



slim pickings

Need to lose weight? **Joanna Hall** has the lowdown on five of the latest fat-fighting faves.

The pursuit of body beautiful without sacrifice or pain is a preoccupation for many women these days. Yet, for lots of reasons, it's something that isn't always easy to achieve.

Hardly a week goes by without a new diet book, program or exercise regime taking the world by storm, and promising to help us lose all those unwanted kilos.

So here are five of the latest, offering slightly different approaches to an age-old problem.

COHEN'S LIFESTYLE CLINIC

This is an eating plan that, rather than focusing on kilojoules, fats or carbs, is designed to balance three hormones in the body that are believed to have a hand in weight gain.

The hormones include human growth hormone, which has many functions in the body, including increasing muscle mass and

the reduction of body fat; insulin, which regulates blood sugar levels; and serotonin, which has an important role in the regulation of appetite.

According to Dr Rami Cohen, the obstetrician and gynaecologist who developed the program, in people who suffer from obesity the level of human growth hormone drops, unnaturally high levels of insulin are released, and serotonin isn't released properly.

As a result, they constantly crave food – especially starches – and they gain weight, regardless of how much or little they eat.

The program starts with a blood test, which is evaluated by Dr Cohen to check your balance of the three hormones, so that he can create an individual eating plan based on the results.

The plan aims to stimulate the three hormones, using specific food combinations, so that the body starts burning its own fat.



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You don't need to buy special meals: the plan is based on everyday foods including protein, vegetables, fruits and carbs. And the end result includes rapid fat loss (not muscle or water), an end to cravings and increased energy.

How long you stay on the program depends on your blood profile, age, gender and the amount of weight you have to lose. However, the average time is between two and four months, with an average weight loss of seven to 15 kilograms per month.

For more information visit www.lifestyleclinic.com.au for outlets nationwide.

BLACKMORES WEIGHT-LOSS ACCELERATE

This isn't a weight-loss pill, but a supplement designed to accelerate the results of a commonsense approach to weight loss, involving a healthy diet and exercise.

The key ingredient in the supplement is hydroxycitrate complex, or HCC, which, in clinical trials, revealed that people taking it achieve three times greater weight loss than with just diet and exercise alone.

Derived from the rind of the Malabar tamarind, a yellowish fruit from southern India, HCC is said to increase blood levels of serotonin – a hormone that helps to regulate mood and appetite.

According to Blackmores, it's not yet fully understood exactly how HCC works, but it's believed to inhibit the enzymes that convert carbohydrates into fat. And unlike other weight loss supplements, it doesn't stimulate the nervous system with caffeine or guarana.

Weight-Loss Accelerate aims to help reduce body fat, enhance fat burning, reduce appetite, and even maintain normal cholesterol levels. In the long run, you eat smaller portions at meal times and have less cravings in between – both of which should ultimately lead to a slow, steady weight loss.

When you start a diet and exercise program, all you have to do is take two tablets, three times a day on an empty stomach, around half an hour before meals. How long you need to take the tablets for depends on how much weight you have to lose.

Available at pharmacies, health food stores and supermarkets, \$49.95 for a two-week supply.

THINK SLIM

As anyone who has read the bestseller *The Secret* will know, what you think and feel today could shape your future life. But when it comes to weight loss, can you really think yourself thin?

Sydney hypnotherapist and neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) trainer, Mark Stephens, thinks so.

"When people keep saying they can't stop eating chocolate, that's a self-fulfilling prophecy," Stephens says. "When you rewire their brain to think 'drink more water', that becomes the new way of thinking."

Stephens believes the battle with weight loss is mostly psychological; he has first-hand experience, having struggled with his own weight during his teens and twenties. In his book, *Think Slim*, he details a "weight loss program for the mind" which he believes translates to weight loss for the body.

The *Think Slim* program focuses on self-hypnosis techniques that not only control the emotional reasons that you eat, but also eliminate unproductive negative thoughts. Using 12 "transformational keys", he says you will change bad habits, set goals and stay motivated.

Ultimately, it's a program that aims to help you stick to a healthy eating plan and exercise routine so you can reach your ideal weight safely and permanently.

Published by Allen & Unwin, \$24.95, available at all good bookshops.

FORMOSTAR INFRARED BODY WRAP

If the idea of lying on your back to lose weight appeals, then this is the method for you.

It's a salon treatment and a virtual workout. In around 50 minutes, you can burn up to 1200 calories, and reshape problem parts of your body by doing nothing but relaxing.

The treatment involves being tightly wrapped in six silicone bandages that target problem areas (commonly the thighs, abdomen, chest, buttocks and upper arms).

It works by using far infrared energy, or FIR, which is a part of the natural light spectrum, without the UV element that can damage the skin.

According to Formostar, the core temperature of our bodies is 37 degrees, while the outer areas of our bodies – where most of our fat is stored – can be up to 10 degrees cooler and poorly supplied with blood.

When the infrared heat from the bandages penetrates the skin down to the subcutaneous fat tissue, however, increased blood circulation occurs, stimulating fat burning.

Based on clinical trials and results, you should expect to shrink a clothes size in six to 10 sessions, and the sessions should ideally be two or three days apart. But unless you are eating properly,



you won't achieve the desired results – it's not an excuse to chow down on biscuits and takeaways.

Visit www.formostar.com.au for locations Australia-wide.

THE SKINNY BITCH DIET

Victoria Beckham is known for many things – being the Spice Girl who stole David Beckham's heart and having a passion for fashion among them.

But after being snapped by paparazzi in an LA shop in May, she single-handedly catapulted a little-known diet book, *Skinny Bitch* (Running Press), into the spotlight.

The book is self-described as a “no-nonsense, tough-love guide for savvy girls who want to stop eating crap and start looking fabulous”.

Written by two LA fashion luminaries – ex-model agent, Rory Freedman, and former model Kim Barnouin (who holds a degree in holistic nutrition) – it doesn't hold back.

“They may be bitches,” it reads, “but they are skinny bitches.”

A key element of this diet is that you stop counting calories. You can also eat all the bread, potatoes, pasta and cookies you want, which

will be music to the ears of carb addicts across the globe.

But there is a catch – and it's a big one. It's based on a vegan diet, which means foods on the “forbidden” list include meat, dairy, sugar, refined flour and sweeteners.

Alcohol is off the menu too, except for organic wine.

The concept behind the diet is pretty simple – if you want to get skinny, you've got to get healthy. And by the authors' definition, that means you should only eat foods that are rich in nutrients, free of additives, and easy to digest.

As to how much weight you will lose, a lot depends on whether or not you can stick to the diet in the first place. Even the authors are candid about how long it took them to stop eating the “bad stuff”: “It took us each many years to achieve the lifestyle we live today. Rome wasn't built in a day.”

Distributed by Bookwise, \$24.95, available at all good bookshops.

