic, carrot, celery, jalapeño, cumin, oregano, half the pepper and the remaining potatoes for 5 minutes.

**2** Stir in the stock and mashed potato, then bring to the boil, stirring well. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 15-20 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender.

**3** Add the sweetcorn, tomato and lime juice, and cook for a further 4-5 minutes. Remove from the heat and add the Tabasco (if using). Season to taste and scatter over the remaining diced pepper to serve.



3



## Prawn paella rice salad

**SUPER SIMPLE**

Serves 1

Free

Ready in 15 minutes, plus cooling

300ml vegetable stock  
1 tsp ground turmeric  
50g dried long-grain rice  
100g frozen mixed vegetables  
1 spring onion, sliced  
2 roasted red peppers in brine from a jar, drained and diced  
1 lemon, 1 end cut off to serve and the rest juiced  
Large handful of rocket  
100g cooked peeled prawns (defrosted if frozen)  
Pinch of sweet smoked paprika

**1** Put the stock and turmeric in a saucepan, and bring to the boil. Add the rice and cook according to the pack instructions. When the rice has 1 minute to go, add the frozen vegetables. Drain well, then spread the rice and veg out on a baking tray to cool the rice quickly.

**2** Once the rice is cold, tip the mixture into a bowl. Season and stir through the onion, peppers and lemon juice to taste. Transfer to a lunch box and top with the rocket, prawns and paprika. Add the end from the lemon, then seal and chill until lunch the next day – before eating, squeeze over the lemon, pop the lid back on and give everything a good shake.

### GIVE IT A TWIST

Swap the prawns for 1 sliced or shredded cooked skinless chicken breast

4

## Taco jackets

**EVERYDAY EASY**

Serves 4

Syns per serving 1

Ready in 1 hour

4 large baking potatoes, skins pricked  
500g lean beef mince (5% fat or less)  
Low-calorie cooking spray  
2 onions, finely chopped  
1 green pepper, deseeded and diced  
25g sachet Old El Paso Sweet Paprika & Garlic Seasoning Mix for Tacos  
300g tomatoes, diced  
1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped  
Juice of 2 limes, plus wedges to serve  
20g fresh coriander, leaves roughly chopped  
400-435g can refried beans  
½ small iceberg lettuce, shredded  
200g fat-free natural yogurt

**1** Preheat your oven to 190°C/fan 170°C/gas 5. Microwave the potatoes on high for 12 minutes, then place on a non-stick baking tray and cook in the oven for 30-40 minutes, or until the flesh is soft.





**2** Meanwhile, when the potatoes have about 20 minutes to go, dry-fry the mince in a non-stick frying pan until browned all over, then drain and transfer to a plate. Wipe out the pan, place over a medium heat and spray with low-calorie cooking spray. Add half the onions and fry for 5 minutes, or until soft. Add the pepper and cook for 2-3 minutes. Increase the heat to high, then add the mince back to the pan.

**3** Stir in the seasoning mix and 200ml water, and simmer gently for 5 minutes. In a bowl, mix together the remaining onions, tomatoes, chilli, lime juice and coriander. Heat the refried beans in a microwave or small pan, then put in a separate bowl.

**4** Split open the jackets and serve each with a quarter of the mince, and the salsa, refried beans, lettuce, yogurt and lime wedges for squeezing over.



*Fuss free and  
full of flavour*

## Tomato & olive pasta

### SUPER SIMPLE

Serves 4

Syns per serving ½



Ready in 35 minutes

Low-calorie cooking spray

2 red onions, sliced

4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

2 celery sticks, finely diced

400g can chopped tomatoes

2 tbsp white wine vinegar

2 tsp dried oregano

1 tsp dried red chilli flakes

250g baby plum tomatoes, quartered

1 yellow pepper, deseeded and roughly diced

2 tbsp capers, drained

8 pitted black olives in brine, drained and sliced

400g dried penne pasta

**1** Spray a large, non-stick frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium-high heat. Fry the onions for 5 minutes until softened. Add the garlic and celery, and cook for a further 2-3 minutes. Stir in the canned tomatoes, then add half a can of cold water with the vinegar, oregano and chilli flakes. Simmer for 10 minutes.

**2** Add the plum tomatoes, pepper, capers and olives. Season and simmer for a further 10 minutes. Meanwhile, cook the pasta according to the pack instructions, then drain. Add the pasta to the sauce and stir. Divide between 4 bowls, serving a quarter of the olives per person.

## Quick sandwich fillings – all Free!

Use to fill 2 slices wholemeal bread from a small 400g loaf (a Healthy Extra 'b')

### RAINBOW TUNA

Drained canned tuna in spring water mixed with fat-free natural fromage frais, finely chopped cucumber, red onion and pepper, and a squeeze of lemon juice.

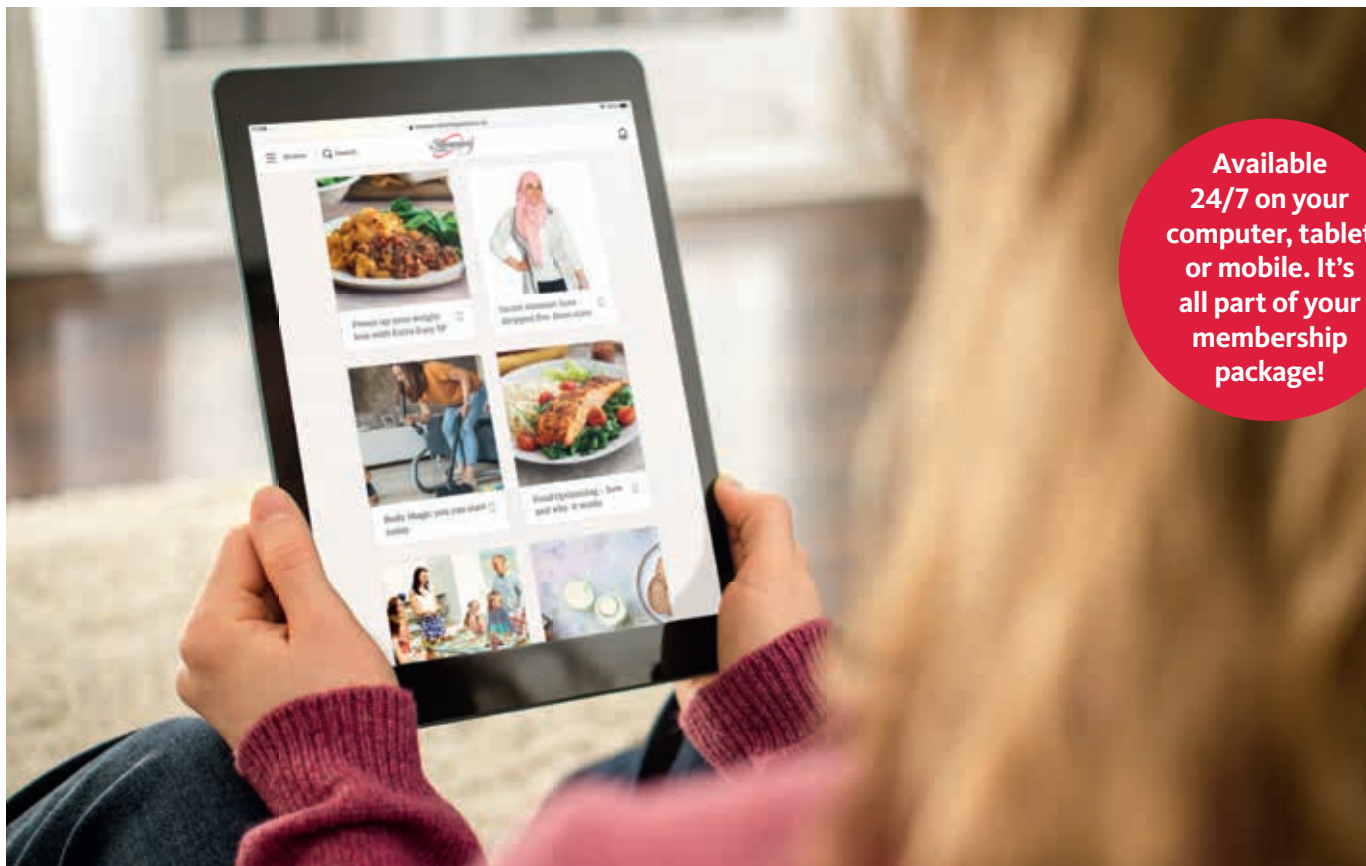
### CORONATION CHICKEN

Diced fresh mango and cooked skinless chicken mixed with fat-free natural yogurt, chopped fresh coriander and a pinch of curry powder.

### CREAMY SMOKED SALMON

Chopped smoked salmon trimmings mixed with plain quark, finely chopped fresh chives or dill, and a squeeze of lemon juice.





# Tap into Slimming World support, all week long!

Did you know that as a Slimming World member you get exclusive access to LifelineOnline, the members-only website, *and* the Slimming World app? It's all part and parcel of your Slimming World support – at no extra cost

**N**othing can rival the special support you'll find at group. And there's a whole extra layer of support between groups, too – for help during tricky times, for meal inspiration, or for a motivational boost – all waiting for you on LifelineOnline!

## **Log in if you find yourself asking...**

### ● **'What can I eat today?'**

You'll find 1,400+ recipes online and on the app. Sort them by cuisine, prep time, even veggie/vegan options, then add your dish to the online planner. See your weight loss soar by getting into the meal-planning groove!

### ● **'What can I grab in the supermarket when I'm hungry?'**

Our barcode scanner (on the Slimming World app) is perfect for quickly checking

out food when you're just not sure how it fits into Food Optimising.

### ● **'How do I know what to choose when I eat out?'**

Browse our eating out articles online for weight loss boosting advice, tips and handy Syn values.

### ● **'Am I on track for a Body Magic award?'**

Add your activity to the online planner and we'll let you know how many minutes you've done towards your next award.

