



Take 5
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Too FA

THEN
126kg



When the hugs stopped coming, Sue knew it was time to take action ...

Whizzing round the playground on my skates, I sped towards the finish line with ease. At 10 I was such a string bean, I could easily zoom in and out of the obstacles and overtake my classmates.

It was 1979, and I was in Year 5 at Kalgoorlie Catholic Primary School in WA. Every recess I'd rollerskate, play netball or get involved in sports competitions.

But that all changed a few years later.

In August 1983, just after my 14th birthday, I twisted my knee while rollerblading and spent the next three months on crutches.



As a kid I loved being active

I'd lie on the sofa, flick through TV channels and treat myself to chocolate bars to ease the pain.

Eventually this laziness took hold and I started to put on weight. By the time I was 15, I weighed 68kg and had lost all motivation to exercise.

When I finished school at 17, I got a job in an office. I was 80kg and a size 16.



I wore a size 14 wedding gown in 1991

"Fancy joining us for a few beers and kebabs, Sue?" Mike, a colleague, asked after work each day.

I always agreed and ended up piling on more kilos.

"Play us some Madonna?" I yelled over the DJ booth at 'Rock 'n' Bowl' at our local bowling alley one Friday night in January 1989.

"Okay, but only if you stop for a chat," the DJ smiled.

After some more flirting, the DJ, Ian, and I really hit it off.

Ian was a sales rep for a mining company and worked as a DJ in his spare time.

He proposed three months after we met, and when we got married on September 21, 1991, I weighed 70kg and wore a size 14 gown.

But marital bliss started to take its toll on my waistline.

"Let's get takeaway tonight," I'd say to Ian.

After tucking into fried rice, pizzas and creamy pastas every night, my weight rapidly increased to 94kg in a year. My appetite got bigger, too.

In February 1993, when I was getting ready for work, Ian looked at me standing in my underwear.

"Sue darling, maybe you should address your weight," he said, concerned.

I dismissed Ian's comment. "I'm happy and that's all that matters," I smiled, as I pulled on my size 18 dress.

There wasn't much chance for me to diet anyway, because in June 1994 I fell pregnant.

Our first son, Matthew, was born on April 28, 1995, and his

little brother, Jarred, arrived on May 3, 1998.

After the boys were born I weighed 105kg but was too busy being a full-time mum to diet or exercise.

Every day when Ian had gone to work and the boys were at school, I'd sit on the sofa watching TV and eating junk all day.

When I picked the boys up from school they'd beg me to buy them some lollies.

I'd always agree and would grab a chocolate bar for myself, too.

By the time I was 15, I weighed 68kg



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When Ian got home from work he'd give me a kiss and ask what was for dinner.

"KFC, McDonald's or Oporto?" I'd reply. I'd just cooked dinner for the boys and couldn't be bothered to prepare more food.

"Come and play outside, Mummy," Matthew begged one day in October 2003.

But I was so big I had heart palpitations every few hours and was scared I'd collapse if I exercised.

A couple of days later, Jarred, five, went to give me a cuddle.

"I can't fit my arms around you anymore, Mum," he giggled as he stretched his arms around my big belly.

About six months later I took Matthew to Adventure World.

"Can we go on that tube slide together?" he asked, tugging my hand.

"Sorry love, I won't even squeeze through that on my own," I said in embarrassment. I was a size 26 at 35.

In January 2005, during a holiday in Esperance, WA, I was hunting for shells on the beach with Matthew when a group of young boys started yelling from the water.

"Look at the beached whale," they laughed.

"Tell them off, Mummy," Matthew said to me sympathetically after a few silent moments.

That night I confided in Ian. "I want to lose weight. I'm ashamed for our boys. They're suffering because of my weight," I cried.

"I'll support you every step of the way," Ian smiled encouragingly.

I called my sister-in-law, Miriam, for advice.

"I weigh 126kg and need to take action. Any suggestions?" I asked.

"There's a guy in my office that lost heaps of weight by eating great food," she said.

So on June 20, 2005, I joined the Cohen's Lifestyle Clinic weight-loss program.

My target weight was 58kg and I knew it was going to be a challenge.



Patricia Green from the clinic drew up a 12-month program for me.

"No pasta, bread, biscuits or snacks. You're allowed three meals a day and they are to consist of protein, vegies and fruit," she said.

The first week I lost 5kg and the weight continued to drop off.

"How much have you lost this week?" Jarred asked excitedly as I stepped onto the scales.

"Another 5kg," I gasped. Seeing his smile would spur me on to lose more.

I tried to fit as much exercise as possible into my daily routine. I walked our dog every day - increasing the distance until I was walking three kilometres.

After school snacks were replaced with trips to the park, where I'd play and run around with the kids.

We also moved to Victoria for Ian's work - but Miriam and my family kept up their great support over the phone.

In May 2006 I reached my goal weight of 58kg. After shopping for a new wardrobe, I came home in a size 10 top.

"Mummy you look great, and I can wrap my arms all the way around you!" Jarred smiled, hugging me.

"You're so light I can pick



BEFORE
Breakfast: 3 slices white toast with butter, Vegemite and jam; Coffee with milk and sugar
Lunch: Chicken and mayo white roll; chips and gravy; 1 Cherry Ripe or Mars Bar; 1 can Diet Coke
Dinner: 2 large bowls spaghetti bolognese; 1 large bowl ice-cream, chocolate topping and nuts
Snacks: Chocolate biscuits; 2 cakes; 2 packets potato chips; 4 coffees with milk; 3 cans Diet Coke



AFTER
Breakfast: Low-fat fruit yoghurt; black coffee; glass of water
Lunch: Tuna salad with tomato, cucumber, red onion, celery and capsicum; apple
Dinner: Grilled chicken or fish with steamed vegies or salad; fat-free hot chocolate
Snacks: Fruit; crackers with a small piece of cheese; liquorice

you up," Matthew added. I've managed to keep my weight off and, as a result, today I'm more confident and have a greater zest for life. Now I do group fitness classes every day and I love competing in family fun runs at weekends.

But best of all, Matthew and Jarred are so proud of me - a mum they can hug.
Sue Watson, 38, Truganina, Vic.



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