

Diet S.O.S

One reader in need of a weight-loss boost gets a diet overhaul...



Fran Brown, 30, is a magazine ad production controller from Peterborough
Height 4ft 11 in Weight 9st 8lb
Dress size 14

Fran says I'd like to lose 1st. I go to the gym three times a week and don't drink or smoke, but I tend to put on weight easily – especially around my tummy. Usually, I skip breakfast, but snack at my desk mid-morning, have a light lunch, then a substantial evening meal at home. My stressful job

means I often get home late, so I make simple meals. I've lost 10lb in nine weeks by healthy eating, but I have a sweet tooth and love junk food.

What I'm eating now

Breakfast Nothing

Snack Croissant and jam and cup of tea

Lunch Ham salad bap, packet of low-fat crisps

Dinner Reduced-cal lasagne ready-meal with salad and reduced-fat cheesecake

Snack Small packet of crisps with low-fat garlic dip

Drink Two glasses of sparkling water



Nutritionist, Susannah Lawson, says

Fran's lost 10lb in nine weeks, which is a good, steady pace,

but we can help her increase this to 1½–2lbs a week. I would suggest that Fran begins each day with a cup of cleansing hot water with lemon juice, and sips 1-1½ltrs of pure still water daily. Eating breakfast first thing would also help kick-start her metabolism, as would eating at regular times. Fran shouldn't worry about calorie counting for now, but should swap refined foods, like croissants, for nutrient-rich wholefoods, such as wholemeal or rye bread, oatcakes, brown pasta or rice. These foods release energy slowly, balancing blood-sugar levels and keeping hunger pangs and sugar cravings at bay. Combining these foods with protein will slow her energy release further. This is the best way to lose weight permanently. Fran should also boost her intake of essential fats to help weight loss. These are found in unsalted nuts and seeds, seed-pressed oils, Columbus free-range eggs and oily fish like organic salmon, sardines and mackerel.

Sample day's menu

Breakfast

Boiled, free-range egg with two slices of rye or wholemeal toast, spread thinly with butter

Lunch

A jacket potato with prawns and cottage cheese, and a large mixed salad

Supper

Grilled, skinless chicken or organic salmon (first brush with olive oil and lemon juice and season with salt and fresh black pepper) with mixed steamed vegetables tossed in chopped fresh herbs (eg parsley, basil and chives) and walnut oil or olive oil dressing

Snacks

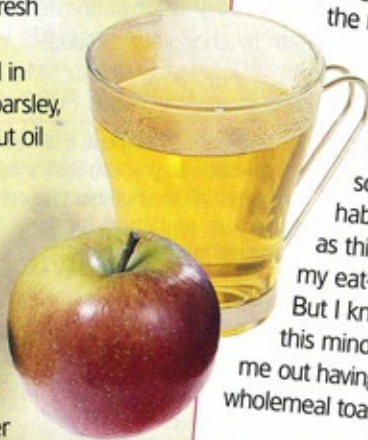
An apple with a handful of pumpkin seeds, two oatcakes spread with mackerel pâté or cottage cheese

Drinks

1-1½ ltrs of pure still water and herbal teas. One cup of regular tea, with food

Fran's verdict

'I'm really pleased to have lost 3lbs and dropped down to a size 12! I've picked up lots of good tips from the diet, such as trying to vary my food intake more, keep up my exercise routine, and above all, cut out the sweet things I'd got into the habit of indulging in every day. I went off the rails a couple of times and didn't vary foods as much as I could have done – I ate quite a bit of chicken! I find it so hard to stick to good habits at the weekend, as this has always been my eat-what-you-want time. But I know I have to change this mindset! It's also balanced me out having lunch and eating wholemeal toast instead of white bread.'



Susannah Lawson, Lic ION, is a nutritional therapist and co-author of *Optimum Nutrition Before, During and After Pregnancy* (£9.99, Piatkus). She practises in London and Hampshire and can be contacted via email (mail@susannah-lawson.co.uk) or on 07960 020538.

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