### ● **'How do I get my slimming mojo back?'**

In addition to all the help you'll find in group, there are hundreds of insightful and enlightening articles on the LifelineOnline site (and coming soon to the app!), to help you overcome stoppers, create brand-new lifelong habits, and boost your motivation!

## **Don't miss out**

It couldn't be easier to start using LifelineOnline and our app to support your weight loss journey – visit [slimmingworld.co.uk](http://slimmingworld.co.uk) and click on 'Register your group card' in the top right-hand corner, or ask your Consultant for details.

**Slimming<sup>®</sup>**  
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touching hearts, changing lives

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# Come in from the cold...

Chilly nights call for warming, feel-good food, which is why we're sharing three soul-soothing recipes from the new *Slimming World Comfort Zone* cookbook

Photographs: Nassima Rothacker

Chicken tikka masala soup,  
recipe p78





## Chicken tikka masala soup

**SUPER SIMPLE**

Serves 4

Free

SP \* (except the yogurt)

Ready in 45 minutes

1 small onion, chopped

300g butternut squash flesh (or ½ small butternut squash, peeled, halved and seeds scooped out), cut into bite-size chunks

1 large yellow pepper, deseeded and cut into chunks

3 garlic cloves, crushed

500ml hot chicken stock

2 tbsp tikka curry powder (see Cook's note on p43), plus extra to serve (optional)

2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes

4 small skinless and boneless chicken breasts

2 tbsp lemon juice

150g baby spinach

100g fat-free natural Greek yogurt, whisked with a splash of water

Sprigs of fresh coriander, to serve

**1** Place a large, lidded, non-stick saucepan over a medium-low heat. Add the onion, squash, pepper, garlic and 4 tbsp stock. Cover and cook for 10 minutes.

**2** Stir in the curry powder and cook for 2 minutes. Add the tomatoes, chicken and the remaining stock. Bring to a simmer, then re-cover and cook for 20 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked through.

**3** Transfer the chicken to a plate, leave to cool slightly, then cut into bite-size chunks. Stir the chicken back into the soup with the lemon juice and spinach, and stir until the spinach has wilted. Season to taste, then divide between 4 bowls. Top with a swirl of yogurt, a pinch of curry powder (if using), and the coriander sprigs to serve.

## Slow-cooker winter vegetable stew

**SUPER SIMPLE**

Serves 4

Free

Vegan \*

Ready in 7 hours 15 minutes

350g butternut squash flesh (or ½ small butternut squash, peeled, halved and seeds scooped out), cut into bite-size chunks

350g carrots, cut into bite-size chunks

75g dried pearl barley

75g dried red lentils

6 garlic cloves, sliced

3 sprigs of fresh sage, leaves chopped

300g celeriac, peeled and cut into bite-size chunks

350g waxy potatoes, such as Desiree, cut into bite-size chunks

1 litre hot vegan vegetable stock

1 vegan vegetable stock pot

2 celery sticks, sliced

1 large leek, rinsed and sliced

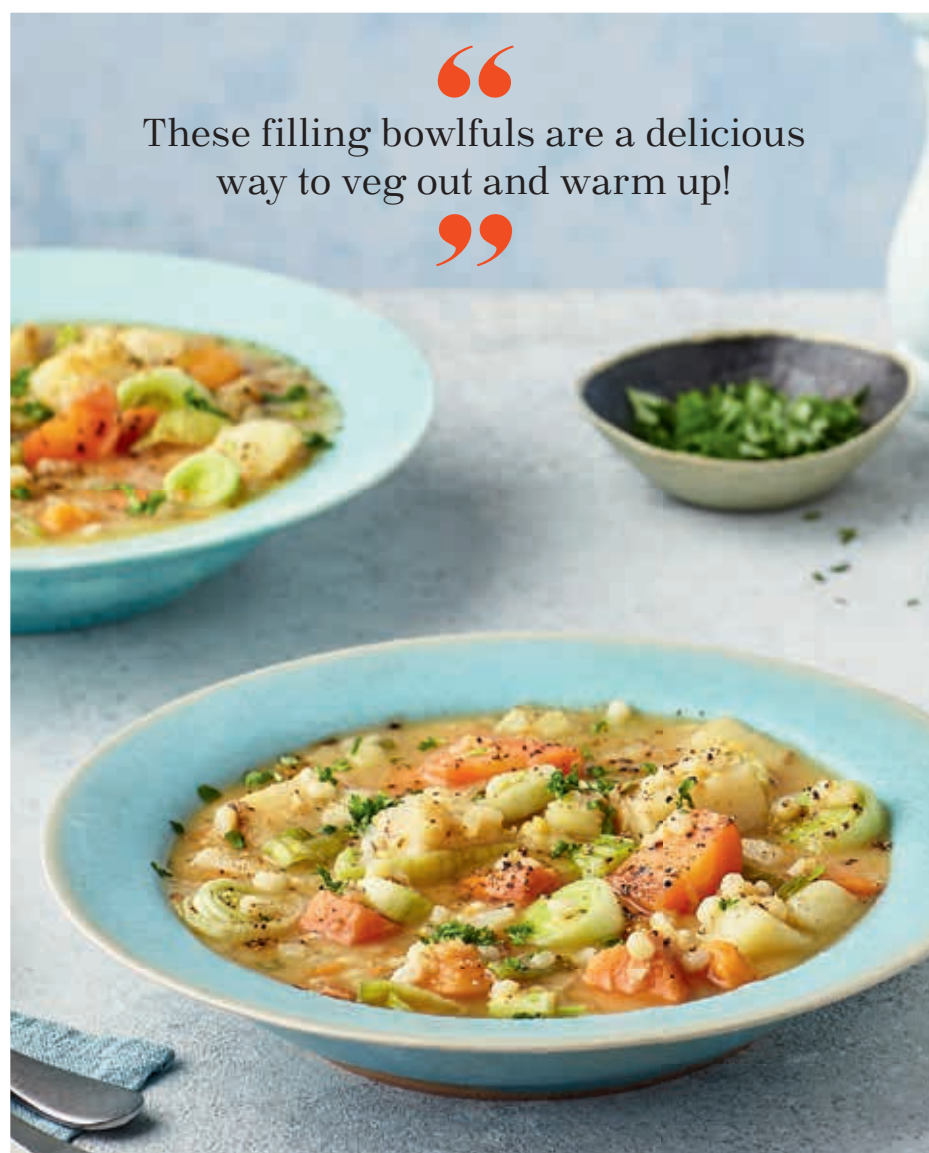
Chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley, to serve

**1** Put the squash and carrots in your slow cooker and sprinkle over the pearl barley, lentils, garlic and sage leaves. Top with the celeriac, then the potatoes. Pour over 1 litre stock, cover and cook on low for 4 hours.

**2** Stir in the stock pot, celery and leek. Re-cover and cook for a further 2-3 hours, or until the veg, pearl barley and lentils are tender. Divide between 4 bowls, and top with the parsley and a twist of black pepper.

### DON'T HAVE A SLOW COOKER?

Put the squash, carrots, celeriac, potatoes and 4 tbsp stock in a very large, lidded saucepan. Cover and cook over a high heat for 10 minutes, adding more stock if needed. Add the celery and leek, then stir in everything else except the parsley, re-cover and simmer for 30-40 minutes. Season to taste and top with the parsley.



“These filling bowlfuls are a delicious way to veg out and warm up!”





## Minted lamb, pea & potato bake

**EVERYDAY EASY**

Serves 4

Free

Ready in 1 hour

4 lean lamb leg steaks, visible fat removed

3 garlic cloves, finely chopped

4 sprigs of fresh thyme, leaves picked and chopped

1kg small new potatoes, halved

500g carrots, cut into batons

4 small red onions, cut into wedges

Low-calorie cooking spray

300g frozen peas

4 tbsp red wine vinegar

½ level tsp sweetener granules

20g fresh mint, leaves finely chopped, reserving a few whole leaves to serve

**1** Preheat your oven to 220°C/fan 200°C/gas 7. Put the lamb in a large, sealable food bag with the garlic, thyme leaves, a pinch of salt and lots of freshly ground black pepper. Seal, then massage the bag to rub the flavours into the lamb.

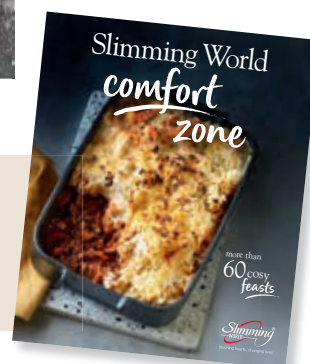
**2** Boil the potatoes for 5 minutes, then drain well and tip into a large, non-stick roasting tin. Add the carrots and onions, and spray with low-calorie cooking spray. Season, toss well, then roast for 25 minutes.

**3** Remove the lamb and all the ingredients from the bag and arrange on top of the vegetables. Scatter over the peas and roast for a further 15-20 minutes, or until the lamb is done to your liking and the veg are tender.

**4** Just before the lamb is ready, mix together the vinegar, sweetener and 3 tbsp water until the sweetener has dissolved, then stir in the chopped mint. When the lamb is cooked, drizzle over the mint sauce and reserved mint leaves to serve.

### IF YOU LIKE THESE RECIPES...

...you'll find more hot and hearty meals in the new *Slimming World Comfort Zone* cookbook. Take your pick from more than 60 Free and low Syn dishes to cosy up with when it's cold outside, from bakes and roasts to soups, stews and more. Price £4.95/€7.95 to members of Slimming World groups and Slimming World Online.





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tomato & basil sauce



beef tagiatelle



chips



exclusive to  
Iceland







quarter pounder  
beef burgers

vegetable biryani



The full Slimming World range may not be available in smaller Iceland stores. Please check with your local store for more details.

