

UPDATE... READER MAKEOVER

Last month our four readers embarked on life-changing regimens with four of the UK's top personal trainers. After six weeks' hard work, **Alix Miller** updates us on their progress so far



Shirley Skyers, 27

CHALLENGE: Weight loss

The programme Shirley does two half-hour sessions each week with Dax Moy from Dax Moy Personal Training (020 7354 3550; www.daxmoy-pts.co.uk), plus two 15-minute sessions of 'integrated movement training'. Using a medicine ball, this routine takes every muscle and joint through every possible movement to build muscle and boost Shirley's metabolism. She is continuing her elimination diet (no caffeine, dairy, alcohol, wheat, sugar and red meat) as she's seen such good results.

Progress so far 'Shirley is an excellent example of what can happen when you integrate optimum nutrition, physical activity and motivation,' says Moy. 'Already, she has lost more than 6kg (13.5lb) of body fat and a whopping three inches off her hips and thighs. She's made dramatic improvements in strength and flexibility, too, through the integrated movement training plan. All this

with only a 10-15 minute workout at the start and end of each day.

'By breaking exercise into smaller chunks, Shirley feels less intimidated by it and less likely to skip workouts. I expect even greater things in the next phase, when we'll address her biochemical make-up and prescribe foods based upon her metabolic type.'

My highs 'I thought the elimination diet was going to be tough, but I soon got to grips with it. Within the first two or three weeks, I noticed a dramatic change in my body shape, especially around the waist. I couldn't believe I was seeing such results in so little time. My sleeping has improved and I feel healthier, fitter and more confident.'

...and lows 'I met up with friends one evening. I had good intentions but got carried away and ended up very tipsy! I felt extremely guilty, but Dax was great and reassured me that overall I was doing much more good than harm. To make up for it, I did a walk at lunch... and felt loads better.'



Beccy Linn, 27

CHALLENGE: Regaining the fitness habit

The programme Beccy's programme includes exercises, such as dumbbell bent-over row and forward ball roll, that address imbalances found during her functional evaluation and also help to blast stress. She does these two or three times a week, on top of a twice-daily flexibility programme, yoga and meditation classes, and sessions with a St John Neuromuscular Therapist at Optimum Fitness (020 8940 0888) to straighten out her uneven hips and a hyper-extended muscle.

Progress so far 'After only a couple of weeks, Beccy was back to the familiar feeling of gentle muscle fatigue the next morning,' says Roland Mensikovas of Optimum Fitness. 'She also began to notice her motivation for healthier food choices returning, one of the key areas we agreed to work on.'

'Becky is already seeing improvement in muscle tone from the tougher strength and endurance exercises. So far, Becky has made excellent progress, and even looks forward to her workouts.'

My highs 'The programme has given me the motivation to exercise again. One of the best things is that I've learnt a huge amount about my body - its strengths, as well as how to improve its weaknesses. I feel I'm learning skills for life. I can already see the difference in my body, particularly around the waist, upper arms and shoulders, and this gives me more motivation to continue.'

...and lows 'Finding time for my programme hasn't been easy. Optimum Fitness recommended I do relaxation exercises and yoga because I'm quite highly strung, but I haven't managed this recently.'

Iris Gilbert, 27

CHALLENGE: Fitness and diet overhaul

The programme Iris is cutting down on carbohydrates and sugary, processed foods, eating more protein and creating more attractive breakfast options. As Iris spends up to four hours commuting every day, she's doing shorter but more regular, structured programmes on her stationary bike, plus 12 strength exercises and six core-strength exercises, set out by The Tonic Personal Training (020 8405 1727; www.the-tonic.com). She boosts this by walking up escalators and taking a brisk walk every day.

Progress so far 'Iris has already managed to lose 4lb of body fat, which was what she set out to do when she began her fitness programme,' says trainer Jeff Archer at The Tonic. 'She did this quickly by making simple changes to her eating patterns. Swapping high-fat snacks for healthier low-fat snacks and drinking more water has given Iris more consistent energy. This in turn has made her long commute and tiring working day more tolerable.'

'She's noticeably toned her muscles and dropped a dress size on her top half. Her headaches and back pain have disappeared and Iris now knows how to set and achieve targets in all areas of her life. She misses exercise when she doesn't do it, which is a powerful sign that her training is becoming an established part of her lifestyle. We'll build on her success to



ensure that Iris's new-found progress and good habits remain part of her life forever.'

My highs 'As soon as I changed my diet I felt more awake and suffered fewer headaches. I lost 2lb too, even before I started working out, which was great. I was amazed to see results so quickly! Jeff's life coaching has helped me with my goals, prioritise the important aspects of my life and pinpoint what I still need to change.'

...and lows 'When the fitness routine was first demonstrated to me, it felt a bit daunting. And although I found the instruction good, it's hard to tell if I'm doing the exercises correctly without further guidance.'

'One week when I was very busy, both with work and in my social life, it was impossible for me to keep up the exercise routine. But I was surprised to find that I missed it, which was a first for me.'



Sophie Fielding, 31

CHALLENGE: Fitness beginner and stress busting

The programme Sophie's doing one hour's exercise a week (20 minutes on movement patterns, 40 on resistance work) at The Health Dept (020 7486 3386; www.healthdept.co.uk), plus one aerobics class a week. She walks to the tube twice a week too. Sophie's also eating more regular meals – rather than her previous habit of eating 60–70 per cent of her calories at the end of the day – to stabilise her energy levels, and is taking a multivitamin.

Progress so far 'Sophie's doing fantastically well,' says trainer Pete Williams at The Health Dept. 'Already, she's reduced her body fat from 29.5 per cent to 26.6 per cent, and lost an inch from her waist. Six weeks ago, Sophie wasn't strong enough to do a press-up in the kneeling position – now, she can manage 11. Her old score on the functional movement screen [which represents key movements such

as squatting, stepping, lunging and reaching] was 45.2 per cent; her new score is 78.'

'Overall, Sophie's fantastic results are a reflection of her good work. Nutritional adjustments have stabilised her previously unpredictable blood sugar levels, which were due to her erratic eating. This is partly why Sophie's energy levels have improved.'

My highs 'I'm really enjoying the exercise and not finding it too difficult to fit into my routine. And I've noticed a difference in my shape. I can fit into trousers that were getting a bit tight. I haven't lost any weight, just toned up, which is exactly what I wanted. I have more energy when I get home from work, too.'

...and lows 'The hardest thing to change has been my diet. But I'm definitely thinking more about what I choose to eat and making sure I include more nuts and fish, and having better breakfasts. I just need to keep it up.'

Next month: We reveal the final results...