

Jelly Belly

I joined Odyssey in May 2011 weighing 94.5 kg (14st 12lbs), the heaviest I have ever been. I knew I had to lose weight and get in shape – my trousers were telling me it was time to act.

Ben, one of the trainers set me a program to get me started and asked me about my diet. I was eating whatever I liked of course, bread, pasta, potatoes or rice practically featured in every meal I ever ate. Ben knew what this meant obviously and suggested I make some changes. The thing is, I love food too much and didn't want to give up the things I look forward to. Besides, I had joined a gym now had I not? So surely that meant I could continue eating as I pleased and I did just that.

I attended the gym about 3 times a week and I was making slow progress. My monthly weigh-ins with Ben was showing that I was losing about 0.5kg each month. Not terrible eh? Well, I thought so, until the progress stopped by November. I was now stuck at 91kg.

'Imagine the progress you might make if you changed your diet' said Ben To hell with that, I thought. I will just try harder at the gym, but I needed some incentive to try harder.

'By the time we meet again in 4 weeks I will be 89 kg or less' I said.

'If I am not, I will do 50 press ups, but if I am, then you owe me 50 press ups Ben'

Ben knows how poor my diet is and didn't hesitate to agree.

For the next 2 weeks I went to the gym 10 times, which is a lot for me. I kept bumping into Ben who could see how committed I was and, clearly starting to worry, told me to ease up and go and have a cream cake as a reward. I had him worried, 'get practising those press ups Ben' I warned him.

After 2 weeks I thought I would have a sneaky weigh-in without Ben to see how I was doing. Disaster! I was now 92.5kg; I had gained weight, despite all my effort in the gym.

As I walked out of the gym, totally deflated and now needing to lose 3.5kg in 2 weeks. I picked up the Odyssey Newsletter with the headline 'Lose the wheat, lose the belly' on the front. I was desperate, I hate losing. Could I follow the advice in the article? Well for 2 weeks I could and decided to cut out bread and pasta and also potatoes too for good measure.

I immediately went into what I would call 'food panic', if I was avoiding these things then what would I eat instead?

Breakfast was easy. Scrambled eggs and tomato every morning. Simple and easy to stick to.

Lunch was more challenging; at work I mostly had salads with prawns, tuna or egg. By the early afternoons I was starving and would probably have eating your bogey if you offered me it. At these times I ate yoghurt or some raisins which just about got me through.

Dinners became roasts with no potatoes, a bowl of chilli with lots of pulses added to it but no rice or garlic bread or sometimes it was chicken and salad.

As soon as my diet changed I felt different. I was no longer bloated after I finished eating. I always used to feel like this after a meal. If I was peckish after a meal I would just scoff a couple of satsumas.

Within a couple of days, my stomach was feeling different. Also my bowel movements became more predictable and much less urgent. I even went to McDonalds with my wife and kids and had a salad! Anyone who knows me would not believe that happened. Strange thing is that it actually was not bad at all and I felt enormously proud of myself for not pigging out.

But I still had to get past Xmas – my weigh in was on the 28th December. Xmas Dinner was a potato free meal although I still had plenty of alcohol that day, however I was starting to believe the changes I made might give me a chance of winning my challenge

On 28th December I stood on the scales at the gym, nervously awaiting my fate. Ben's head fell forward onto the desk cradled in his hands. I looked across at the display, 88.9kg! I had done it and was genuinely ecstatic. When I told him how I had done it, Ben said, 'I told you that 6 months ago' Fair play to Ben, he got straight down and did his 50 press ups while I counted them with a ridiculous grin on my face. 'Okay' said Ben. Next challenge, 87 kg by 28th January? Fine by me, I know what I need to do now to lose weight and my workouts are getting easier as my weight comes down.

Lessons I have learnt:

1. Exercising is not enough, you have to address your diet too
2. Set small goals – get your trainer involved in the forfeit, great fun.
3. Get support from your wife
4. Find foods you like to eat but which will not hinder your progress
5. Listen to the trainers – they do actually know what they are talking about

My thanks to Ben for his patience and sense of humour. Also thanks for the article in your newsletter about wheat. Very helpful.

Mike Moorhouse
Aged 40.