**Slimming<sup>®</sup>  
WORLD**





The combination of  
gooey, toasted meringue  
and cold ice cream  
will win you over



# Timeless classics

From showstopping baked Alaska to warm and cosy rice pudding, we've given these wintertime favourites a lightened-up makeover

Photographs: **Toby Scott**

## Baked Alaska

It's easy to see why this stunning retro dessert has stood the test of time

### A LITTLE EFFORT

Serves 10

Syns per serving 5



Ready in 40 minutes, plus freezing

900ml reduced-fat vanilla ice cream, softened

100g fresh raspberries, plus an extra handful to decorate

### For the meringue:

3 large egg whites, preferably from medium-fresh eggs\*

90g icing sugar

**1** Line a 1-litre mixing bowl with 2 layers of cling film, allowing it to overhang. Spoon the ice cream into a separate mixing bowl, then stir through the raspberries. Transfer the ice cream to the lined bowl with

a spatula, then smooth the top. Freeze for at least 3 hours, or until solid.

**2** Preheat your oven to 240°C/fan 220°C/gas 9. Add the egg whites to a large, clean, heatproof glass bowl set over a pan of just-boiled water, ensuring the bowl doesn't touch the water. Sift over the sugar, then use an electric hand whisk to whip the mixture into glossy meringue – it will take 4-5 minutes. Once the peaks flop when the whisk is removed (don't let them get too stiff), remove the bowl and whisk slowly for 1-2 minutes to cool.

**3** Remove the ice cream from the freezer. Use the cling film to gently pull it out of the bowl, invert the ice cream onto a serving plate, then

carefully peel off the cling film. Spoon the meringue in swirls all over the ice cream so it's completely covered. Bake in the oven for 3-4 minutes, or until lightly browned, or brown with a chef's blowtorch. Cut into 10 equal slices and serve immediately, topping with the extra raspberries to decorate.

### COOK'S NOTE

We used a chef's blowtorch to get the golden effect on the meringue. If you're using your oven, the result will look more evenly browned

*\*Pregnant women, the elderly, babies and toddlers are advised not to eat raw or partially cooked eggs, unless eating eggs showing the British Lion stamp*






## Apple & blackberry granola crumble

The crunchy, nutty topping takes this winter warmer to the next level

### EVERYDAY EASY

Serves 6

Syns per serving 4½

  (see Cook's note)

Ready in 40 minutes

400g eating apples, peeled, cored and cut into 3cm chunks

2 level tbsp sweetener granules

150g fresh or frozen blackberries

### For the crumble:

75g lower-sugar granola

¼ tsp ground cinnamon

Fat-free natural fromage frais, to serve

**1** Preheat your oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6. Mix together the apples and sweetener in a non-stick, lidded saucepan with 100ml water. Cover and cook over a medium heat for 5 minutes. Add the blackberries, then transfer everything to a baking dish.

**2** Mix together the granola and cinnamon, then spoon over the top of the fruit mixture. Bake for 25 minutes, covering with foil after 15 minutes, until the juice is bubbling. Leave to stand for 5 minutes, then divide between 6 plates or bowls and serve with a dollop of fromage frais.

### COOK'S NOTE

The filling can be frozen at the end of step 1. Defrost when ready to cook, heat through on the hob with an extra splash of water, then transfer to a baking dish and continue from step 2

A heart-warming  
pudding that delivers  
comforting flavours  
with every mouthful



## Poached pears with chocolate sauce

An elegant dessert that's sure to round off a special meal beautifully

### A LITTLE EFFORT

Serves 4

Syns per serving 4½



Ready in 50 minutes

125ml no-added-sugar

blackcurrant squash

2 cinnamon sticks

2 star anise

2 large firm pears with stalks, such as Conference, peeled

2 sponge fingers, roughly crumbled

**For the chocolate sauce:**

30g dark chocolate, finely chopped

**1** Put the squash, cinnamon sticks, star anise and pears into a small saucepan, and cover with cold water. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat to medium and simmer gently for 20 minutes until the pears are tender.

**2** Carefully transfer the pears to a bowl and bubble the syrup for 10 minutes, or until reduced to about 400ml. Pour over the pears, then leave to cool as you make the sauce (at this stage, you could leave the pears in the fridge overnight, then take out an hour before serving).

**3** Put the chocolate and 2 tbsp just-boiled water in a heatproof bowl

set over a pan of gently simmering water, ensuring the bowl doesn't touch the water. Allow the chocolate to melt for 3-4 minutes without stirring. Once melted, stir gently, remove from the heat and leave to cool to almost room temperature.

**4** To serve, reserve the syrup, then halve the pears lengthways. Carefully core and slice each half into a fan and place on 4 plates. Top each half with a quarter of the syrup (discarding the whole spices) and a quarter of the chocolate sauce, then evenly scatter over the sponge fingers.





*Just when you thought  
rice pudding couldn't get  
any better, we gave it  
a chocolatey upgrade*



## Chocolate-orange rice pudding

This traditional favourite is back – with a dream flavour combo

### SUPER SIMPLE

Serves 4

Syns per serving 3½



Ready in 1 hour

100g dried pudding rice

400ml skimmed milk

1 level tbsp cocoa powder

1 level tbsp sweetener granules

2 oranges, 1 zested and juiced

4 level tsp chocolate dessert sauce

**1** Mix the rice with the milk, cocoa powder, sweetener, and the orange zest and juice in a deep, non-stick saucepan. Gently simmer for 50 minutes, stirring frequently, until the rice is soft and creamy with just a little bite.

**2** Slice off the top and bottom of the un-juiced orange. Stand it on end and, with a sharp knife, carefully remove the peel and pith, allowing the knife

to follow the shape of the orange. Slice into segments.

**3** Divide the rice pudding between 4 bowls. Top each with a quarter of the orange segments and 1 level tsp chocolate sauce to serve.



# touch hearts, change lives

as a

## Slimming World Consultant

*Inspirational, warm and caring people, our Consultants know what it's like to struggle with your weight, and they've experienced the joy of seeing their lives transformed. Now they're dedicated to helping others achieve the same success!*



### **As a self-employed Slimming World Consultant you'll receive:**

- ✓ an excellent income and flexible hours that fit around family life
- ✓ full training from a friendly team
- ✓ all the help and support you need for the next stage of your exciting journey with Slimming World

If you're a member on your way to your final target weight and you'd love to share with others the support, motivation and success you've experienced, we'd love to hear from you.

### **Join our amazing team**

Call **Maggie** on **0344 892 0434**  
(01 656 9600 from the Republic  
of Ireland) or email:  
**maggie@slimmingworld.co.uk.**

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*Find me in the chiller*



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AVAILABLE IN ALL  
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# FITNESS v FOOD

## which is best for weight loss?

Can exercise get you to target as quickly as changing your eating habits? Dr Jacque Lavin, Slimming World's head of research and scientific affairs, gives us the low-down

Illustration:  
Nien-Ken Alec Lu

### FITNESS

» It's a common myth that you can lose weight quickly by hitting the gym. In fact, you'd have to do an awful lot of exercise – more than most could manage! – to get anywhere near the weekly results you get from Food Optimising. And because physical activity reduces your weight very gradually, initially it's generally not as motivating as changing the way you eat and seeing the number on the scales go down week by week.

» There are still loads of great reasons to add fitness into your day, though. It will boost the weight loss you're achieving through dietary changes. And research shows physical activity can prevent you losing lean muscle tissue as you slim, helping to maintain your metabolic rate and burn calories. There's even evidence it helps you to manage your appetite better, too.

» Being active is great for your wellbeing, making you feel good, busting stress, boosting your overall health, and reducing your risk of some serious illnesses (see page 98 for just a few of these). And because we know it's not always easy getting started, Slimming World's Body Magic programme helps you gradually fit activity into your life until it's part of who you are.



### FOOD

» When you're losing weight, your body is burning more energy than it's taking in. This is known as an energy deficit, and it's easier to create one by changing what you're eating than by burning calories through exercise. The brilliant thing about Food Optimising is that you can create this energy deficit without having to count calories, or feel hungry (see page 32 for more about Food Optimising). Enjoyable changes, such as having a home-made meal based on filling Free Food instead of a ready meal and choosing healthier snacks, can add up to an energy deficit without it feeling like a chore.

» Food Optimising makes weight loss easier because Free Food is lower in calories and satisfying at the same time. You're not hungry because you're filling up on Free Food, and including your Healthy Extras and varying your food choices means you're also getting a balance of nutrients to stay healthy. And enjoying your weight loss means you can break out of the on-it, off-it diet mentality for good!

» Seeing results on the scales each week – the kind you get from Food Optimising – is incredibly motivating. Start adding activity to your healthy eating now and by the time you get to your target you'll have developed a powerful habit that will help you stay there. That's because research has shown that regular physical activity helps keep the weight off. So, for success that really lasts, it's definitely food plus fitness for the win!

● If you're planning to start a new activity programme, we recommend you check with your GP first – especially if you have an existing health condition, such as high blood pressure, diabetes or asthma. If you're pregnant, check the suitability of the activity with your midwife.



# ‘Dad would be so proud’



Danny Mann's father was the inspiration behind his weight loss journey. Read how he lost more than 10½st to honour his dad's final wish, and transformed every bit of his life for the better

Even by Yorkshire standards my dad was a straight-talking man who never minced his words. So it was no surprise to anyone that it was Dad who eventually set me on the path to my life-changing transformation. I wish more than anything that he was here to see me now, but I take comfort in the fact that at the end he knew I'd heeded his words. Dad had always been my hero, and now I'd like to think that he'd be proud as punch of what I've achieved.

My weight loss journey started in April 2019, at a very sad time in my life. Four months earlier and just two weeks before Christmas, my 68-year-old dad, Stephen, was told that his cancer was terminal. He'd been having treatment for skin cancer for about five years after discovering a lump on his foot.

Typically stoic, Dad insisted that everyone should 'continue as normal, treat me no differently, we all just carry on'. I tried, but it felt to me like the end of the world. The news was still sinking in a few weeks later when he was released from hospital and came over to visit. While my wife, Deborah, was playing with the kids – Harry, then five, and Rosie, two – in another room, Dad and I sat together in the kitchen sharing a pot of tea.

