

# We've **LOST** 16 stone!

As we recover from the annual Christmas binge, these three dieters tell us how they've transformed their bodies their own way...

## 'I no longer embarrass my son - he's proud of me'

**Julia Reynolds, 56, an engineers' services manager, lives in Taunton, Somerset, with her husband Ray and their son Matthew, 19.** Most teenage boys feel embarrassed about their parents - but Matthew was more mortified than most. On our holiday to Greece last year, he couldn't bear to be seen with me. He'd choose a sun lounger far away, and eat dinner on his own. Now I know why. At 15st, in a size 20 swimsuit, I must have looked like a beached whale.

Matthew had only ever known me big. After he was born, I piled on the pounds with roast dinners and takeaways, and I'd polish off a box of chocolates in an evening.

It wasn't until one day on the beach in Greece that I realised how big I'd become. My ankles had swollen in the heat, so I could barely walk, let alone run around. Our apartment was at the top of a hill, and it took all Ray's strength to push me up it. Enough was enough. 'The diet starts on Monday,' I thought - and I meant it.

Back home, I joined my local Slimming World group. The leader was so enthusiastic and she helped me see that I could lose weight by eating filling meals, like chilli and pasta. In the first week I lost 5lb, but I still enjoyed my food, having new potatoes instead of roast. I'd have a glass of wine at the weekend too - instead of a bottle!

I've been going to Slimming World for six months now, and I've reached my 11st target weight. I know Matthew's proud of me, and I want to go back to that beach and run around, just to prove that I can! **To find your nearest group, visit [slimmingworld.com](http://slimmingworld.com) or call 0844 897 8000. Julia's story is in the latest issue of *Slimming World* magazine, out now.**



WAS 15ST NOW 11ST

'I'd put off dieting before, but going on holiday made me realise I had to start!'

## 'I won't hide from the cameras in 2012!'

**Tabby Shaw, 40, works as a facilities co-ordinator. She lives in Redditch, West Midlands, with husband John, 45, and daughters Mary, 17, and Esther, 15.** I've never liked having my photo taken. At parties, I'd spot the cameras and try to stay out of the picture! At 20st 9lb, I was hardly photogenic. So when I found a photo from an Eighties-themed party in 2010, I wanted to cry. I looked old, haggard - and obese.

Food had been my comfort for as long as I could remember. But as the weight crept on, I struggled with the simplest of tasks, and got pins and needles in my legs after walking more than 50 yards.

Now I had two choices: I could destroy that photo, or find the courage to lose the weight that was making me miserable.

A colleague suggested the Cambridge Plan - a meal replacement diet, and I was determined to try it. I'd have porridge for breakfast and soup for lunch, followed by a 200-calorie dinner, like tuna or tofu with leafy vegetables. I was allowed a 'shake' for dessert - but having so little wasn't easy after years of eating whatever I fancied.

At my first weigh-in I'd lost 9lb and I realised that for the first time in my life, I was the one in control. Now there was no stopping me. By April, I could walk the mile to work which I'd always driven and soon I was walking everywhere. I hit my 11st target in early December and now I have porridge for breakfast, salad for lunch and pasta or a jacket potato for dinner. On special occasions I'll even allow myself a proper dessert and a glass of wine! **Visit [cambridgeweightplan.com](http://cambridgeweightplan.com)**

WORDS: ROSALIND GRAINGER, NIKKI OSMAN PHOTOGRAPHS: BILL MORTON AND SLIMMING WORLD MAGAZINE HAIR AND MAKE-UP: SHERRIE WARWICK



WAS 20ST NOW 11ST

'I was huge for my 5ft 6in frame and tried to stay out of the picture at parties'

## 'I was hypnotised into thinking I had a gastric band'

**Esther Ruiz, 36, works as a legal secretary. She's from London.** Looking at pictures of Fern Britton and Tina Malone, who've lost weight using a gastric band, I couldn't help feeling jealous. But I couldn't afford to pay £8,000 for one, and I was worried about the dangers too.

I'd been fat all my life. I loved chocolate, chips and anything fried. My diets rarely lasted more than a few days. At the end of 2010, I weighed 15st. At 5ft 7in, I carried it all around my middle, like a spare tyre. Surgery seemed extreme, but with every pound I put on, it became more tempting.

Then a friend told me she'd lost 3st on the Gastro Hypno Balloon Programme. It hypnotises you into eating smaller portions, like a real gastric band. Knowing nothing about hypnosis, I was sceptical, but I went online to check it out. The CDs cost £157, and you could download the recordings on to a computer for £127 - a lot cheaper than the real thing. So I decided to give it a go.

The programme is made up of eight sessions, dealing with different aspects of weight loss, and the final one places a 'virtual' balloon in your stomach to restrict what you eat. I had to listen to a different half-hour recording every night. As I lay down with my headphones in, I felt a fool. But before long, I was falling asleep to them every night.

I never thought it would work, but three weeks later, in the supermarket, I noticed a change. I'd usually fill my basket with ready-meals, but I felt a sudden craving for strawberries. I piled several packs into my basket, then filled it up with other fruit and vegetables. I realised then that I was picking out what I craved.

I soon noticed more changes - I started walking everywhere, and even joined a gym. I gave up daytime snacking, and going out for dinner, I'd order lighter options and eat slowly until I felt full.

After a month I'd lost a stone. I couldn't believe it. I'd failed every diet I'd ever tried, and now I was losing weight because of a few recordings. Although I found it hard to understand, I was a complete convert.

I still listen to the tapes twice a week, I've lost almost 3st, and I look and feel like a different person. I don't envy the celebs any more - I've never felt better. **Visit [gastrichypnoballoon.com/uk-weightloss](http://gastrichypnoballoon.com/uk-weightloss)**



WAS 15ST NOW 12ST

'Listening to the tapes has changed my eating habits. I feel like a different person'