

Losing Weight...My Story

Linda, 38, has struggled with her weight for decades but this year has managed to lose almost two stone after starting to do more exercise and switching to a healthier way of eating.

My diagnosis

"I've been overweight for 20 years and tried every diet under the sun and although I'd succeed initially, I'd always regain the weight I'd lost and then a few more pounds would creep on too.

After failing to lose weight so many times I have to admit I'd given up and began to comfort eat, snacking on chocolate, crisps and fizzy drinks.

A few months later my sister got diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and not being as big as me this got me worrying about the effect my weight was having on my health. I had already developed knee problems that my GP said were related to being overweight and at my last appointment he told me I was obese – an awful term and one I didn't want used to describe me.

My GP warned there could be other health problems ahead including Type 2 diabetes and heart disease if I didn't do something about it. She referred me to a dietician for some advice."

Treatment

"The dietician listened to my history of yo-yo dieting and suggested my first step should be to keep a food diary to see where I was going wrong. Using this as a starting point she then told me to make small realistic changes to make sure I would stick to it. She advised that a slower long term weight loss target of around 1lb a week was a sensible plan that I was more likely to stick to.

She also pointed out what was obvious – I wasn't active enough to burn off the number of calories I was eating every day."

What I did

- **I set myself a target of losing a 1lb a week:** *"I was about three stone overweight so knew it would take me a long time. For every 1lb I lost I saved £10 in a money box towards a new wardrobe of clothes."*
- **I started eating smaller portions:** *"I was eating nearly as much as my husband who is at least a foot taller than me which looking back doesn't make sense. I decided to cut down on my overall portions and the*



majority of my meals were made up of salad and vegetables. At first I found this quite difficult as I was getting hungry between meals but snacking on fruit and nuts helped and my body soon adjusted to the new portion sizes.”

- **I made lots of small changes:** *“I cut out sugar in coffee and tea , used low fat spread instead of butter, swapped sandwiches for salads, grilled instead of fried , switched to skimmed milk from full fat, ditched fizzy drinks and latte coffees for water and herbal tea and started snacking on fresh fruit and nuts. Each individual change sounds small, but together they made quite a difference to my calorie intake.”*
- **I kicked some unhealthy eating habits:** *“Takeaways and ready meals were regular features in my weekly eating before, but now they are reserved as treats. I now plan my meals and shop from a list to stop me being tempted by some of the unhealthy options.”*
- **I got out my running shoes:** *“I started with brisk walking and after a while my fitness improved so I could jog for a few minutes, before dropping back to walking pace. A neighbour saw me doing it and asked if she could join me and we really motivate each other now. We entered a sponsored run in our local park and were so pleased to complete it - even if we did walk for part of it!”*

Where I am now

“After six months I’ve lost just under two stone – sometimes the weight loss plateaus or I might gain a pound or two if it’s a holiday or a wedding, but I’m on a downward trend and feel great. My knee is better, my blood pressure and cholesterol are normal and I’ve got so much energy.”