There was a natural pause in our conversation when Dad fixed me with a steady gaze. 'I'm not going to be here for that much longer,' he said. I was trying to

deflect, move him onto a more comfortable topic, but he carried on. 'So you need to sort your weight out. You need to be here for your family and for your mum, too.'

Looking back at him, I nodded solemnly. He was right, my weight was affecting my family already – so who knew what might happen if I carried on getting bigger? I wasn't larking about with my kids because any kind of boisterous games soon left me out of breath. And Dad wasn't the only one who'd noticed me slowing down. Deborah and my mum,

Elizabeth, had already joined forces to try to convince me to lose weight, and it had been cropping up in conversation for months. But somehow, Dad could get through to me like nobody else.

I thought back to something that had happened recently at work. My job as a heating engineer installing systems on construction sites was physically demanding – and being overweight made it exhausting. One afternoon, I was working in an old Victorian property as foreman with my two colleagues. One of them had gone down into the floor space and I needed to join him in the hole to show him what needed to be done. As I lowered myself down, I felt the floorboards dig into my waist and I realised I was stuck fast – I couldn't drop another inch and was unable to haul myself up. All >

## Meet Danny

**Danny Mann, 33, is a heating engineer. He lives in Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire, with his wife, Deborah, and their children, Harry, seven, and Rosie, three**

Height: 5ft 11ins  
Starting weight: 24st 8½lbs  
Weight now: 14st

**WEIGHT LOST:  
10st 8½lbs**

*Danny is a target member of Tamina Oates's Slimming World group in Halifax, West Yorkshire*





**NOW** We enjoy going on family walks in the countryside

**THEN** Even just playing with the kids would tire me out



*One of my favourite things to do is go out on my bike – I love taking in the fresh air and powering up hills*



**THEN** Doing simple things would leave me feeling out of breath

**NOW** I'm fitter than I've been in years – and it's great!



I could do was call for help, to howls of laughter from my workmate below.

My colleague above came to my assistance and grabbed my wrists – although not before taking a moment to snap a picture on his phone. With lots of pushing from below and pulling from above they eventually managed to free me. I gamely joined in with the laughter, then when I told Deborah about it later, rather than laughing with me, she looked concerned.

It wasn't the only way my weight had been affecting my job. Some days I struggled to tie my boots, and getting around a big site left me feeling worn out. And now I even had photographic evidence that my size was getting in the way. But it was Dad's man-to-man talk that really made up my mind.

### The first step

While Deborah had been telling me for weeks that I'd enjoy going to a Slimming World group, I had serious doubts. By nature I'm a pretty shy guy, so the idea of being in a roomful of strangers was daunting. Deborah wanted to lose weight, too, though, so when she said she'd join with me I agreed to give it a go. On that first day at group the Consultant, Tamina, and the other members were so friendly that I immediately felt at ease, and they were full of brilliant tips and ideas to help us get started. Then came the time to find out my weight and I had to look twice at the number that flashed up: 24st 8½lbs – far more than I'd thought. I was worried I'd find it really hard to lose weight, so when Tamina asked me to set my target, I said I wanted to get down to 20st. Her confidence that I could do it made me feel more positive and I left ready for the challenge.

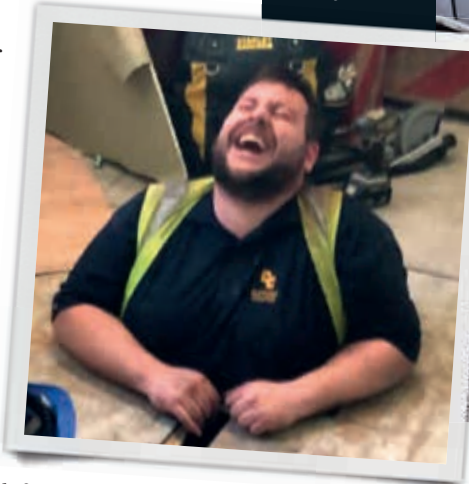
And at first, it definitely felt daunting. The takeaway fry-ups, pies, and fish and chips I'd been having on site every day, the four or five cans of beer I'd drink in front of the TV every evening – all of it had to change. Deborah and I started planning our meals for the week together. We stuck with what we knew to begin with – Food Optimising spag bol and roast dinners – gradually getting more adventurous. Soon we'd developed a new tradition, frittata Mondays, packing our wedges of omelette with veg such as sweet potato, spinach and red onion, and playing around with different combinations. I discovered a low Syn Chinese sauce mix, which I'd use to make a chicken, mushroom and pea curry that I'd serve with rice. It tasted just as good as the one I'd usually order from the Chinese, and I absolutely loved that I could have an on-plan version for my Saturday night in, along with a beer using my Syns.

I soon became a fan of overnight oats, topped with strawberries, blueberries and raspberries, and that's what I'd have for breakfast most days. And instead of fish and chips at work for lunch, I'd have leftovers from the previous night's Food Optimising



**THEN** My size meant I got stuck in a hole one day at work

**NOW** I've got the energy to dash around all day on site



dinner, or home-made pasta soup. In two weeks I'd lost a stone, never once having felt hungry. Collecting that one-stone certificate so soon gave me the biggest push to keep going.

Six weeks into my Slimming World journey and 2st 4½lbs lighter, I got the call I'd been dreading. Downing tools I went straight to Overgate Hospice where Dad had been growing weaker by the day. He had slipped away quietly with Mum and my uncle at his bedside. All I could do was be there for them, but it was agonising. Later at home I sat red-eyed, staring into space, wondering how I'd be able to face the world without him.

Dad was the reason I worked in construction. My boyhood had been spent watching him tinkering on machines, and gazing in wonder at traction engines at steam rallies while he explained to my brother Stephen and me how they worked. We'd even go to watch him at work for the highways department at the wheel of his giant tarmac roller. He was our hero, and he was also a dispenser of wisdom. What was it he'd said? 'We all just carry on...'

'I want to go to Slimming World tonight,' I said suddenly to Deborah. She looked at me, frowning >



slightly. 'Are you sure? It would be OK to miss tonight.' I was sure, and an hour later we were sitting in group. When it was my turn to speak, I wanted to share why I was there looking sad and troubled. 'I lost my dad today,' I said, 'but I told him I would lose this weight and I'm doing this for him.'

As I barely held it together and Deborah began to cry, other group members were offering me condolences with tears in their eyes and congratulating me on my determination. It felt good and I knew I'd made the right decision to be there, honouring Dad's wishes. My grief was hard to deal with over the following weeks and months, but at the same time it also fuelled my conviction that I would change my life and do Dad's memory proud.

The weight continued to come off, and four months after joining I reached my target weight

of 20st. Feeling more determined than ever, I immediately reset my target to 14st. I began to feel fitter than I had in years. At work we'd started on a huge school site, which meant lots of walking around to speak to my team, and I discovered that I could get around easily now without feeling tired. Then, I started chatting to another member from my group, Ian, through our group's private Facebook page. We soon became friends and also started up a tongue-in-cheek weight loss rivalry with one another, motivating each other to start doing more exercise. He recommended I buy a fitness tracker as a way of counting my steps, and pretty soon I got the bug for walking, sometimes spending hours marching up the hills that loom over Sowerby Bridge.

### Ramping it up

With the tracker allowing you to challenge your friends, Ian and I would compete to see who could do the most steps over a weekend. Meanwhile, I was sticking to Food Optimising, too, and adding in walking as Body Magic was really boosting my motivation. I carried on losing weight and at the beginning of March, just before lockdown, I achieved my target of 14st. It felt amazing to have made it there in less than a year, and to be able to share my success with Deborah. She had much less to lose than me and had done brilliantly, losing 2st 9lbs, and looking and feeling fantastic.

Mum was really proud of me – I'd changed so much that when she came round to see me she'd sometimes do a double take. Harry and Rosie loved the difference in their mum and dad, too – not that they really noticed how we looked, but they noticed that we had more energy to run around with them! We got out of the house every weekend going for walks and playing games outside. It made such a difference to my energy and I was the first to run around after the kids, which was exactly what Dad wanted. I actually liked exercising and seeing my body change. I joined a gym, working out regularly, and I also discovered one of my favourite things

to do was go out on my bike. That was something that would have been unthinkable to me at my biggest. My friends and I formed a little cycling club, and we loved getting out on the moors in the fresh air and taking in the sights as we powered our way up the winding hills.

Recently, at the peak of one of my favourite cycle routes to Stoodley Pike, a monument at the top of a hill in the south Pennines, I paused with my thighs burning from the steep climb, looking out over the Calder Valley where I was brought up. I thought about how I've come so far, and how proud I am of what I've achieved...and that even through these strange times we've been living in, I never lost sight of the inspiration behind it all. With the wind whistling around me, I looked down towards my childhood home and said quietly: 'I did it all for you, Dad.' ●

*Now I've got so much energy, I'm the first to run around with the kids, which is exactly what Dad wanted*





**DANNY WEARS**

p91 and right: Jacket, H&M. Shirt and boots, both ASOS. Jeans, New Look

p92: Bikewear, helmet and bike, all Danny's own

p94: Jacket and jeans, both River Island. T-shirt, New Look

**DEBORAH WEARS**

Right: Dress and boots, both Deborah's own



**THEN** With Deborah's support I felt ready to lose weight

**NOW** Harry and Rosie love their new active mum and dad





# CHICKEN MINCE...



BECAUSE *healthy*  
CAN BE *tasty!*

NOW AVAILABLE IN SELECTED SAINSBURY'S STORES.



# “That feeling when... I took to the skies”

Losing 4st 8lbs has seen Damian Harriss's health improve and his energy levels soar! And now he's made a long-standing dream come true

Damian, 47, is a key worker delivering food for a major supermarket. He lives in Haverhill, Suffolk, with his wife, Denise, and has four children. He is 6ft 1in tall and weighs 13st 13lbs, having lost 4st 8lbs at Jo Johnson's Slimming World group in Haverhill



IF YOU'RE PLANNING TO START A NEW ACTIVITY PROGRAMME, WE RECOMMEND YOU CHECK WITH YOUR GP FIRST – ESPECIALLY IF YOU HAVE AN EXISTING HEALTH CONDITION, SUCH AS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, DIABETES OR ASTHMA. IF YOU'RE PREGNANT, CHECK THE SUITABILITY OF THE ACTIVITY WITH YOUR MIDWIFE. INTERVIEW: KEVIN DONALD. PHOTOGRAPH: GLENNYDOW-AVIATION

**M**y six-year-old son Fred's worried face peered down at me as I dropped to one knee, puffing and blowing. We'd been playing football in our local park for just a few minutes when I realised I couldn't carry on. Now my wife, Denise, who'd been watching, ran over. 'We'd better get you home and call the doctor,' she said.

My GP diagnosed high blood pressure and advised me that losing weight would help to bring it down. For the 17 years I'd worked in logistics with the Royal Air Force, I'd been fit and healthy. It was only after I left the services in 2006 that my weight had crept up, as I fell into a routine of takeaways and unhealthy snacks.

My mum, Pamela, had been going to Slimming World and doing really well. I wasn't sure if it was for me, but I knew it was working for Mum, so

I put my fears aside and decided to go along in April 2019. I was immediately put at ease by my Consultant, Jo, and the other members. And there was a bonus: since leaving the RAF, I'd missed having goals to motivate me. Now, I set myself the target of losing 4st 7lbs, inspired to start collecting those half-stone awards.

As the weeks went by, I enjoyed getting to grips with Food Optimising, and I steadily filled up my motivation board with certificates. I reached my target of 14st in less than six months and my energy levels soared. I started to go out on walks, which soon became runs, and then I discovered a love of cycling. Soon, I was running 10K races and cycling around London, Suffolk and Essex to raise money for the Royal Air Forces Association, which looks after veterans and their families.

Then an opportunity came up to do something really exciting – a wing

**THEN** After leaving the RAF and my weight and blood pressure increased

**NOW** I feel fit and healthy – and I've achieved my dream of doing a wing walk!

walk! Before, I'd been too heavy for the weight limit. Now I leapt at the chance, not only to take to the skies, but also to raise money in support of my favourite cause. On 29 September 2020, I was strapped onto the top of a First World War biplane and flown above the clouds at an airfield in Gloucestershire. It was totally exhilarating and when Fred saw the video of my face pulled back by the G-force, he couldn't stop giggling!

I've stayed at target for over a year and my blood pressure has come down. I'm so fit and well that I'm applying to join the RAF Reserves, and looking forward to getting back into the world I love, and have missed so much. Weight loss has taken me to new heights! ●

**#ThatFeeling** Share a photo of a special moment since hitting target on social media, or email it to us at [editorial@slimmingworld.co.uk](mailto:editorial@slimmingworld.co.uk)



**W**e owe a lot to our folks, from growing up knowing the words to every Beatles song to the texture of our hair, or whether we're able to roll our tongue. And they can also teach us a lot about our health, which is why your doctor might take an interest in your family history.

But whatever we discover about our parents' health, that doesn't necessarily mean history will repeat itself. While some people may be more likely to develop diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease or osteoporosis because of the genes they inherit, in most cases factors including weight, diet and exercise can make a big difference.

So, while you might not be able to change the way your hair goes frizzy in the rain, there's plenty you can do to influence your health. We ask the experts how much our risk of some conditions is passed down and ways that, through everyday choices, we can turn over a new leaf.

# Shape your *healthier* future

Your family history doesn't have to repeat itself. There's a lot you can do through simple lifestyle changes to influence your health destiny...

Words: Alex Lloyd Illustration: Susanna Harrison







### Heart health

**When your doctor asks if you've a family history of cardiovascular disease, it's because if a close relative has had a heart attack or stroke, it raises your likelihood of having one.**

That doesn't mean that there's nothing you can do about it, though. A combination of different factors adds up to your total risk, and there are many that you can influence. 'Stopping smoking, taking regular exercise, gradually losing excess weight and eating healthily will all help to lower your risk,' says Philippa Hobson, senior cardiac nurse at the British Heart Foundation. High blood pressure is very similar. While it does tend to run in the family, 'smoking, sitting most of the time, and consuming a lot of salt are likely to cause blood pressure to go up further,' Philippa adds. One key to protecting your heart health is to know your numbers, so you can use them to monitor whether your risk is creeping up. You're entitled to an NHS health check if you're in England and aged 40-74 to find out your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels, and how to bring them under control if they're a cause for concern. Alternatively, you can make an appointment with your GP. And when it comes to losing excess weight, the benefits to your heart start sooner than you think. 'Losing just 10 per cent of your body weight and keeping it off can help reduce raised blood pressure, risk of heart disease and stroke, and also help reduce the need for medication,' says Carolyn Pallister, Slimming World's nutrition and health policy manager. So small losses can add up to big health benefits!

### High cholesterol

**We all need cholesterol to help our bodies function properly, and it's the balance between the two types our body makes – LDL and HDL – that can have an affect on our health.** Some people just naturally make more cholesterol than others, explains Philippa Hobson. 'There's also an inherited condition called familial hypercholesterolaemia (FH), where a person is born with very high cholesterol due to a faulty gene,' she says. 'Although this is relatively rare, it increases the risk

of having a heart attack at a younger age, so it's important for medical professionals to know if there is a family history of someone having a heart attack in their 30s or 40s.' Men are more prone to high cholesterol than women, and the chances of developing it are increased for both sexes with age, along with eating a diet high in saturated fat and having certain health conditions. Carolyn Pallister says people with high cholesterol levels are advised to follow a balanced diet that's rich in fruit, vegetables and fibre, and lower in saturated fat. Losing 10 per cent of your body weight and keeping it off can also lower cholesterol levels. 'So if you're Food Optimising, your meals will fit perfectly with this dietary advice,' she adds, 'and you'll be losing weight, too!'

**'Losing just 10 per cent of your body weight can help reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke'**

### Type 2 diabetes

**If this is a disease that runs in your family, not only can you take action to reduce your risk, you can also take steps to reverse it if you've been diagnosed.**

While there is a genetic element to type 2 diabetes, not everyone who has diabetes will pass it down to their children, according to Professor Thozhukat Sathyapalan of the Diabetes Research & Wellness Foundation. 'There is an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes for those with a family history,' he says, 'but it'll be a combination of nature and nurture.' If you're from a black African, African Caribbean or South Asian background, you'll probably be aware that there's a higher risk, but all of us can take positive steps. In fact, Diabetes UK estimates that three in five cases of type 2 diabetes could be avoided through >





lifestyle changes, such as weight loss and regular exercise. Encouragingly, these changes can also help manage and even reverse the condition if you already have it, or if you've been told you have prediabetes. Weight plays a major part in your chances of developing type 2 diabetes, regardless of whether a parent or close relative has the condition, and 85 per cent of people with type 2 diabetes are overweight, according to Diabetes UK. 'A recent survey of our members with diabetes indicated that losing weight with Slimming World can lead to dramatic improvements in diabetes management, and even reduce the need for medication,' Carolyn Pallister explains. 'Over 75 per cent reported improvements in their blood glucose management and 60 per cent were able to reduce or stop their medication.'

age, meaning the condition tends to affect older people. And women are more at risk because they have smaller bones, which lose density when levels of oestrogen drop due to the menopause. 'Aiming for a healthy weight is what we advise, as there are risks both for people who are underweight and overweight,' says Sarah. 'Calcium and vitamin D are important for bone health and the overarching thing is to enjoy a wide variety of foods, as all nutrients have a part to play.' You may also want to take a vitamin D supplement, as while it's present in some foods, we rely mainly on sunlight to produce it. If you're Food Optimising your Healthy Extra 'a' choices are there to support your calcium intake, and you'll find a C symbol in your Food Optimising book next to Free Foods that contain calcium. Stopping smoking, cutting down on alcohol and being active can also protect you. Exercise stimulates bone repair and for the best skeleton-strengthening effects, go for a mixture of weight-bearing activities – ones that impact your bones, like dancing or running – and some muscle-strengthening ones, such as yoga, push-ups or lifting weights. Exercise can also help to improve balance and coordination, which makes you less likely to have a fall, and Slimming World's activity programme, Body Magic, is perfect for helping you build activity into your life in a way that works for you.



**Thanks to the hard work of scientists and doctors, we know more about the causes of cancer than ever before, meaning that treatments and outcomes for patients have come a long way.** It's true to say that many types of cancer start with changes in our genes, but current evidence suggests only three to 10 per cent of cases are linked to genes we inherit. 'Genes come together with environmental factors to determine risk, and around four in 10 cases can be prevented with lifestyle changes,' says Dr Rachel Orritt, Cancer Research UK's health information manager. 'That means there's still a lot you can do in terms of prevention. The top changes that make a difference for some types of cancer are stopping smoking, followed by keeping a healthy weight and having a healthy, balanced diet.' Carolyn Pallister adds: 'Research shows that the longer someone has been overweight, the higher their risk of certain cancers. Losing weight and keeping it off means you stop accumulating risk, and reduce it, too.' Genetics can play a strong part in some types of cancer, so if you're worried about a specific cancer that has affected a blood relative, Rachel recommends talking it through with your doctor. While we can't change the genes we inherit, there's so much we can do to take more control of our health. And since lifestyle changes have a habit of rubbing off on our nearest and dearest, you could be starting a healthy new chapter in your family story. ●



**This is a health condition that weakens bones, making them fragile and more likely to break. While we associate it with ageing, family history also plays a role, says Sarah Leyland, a specialist nurse with the Royal Osteoporosis Society.** 'Perhaps one of your parents has broken a hip, or a grandparent developed a curved-over posture – a telltale sign of an osteoporosis symptom known as spinal fractures,' she explains. 'But while a big part of our bone make-up and body type is inherited, there is room for change, and lifestyle can make a difference.' Bone mass decreases with

## Is being overweight genetic?

It's a common myth that some of us are just born 'big boned'. And slimmers who waited years before starting to tackle their weight often say it's because they believed they were destined to always be bigger than their friends. It's true that there are ways genetics do play a part in our weight – genes can influence our body shape, our metabolic rate, our muscle-to-fat ratio and even our appetite – but these are all things that we can also influence ourselves. Food Optimising is designed to help you feel full and satisfied while you slim, however hearty your appetite, and adding in Body Magic can help build muscle and increase your metabolism. So it's reassuring to know that whatever genetic hand you've been dealt, healthy weight loss isn't out of reach for any of us!

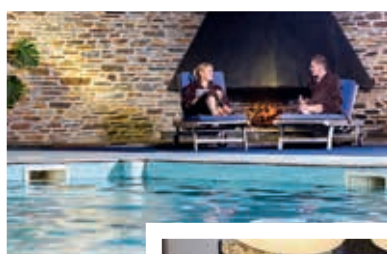
● If you're concerned about symptoms or any aspect of your family health history, see your GP. And if you're planning to start a new activity programme, we recommend you check with your GP first – especially if you have an existing health condition, such as high blood pressure, diabetes or asthma. If you're pregnant, check the suitability of the activity with your midwife.



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For more information about Budock Vean Hotel, visit [budockvean.co.uk](http://budockvean.co.uk). The prize must be taken by 12 March 2022 and is subject to availability. The competition is open to UK and Republic of Ireland residents aged 18 or over; guest must be aged 18 or over.

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**DATA PROTECTION:** By entering the competition, all entrants consent to the use of their personal data by Slimming World for the purpose of the administration of this competition, the winner's name and county will be published in the July 2021 issue of *Slimming World Magazine*.



Fitter,  
healthier,  
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# How Ashli fell in love with fitness



Gone are the days when Ashli Sterling, 34, would do anything to avoid exercise. Now she's enjoying walks with her two dogs, days out with her family, and getting out for a run come rain or shine

**a**s I opened the front door, the howling wind nearly knocked me over. I looked down at our dog, Penny, who returned my gaze with expectant eyes. 'Are you sure you don't want to take her out, Danny?' I called over to my partner. 'No thanks, love,' he replied from the sofa. 'It's definitely your turn.' Realising I really wasn't getting out of it this time, I pulled up my hood, grabbed Penny's lead and braced myself against the cold. After what must have been the shortest dog walk ever, I joined Danny on the sofa, wondering how anybody did this kind of thing for fun.

Funnily enough, when Danny and I had got Penny a couple of months earlier, we'd really hoped having a dog would make us get out more – maybe even help us get a bit fitter. So far, it wasn't working. Although we did walk her faithfully once or twice a day, it felt like a chore and we got back into the house as quickly as we could. I'd never been a fan of any kind of exercise, really. Even if I was popping to the local shop, I'd reach for my car keys rather than my trainers, and as Danny felt the same way, we just didn't seem to get around to being active.

Over the years, I'd sometimes thought maybe I ought to get fit, but I knew I didn't actually want to. I'd lost count of the number of gym memberships

I'd taken out, only to go once or twice and never again. I'd convince myself there was always a reason why I couldn't go to the gym or out for a walk: it was too cold, too late, I was too busy. I knew deep down the reason was that my weight made it feel too difficult. Just walking up two flights of stairs in our three-storey house would leave me gasping for breath, and I'd have to stop halfway through the housework to take a rest.

I'd tried loads of diets, but nothing seemed to work. Meanwhile, I started avoiding having my photo taken and was sick of being the biggest one in my friendship group. Then Danny's mum joined Slimming World, and seeing how well it was working for her spurred me to join, too. That was in November 2016, not long after we got Penny. I weighed in at Alicia Myall's group in Northampton at 12st 11lbs and set my target weight at 9st 13lbs. When I found out I could use my Syns to still enjoy







As I gained weight, I'd try to avoid having my picture taken

a glass of wine or other treats, I was delighted – and it meant I never felt like I was missing out. In the first week, I lost 4lbs. Things were going well until, a few months later, some happy news took me off course...I was pregnant. When I told my Consultant Alicia, she explained how Slimming World works with the Royal College of Midwives. With my midwife's support, I could continue Food Optimising during my pregnancy to help me maintain a healthy diet and support me in getting the nutrients I needed. So that's what I did, and after my son, Joey, was born in October 2017, I only weighed 10lbs more than when I'd found out I was pregnant.

### Little by little

Now that I was a mum, those niggling thoughts that I should be more active took on a new importance. Alicia had told us about Slimming World's activity programme, Body Magic, and how we could build up gradually to an active lifestyle. As I had a step tracker, I decided I'd start by walking. I set myself a challenge of 10,000 steps a day, no matter what. Each day, I'd put Joey in his pram and head out

with Penny for longer walks than before. Some days I was shocked to realise I'd done closer to 20,000 steps by the time I headed to bed. 'It's definitely getting easier,' I told Danny, admitting that maybe I was actually starting to enjoy it a bit, too. Meanwhile, Food Optimising was still giving me great results – by June 2018 I'd reached my target weight, and two months later I reached my second target weight of 9st 4lbs.

As Joey started walking and toddling about, we'd head to the local park together. We always walked there, and I loved going down the slide with him. Once, I'd have hidden if anyone pointed a camera at me. Now I was the one shouting 'Smile!' and taking selfies with my family. In September 2019, we were lucky enough to be able to give Penny's sister, Martha, a home with us, too. Martha loved her walks, and both dogs were up and at the door whenever they heard the magic word 'walk!'.

I was proud of my 3st 7lb weight loss, so when the first lockdown happened I was determined that >

### ASHLI'S TOP TIPS FOR MAXING MOTIVATION

★ Starting small is definitely the best plan. Find what you can comfortably do now, and build up very slowly from that. Don't put yourself off with an unattainable challenge straight away.

★ If you can, find someone to walk or run with. This gives you an extra reason to exercise and means that you can encourage and support each other, too.

★ Get dressed in your walking or running gear as soon as you get up, so you're ready to go. And if you're going for a walk, all you need is comfy shoes and clothes you can move in.

★ Break down your long-term goal into manageable, bite-size chunks. I found the couch-to-5K app was brilliant for this, and you could do the same with any activity.





I used to wonder how anyone could find walking or running fun

I thought, 'this is pointless.' And if I couldn't run for 60 seconds, how was I ever going to run 5K? I didn't want to go home and tell Danny I hadn't even tried, so I gave it a go. And it was hard, but I just about managed it. 'It will get easier,' Danny said, trying to reassure himself as much as me, I think. But I didn't believe him. I just wasn't cut out for running.

While Danny struggled with injuries and had to give up, unexpectedly, I kept going. And little by little, I found I could run further each time – until I was running solidly for 30 minutes and completing my first 5K! As I rounded the corner, Danny was waiting at the front door for me. 'You did it!' he said, 'amazing!' I felt incredible. How had I managed to run solidly for 30 minutes when I could barely manage a minute not so many weeks ago?

Running had become my new thing and one afternoon, I'd just pulled on my trainers when Martha bounded up to me. 'It's not your walk time,' I laughed as I stroked her head. But as I was tying my laces, I had a thought. Why couldn't the dogs come with me? If they couldn't keep pace, I could always bring them home. Excited to try it, I grabbed their leads and off we went. Running with the dogs was brilliant fun – Martha took the lead and Penny trotted along behind me. From then on, the moment they saw me putting on my running gear they'd start getting excited!

### Loving the feeling

Even before I got my Platinum Body Magic award in group, I knew activity had become a part of my life. It makes me laugh to think that until the age of almost 34, I never thought I was someone who could love exercise. I've even got a WhatsApp group of running friends and we all spur each other on. The weather doesn't really faze me now, in fact, I quite like running in the rain! The feel-good buzz and sense of satisfaction I know I'll get afterwards is enough to motivate me no matter how wet, cold or blustery it is.

It's not just when I'm running that I appreciate being so much fitter. As a family, we're always out and about, and I can't wait until Joey, now three, is old enough to ride a proper bike, so he can cycle alongside me as I run. I love the fact that I just have to step out of my front door and I can head off on another adventure. There's no more wasting money on gym memberships I never intended to use, no travelling to a class, or special equipment to buy. These days, as well as feeling fit, I love every second of my active new lifestyle. And I honestly never thought I'd say that! ●

● If you're planning to start a new activity programme, we recommend you check with your GP first – especially if you have an existing health condition, such as high blood pressure, diabetes or asthma. If you're pregnant, check the suitability of the activity with your midwife.

### ASHLI WEARS

p102: Top, ASOS. Leggings, New Look. Trainers, Puma. Headband, earphones, earrings and watch, all Ashli's own

p103: Jacket, ASOS. Vest, New Look. Leggings, Fingleaves. Trainers, as before. Earphones, earrings and ring, all Ashli's own

Above: Top, Only at ASOS. Sports bra, Fingleaves. Leggings, South Beach at ASOS. Trainers, as before. Earrings, bracelet and watch, all Ashli's own

the change in routine wouldn't send me off course. Danny and I still headed out with Joey and the dogs for their daily walks, and we also started doing PE with Joe Wicks every morning. We were surprised at how tricky we found it, and were amazed we both kept going! Keeping up my fitness helped motivate me to stick to Food Optimising, too. Soon, Danny and I decided to step things up a bit and both downloaded a couch-to-5K app. 'I can't believe I'm even thinking about running,' I laughed to Danny, remembering how I always used to watch people running or jogging and think that I couldn't imagine anything worse! 'Me too,' he agreed.

We decided to each try the app on alternate days, so one of us could stay home with Joey. On my first day I pulled on a pair of old trainers, a baggy T-shirt and leggings, and plugged in my earphones. The app told me I needed to run for 60 seconds, then walk for 90 seconds. 'I can't run for 60 seconds,'

### FAMILY ACTIVITIES

It's funny how much my whole outlook on activity has changed since losing weight and embracing Body Magic. Far from wanting to stay indoors, I love spending time together outdoors as a family. Whether Danny and I are taking Joey to the park to play on the swings, or out on his scooter or tricycle, I'm full of energy to chase after my little boy.





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Meg's lost over 4st and got her sparkle back! Turn to page 24 for her story



# Unlock the brave new you in 2021

All you need to achieve your weight loss dreams already lies within you. And we're here to help you see it, believe it and make it happen, says Slimming World's founder and chair, Margaret Miles-Bramwell

Close your eyes, take a deep breath of that cleansing, frosty air and recognise that YOU are more than you ever realised.

You are stronger, more intelligent, more determined and more courageous than you have been giving yourself credit for. Hear those nagging, negative messages in your mind and recognise them for what they are – a load of rubbish! So right here, right now, DUMP THE RUBBISH! It's rubbish that has accumulated over the years – unkind remarks, sometimes a buried memory from childhood, not understood or analysed by your young mind. Unkind remarks from family and friends who maybe don't mean harm, but dole it out anyway. Unkind remarks you've told yourself when you haven't had the stamina to keep on a much too straight and narrow path, unsustainable by anyone falling short of sainthood standards.

Instead I want you to imagine a very young version of yourself, and allow your feelings of love for you, this precious child, to guide your advice to young you. Tell the young you how much potential you have and will always have. Tell the young you to choose your friends and your lifelong partners from people who recognise and value the strength, intelligence, courage and kindness you possess. Tell the young you how to manage those who don't 'get' it.

Let '21 become the key to your door. And let Slimming World show you how. Because we know how much courage and kindness you have in your heart, and how that gives you determination and common sense. We know this through years

of experience of our members – all unique, all different, yet all so similar – sharing the same respect for others, the same values, the same self-doubts and the same courage.

You've come to Slimming World for the same reasons as everyone else, and we cannot express how very proud we are that you have chosen us for your journey to a new, happier, healthier life.

We will be your guide and your friend throughout, and we will not give up on you, especially in those moments when, like many, many others, you're tempted to give up on yourself. We know those moments. We know how to help. Our groups are where this magic happens. So, live the life you long for – and let Slimming World be your extra strength and your guide.

So again... Close your eyes, take a deep breath of that cleansing, frosty air and recognise that YOU are more than you ever realised.

Together is how we do it. Together, always. Have a wonderful 2021 and let's grow together – in the nicest possible way!

Yours, as always,



Margaret Miles-Bramwell OBE is Slimming World's founder and chair



from the heart

Let '21 become the **key to**  
**your door.** And let Slimming  
World **show you how**





# ‘What I’ve learnt about... weight loss that lasts’

Karen Tucker is Slimming World’s Diamond Member of the Year 2020, and she’s heading into her 60s on a high. Here, she shares how she’s stayed slim for 16 years and why her healthy lifestyle is here for good

**Having a reason to slim helps you stay focused.** My motivation came to me when I was sorting through old photos and found a picture of my 40th birthday party from two years earlier. Memories flooded back of the day I’d spent scouring the shops for something to wear, my confidence through the floor. I’d had my kids in my 20s, but still felt like my body had never recovered from having three babies in three years. Nothing had fitted the way I wanted, or made me feel good. In the end I’d grabbed a pair of size-18 khaki trousers with an elasticated waist and the baggiest top I could find. That weekend, as friends and family filled the private room of my local pub, I didn’t feel like celebrating. Knowing I didn’t want to feel like that again I joined Slimming World, and I kept that picture as a reminder. Even now, nearly 20 years later, when I think back to that photo and how I felt that night, it still motivates me to stay on track.

**Staying to group helps you lose weight – and keep it off!** I’d joined Slimming World once before, not long after I had my kids, yet I hadn’t really stuck with it or made time for group. ‘I’m gonna, gonna, gonna...’ until it turned into ‘not going’. When I rejoined in 2003, the kids had grown up and I’d come to realise it was time to take care of me. My biggest fear was walking into group on my own, but I hoped things would feel a little less daunting once I got there. And they did! Everybody was

so friendly and my fear dropped away as I chatted to other members. It was clear we were all there for the same purpose: to get healthier and feel better. I couldn’t have been happier as I started steadily losing weight. There were bumps along the way – some weeks I gained and it felt disappointing – but my group would be there, encouraging me to remember why I’d started this journey in the first place. And when others hit a hump, it felt good to be

able to offer the same support and advice. Once, I drifted away from group for a while, then when I realised things were going off track I went back, feeling really bad about it. One of the other members said, ‘Karen, don’t beat yourself up, you’re back now.

From today, wipe the slate clean and start again.’ That really struck a chord, and helped me see how important group was to my journey. From then on, I went unless I was on holiday or unwell. After I’d hit target, and maintained my weight for a while, I missed a few sessions, and went back to find the scales had crept up. I told myself we’re all human and that sometimes life can get in the way of the

## Meet Karen

**Karen Tucker, 59, is a pharmacy technician and Slimming World’s Diamond Member of the Year 2020. She lives in Cleethorpes, Lincolnshire, with her partner, Ian, and has three grown-up children**

**Height: 5ft 5ins**

**Starting weight: 14st 4½lbs**

**Weight now: 10st 3½lbs**

**WEIGHT LOST:  
4st 1lb**

*Karen is a target member of Karen Wraith’s Slimming World group in New Waltham, Lincolnshire*



**I could never find clothes that fitted the way I wanted, so I stuck to baggy tops that covered me up**





“  
Being kind  
to myself  
when I hit  
a bump  
helped me  
come back  
stronger  
”

best-laid plans. So instead of feeling bad, I stayed positive and got straight on plan and back to where I wanted to be, knowing my group were behind me.

**Body Magic can get your energy soaring.** To help keep my weight loss from stalling, I decided to add in some Body Magic, as other members said it had given them a boost. To begin with, I took on a couch-to-5K plan, then I found a local cardio-based fitness class. On the first night, I stood at the back, self-conscious and determined nobody would see me from behind. All those mirrors at the front had to be avoided, too! But as the music began to thump, I was able to let go of the negative thoughts and throw myself into the fun of it. I started doing daily classes, including Zumba and Boogie Bounce on mini trampolines,

and even managed a few 5K runs. I was into my 40s with a bang (finally) and fitter than I'd been in years, which really lifted my self-confidence. Shopping no longer felt tiring – or upsetting. Now that I was a size 12, I could take my pick! I had more energy, too, which was helpful for the shifts I spent on my feet as a supermarket pharmacy technician.

#### **You can stick to plan anywhere – and with everyone!**

I must confess that I did find myself a bit of a slimming secret weapon... After I moved in with my partner, Ian, he took on most of our cooking, and it turned out he was a whizz at whipping up Slimming World meals! To make sure snacking didn't send me off plan, I kept hard-boiled eggs, chopped fresh fruit and cold cuts of lean cooked meat in the fridge, at the ready. Eating out with friends tended to be a little trickier; I think sometimes people think you're not enjoying yourself if you're making healthy choices – which isn't true! I'd usually order my favourite grilled chicken, with a baked potato and veg, and if I wanted pudding, I'd use my Syns. Most of the time, though, I wouldn't want one, and I'd often have to explain that I wasn't denying myself – I genuinely didn't fancy dessert. My mindset around food had changed.

#### **Once you've felt this good, you want to hold onto it.**

Returning to group was the best decision I ever made. I've kept the weight off for 16 years and this year I was thrilled to bits when I won Slimming World's Diamond Member competition, for members who've been at target for a year or more. These days, I walk five to 10 miles two to three times a week, with friends or with Ian, and do online classes most days, once or twice a day, depending on work. I'll be 60 soon and I know my healthy lifestyle is here to stay. I'm looking after myself, so that I can be here to enjoy time with my grandchildren. It's a joy to be able to run around with them or take them to feed the ducks. I don't think I'd be doing those things now if I'd never lost the weight.

**Being able to give back feels amazing!** Some of my closest friends are ones I've made in group and it's become a home away from home. I'm on the social committee now, and I love celebrating members' achievements, or helping them through trickier times. Every now and then, I'll show new members *that* photo and they can't believe the difference. It's so lovely when other members say I inspire them – if I can help one person on their journey, that's my job done. At times, maintaining has felt harder than losing the weight. The key is not to be too tough on yourself if you have a gain. Around a year ago, I put on 6lbs in one week (putting me at the top of my target range), which was really unusual for me. When I talked it through with my Consultant, Karen, she said, 'It's just a blip – don't give up, you know how to lose it.' She suggested I tried doing a couple of Extra Easy SP days, to give things a boost, and write down everything I ate that week, too. The next time around, I was 5½lbs lighter, something I often talk about to members who are having a rocky week. I tell them that sometimes things will bounce in the opposite direction to what you're aiming for – remember you've done so well so far, you know how to do this, and you will get to where you want to be. ●



# TERMS AND CONDITIONS



## Budock Vean Hotel Competition (p101)

**1.** Send your entry form by post to Budock Vean Hotel Competition, *Slimming World Magazine*, Clover Nook Road, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 4SW. Entry form must be received by the promoter on or before the closing date, 11 February 2021, or visit [slimmingworld.co.uk/magcomps](http://slimmingworld.co.uk/magcomps) and enter online by 11 February 2021.

**2.** Only one entry per person is permitted. No purchase necessary.

**3.** The competition is open to UK and Republic of Ireland residents aged 18 or over, except employees of Slimming World (or any other company that trades under the name Slimming World), Miles-Bramwell Executive Services Ltd,

Budock Vean Hotel or anyone professionally connected with this promotion (this does not include Slimming World's self-employed Consultants and Team Developers).

**4.** No bulk or third-party entries will be accepted. No responsibility is accepted by the promoter for entries lost, damaged or delayed in the post. Proof of posting not accepted as proof of delivery. By submitting a competition entry, you are agreeing to be bound by these terms and conditions.

**5.** The winner will be chosen at random by the promoter from all qualifying entries within 28 days of the closing date of the competition. They will receive a stay for two (winner and guest must be aged 18 or over) comprising: two nights' accommodation for two people sharing a double or twin Signature room; a bottle of Champagne in room on arrival; a full Cornish or continental breakfast (including coffee or tea and fruit juices) each morning and a four-course dinner each evening (including coffee or tea) in the hotel restaurant; a 90-minute river cruise for two provided by Helford River Cruises; two tickets to Trebah Garden; a 60-minute spa treatment each, and full use of the hotel's spa and leisure facilities, including swimming pool, sauna, outdoor hot tub, golf course and two all-weather tennis courts (golf club and tennis racket hire is available, and reservations must be made at the time of booking your break). All subject to availability. Travel to and from the hotel and any other expenses are not included in the prize. The winner and guest are responsible for ensuring they have valid and appropriate travel insurance. Dinner and spa reservations must be made at the time of booking your break. The prize must be taken by 11 March 2022, subject to availability and excluding Easter, Christmas, New Year, Valentine's and the hotel's Gourmet Weekend in March (5-6 March 2022). The prize is subject to all elements thereof being permissible under government Covid-19 restrictions in force at the time of stay. Budock Vean Hotel reserves the right to offer reasonable alternatives if necessary. If the winner has to change their booking due to changes in Covid-19 restrictions, then Budock Vean Hotel asks that as much notice is given as possible. The cruise is tide dependent, so will be at a fixed time during the winner's stay.

**6.** No correspondence will be entered into and the promoter's decision is final. The winner will be notified in writing by 11 March 2021 using the details provided on the entry form. Visit [slimmingworld.co.uk/privacy-policy](http://slimmingworld.co.uk/privacy-policy) to find out how your data is handled. If Slimming World cannot contact the winner or the winner fails to claim the prize by 8 April 2021, the winner will forfeit the prize and the promoter may draw another winner. The prize is non-transferable and there is no cash alternative. The prize value is correct at time of going to press. The prize cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or any existing bookings.

**7.** By entering, the winner agrees to take part in publicity relating to the competition. The winner's name and county will be published in the July 2021 issue of *Slimming World Magazine*.

**8.** Slimming World is not responsible for: (i) any loss, damage or liability to entrants in relation to their entering the competition or accepting the prize; (ii) any failure by the winner to comply with Budock Vean Hotel terms or instructions; (iii) any delay or failure due to an event outside Slimming World's reasonable control; (iv) any costs associated with the prize; (v) any terms or decisions of Budock Vean Hotel in relation to the fulfilment of the prize.

**9.** The promoter is Miles-Bramwell Executive Services Ltd trading as Slimming World. Promoter's address: Clover Nook Road, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 4SW. The prize provider is Budock Vean Hotel, near Helford Passage, Mawnan Smith, Falmouth, Cornwall TR11 5LG.

**10.** Miles-Bramwell Executive Services Ltd is part of a group of companies that operates the Slimming World business through a network of self-employed Consultants. Full details can be obtained from the promoter upon request.

**11.** The laws of England and Wales apply to this competition.

## Budock Vean Hotel Reader Offer (p101)

**1.** Offer valid up to and including 14 June 2021, subject to availability and excluding Christmas, New Year, Valentine's and the hotel's Gourmet Weekend in March (6-7 March 2021). To book, call 01326 252 100 and quote *Slimming World Magazine* offer to receive your discount of 13 per cent on the full rack rate. Offer is non-refundable and non-transferable, and price is prepayable at the time of booking.

**2.** You'll pay from £65 per person per night, based on two people sharing a double or twin Standard room. Price includes a full Cornish or continental breakfast (including coffee or tea). Or, you'll pay from £94 per person per night to include a four-course dinner (including coffee or tea). A 50 per cent single supplement may apply at busy periods. Offer includes full use of the hotel's spa and leisure facilities, including swimming pool, sauna, outdoor hot tub, golf course and two all-weather tennis courts (golf club and tennis racket hire is available, and reservations must be made at the time of booking your break). All subject to availability. Spa treatment charges apply, reservations must be made at the time of booking your break. The offer is subject to all elements thereof being permissible under government Covid-19 restrictions in force at the time of stay.

**3.** Both guests must be aged 18 or over. The offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other promotional offer or discount. Offer applies to new bookings only.

## Congratulations to the 10 lucky winners of our July/August 2020 competition!

**Müllerlight Shopping Competition** Carolyn Acton-Reed, Leicestershire; Debbie Gallagher, Dorset; Louise Green, Merseyside; Amanda Knowles, North Yorkshire; Karen Malkin, Warwickshire; Eileen O'Shaughnessy, East Sussex; Kate Pirie, Yorkshire; Leoné Robertson, Edinburgh; Sheenagh Surman, Buckinghamshire; Heather Tatum, Devon



Don't miss the next issue of

**SlimmingWorld**  
magazine

On sale 11 February

(earlier to members of Slimming World groups)





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# ‘We’re loving our active lives’



Your weight loss journey can open the door to lots of exciting opportunities, and one of them is getting into an activity you’ve always dreamt of doing! These five slimmers found that losing weight helped them up their Body Magic game – whether it was by falling back in love with an old hobby, discovering a brand-new one, or enjoying being active for longer.



## **‘I don’t let my age hold me back any more!’**

‘I used to use my age and weight as an excuse to say no to things. After losing almost 3st my weight was no longer holding me back, and I decided my age shouldn’t either! So, at 79, together with my grandson, Oliver, I rode the fastest zip wire in the world!’

Heather Dorling, 79, lost 2st 13lbs at Susan Phillips’s Slimming World group in Bromham, Bedfordshire



## **‘I’ve rediscovered my love for martial arts’**

‘I’d practised martial arts for 10 years before injuries and my weight gain put a stop to it. After I started losing weight at group, I also got back on the mats with the support of my husband and teenage stepson. We all take part in our local judo group’s online classes, in our garden or home dojo – with our dogs, Bracken and Honey, watching us!’

Alison Cameron, 43, lost 2st 7lbs at Nicola Garrod’s Slimming World group in Kincorth, Aberdeen



**'I'm more energetic than ever in my 50s!'**

'At 20st 7lbs my weight was making it harder to walk and affecting my job as a PE teacher in a primary school.

That's all changed since losing over 6st – my job is a lot easier now, and I've trekked in some amazing places, like Mount Garibaldi in Canada.'

Debbie Workman, 52, lost 6st 2lbs at Su Byford's Slimming World group in Leatherhead, Surrey

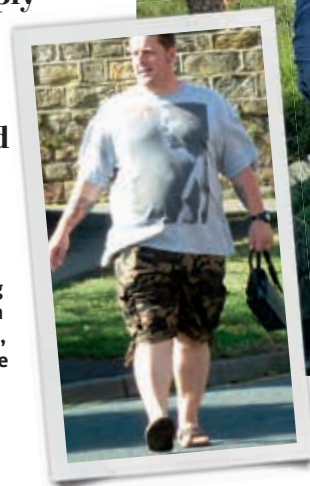


**'Losing weight helped my garden grow'**

'Six years ago, I discovered a love of gardening, but our garden was my wife Jo's pride and joy, and she wouldn't let me loose in it! So,

I took on an allotment instead. Working on it was hard at first, as I got out of breath quickly. Since losing weight, though, it has become much easier, and we have a plentiful supply of our own home-grown Free and Speed Food, too!'

Scott Ufton, 49, lost 6st at Amelia Christian's Slimming World group in Eastwood, Nottinghamshire



Fiona Barnard, 55, lost 2st 5lbs at Trina Booker's Slimming World group in Timsbury, Somerset

**'I'm in pole position now!'**

'I started doing pole fitness classes five years ago. But at more than 12st, I found it a challenge to keep up with the group – and some pole poses, like the Superman and this shoulder mount, were out of the question. After losing almost 2½st, I feel more confident in class, it's more fun, and I can now do both poses plus slow dismounts with ease!'

**OVER TO YOU** Have you got a weight loss story you'd like to share in the magazine? We'd love to hear all about it! Simply email a few details to us at [editorial@slimmingworld.co.uk](mailto:editorial@slimmingworld.co.uk) – and we'll take it from there!



# Strawberry cheesecake melts

Our easy-to-make Valentine's Day treats are a heavenly alternative to ice cream

## **SUPER SIMPLE**

**Makes 8**

**Syns per melt 1½**



**Ready in** 20 minutes, plus freezing

**1 reduced-fat digestive biscuit**

**75g reduced-fat soft cheese**

**160g pot fat-free no-added-sugar strawberry yogurt**

**Pink food colouring (optional)**

**1 level tsp each of heart sprinkles and freeze-dried raspberry pieces (see Cook's note)**

**You will also need:**

**8 cupcake cases**

**8-hole cupcake tin**

**1** Put the cupcake cases into the cupcake tin holes. Crush the biscuit in a small bowl with the back of a wooden spoon. Divide the crumbs evenly between the cupcake cases.

**2** Beat the soft cheese until smooth using an electric hand whisk. Add the yogurt and beat until combined. Add a drop of food colouring at a time (if using), beating between each

addition, until you get the desired colour. Divide the mixture between the cupcake cases. Evenly scatter over the sprinkles and raspberry pieces, then freeze for at least 6 hours, or preferably overnight.

**3** When you're ready to eat, leave the melts to stand for 5-10 minutes to soften a little. Peel off the cupcake cases and serve.

*Have a heart!*

## **COOK'S NOTE**

You can buy freeze-dried raspberry pieces from selected stores, such as Hobbyscraft, Lakeland and Waitrose, or online. Alternatively, you can use 2 level tsp heart sprinkles instead – Syns stay the same

## **SHARE YOUR CREATIONS**

#SWMagazineMakes



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