

Whole Life Makeover



Back in February, Dawn Burns and Liz Pappas took up our challenge to participate in a makeover that would help them take control of their health and achieve personal wellness and weight-loss goals. Here, our makeover experts weigh in on Liz's and Dawn's progress and give them great advice for making it to the homestretch.

Part 3

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“All my clothes are loose now, and I get compliments on how I look. My self-esteem has hugely improved, and I’m dating again.”

DAWN BURNS

Dawn lost 23 pounds in seven months and has already reached her goal weight of 167 pounds. “All my clothes are loose now, and I get compliments on how I look,” says Dawn, 31, who lives on her own in Toronto. “My self-esteem has hugely improved, and I’m dating again.” While Dawn’s goal has always been better health – and the symptoms of her gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) and lactose intolerance have all but disappeared – she did lose several inches off her thighs, which she loves. “I used to wear Spanx bodywear when I wore a skirt or dress because I had a problem with chafing, but I don’t anymore.”

FITNESS

Dawn’s strength-training workout (three times a week at Extreme Fitness) has helped her lower her body fat by more than 10 per cent (from 36 per cent to 25.3 per cent) and improve her overall fitness. Her trainer, Justin Williams, says Dawn is much stronger and, as a result, has an easier time doing daily activities, such as carrying groceries.

NEXT STEPS: To stay motivated, Williams encourages Dawn to find an

additional activity that is both social and fun, such as a dance class or kickboxing. (Check out canadianliving.com/september to read about five hot new fitness trends, guaranteed to get you out of your workout rut.) While she’d like to slim down her thighs even more and says “my trouble area has always been my lower half,” unfortunately she can’t simply whittle away certain parts of her body. Williams explains: “Aerobic activity and weight training burn »

DAWN BURNS

	MONTH 1	MONTH 4	MONTH 7
Height:	5'9"		
Weight:	190 lbs	177 lbs	167 lbs
Resting BP:	135/80	128/68	120/80
Resting HR:	78 bpm	75 bpm	70 bpm
Total body fat:	36%	26.6%	25.3%
Body mass index:	28	26	25

MEASUREMENTS (inches):

Dress size:	14	12	10 to 12
Arms:	12½ R, 12½ L	12¾, 12¾	12½, 12½
Chest:	38	37½	37
Waist:	34	29½	29
Hips:	45½	44¾	44

fat and calories from head to toe. Your body wants to be proportional – so fat will come off all over.” Dawn says she’s fine with that.

FOOD

Dawn tended to eat mostly junk and fast foods. “Now she understands that certain foods will make you more prone to weight gain, especially if you eat big portions,” says Cara Rosenbloom, a nutrition coach and registered dietitian.

There’s more good news: “I think Dawn’s GERD was stress-related – and feeling less stressed and better about herself has helped manage it,” says Rosenbloom. “Eating more fibre, more fruits and veggies, low-fat foods and less sugar and salt all help manage GERD symptoms.”

Rosenbloom recently took Dawn on a grocery store tour to give her some extra tips and incentive to improve her nutrition. She reminded Dawn to make healthier choices by reading food labels. One frozen meal they looked at, for example, had about 20 per cent of the daily recommended intake of sodium, while another had 45 per cent.

NEXT STEPS: To help her keep up her great work, Rosenbloom encourages Dawn to cook more meals at home. She also suggests that Dawn eat a bran cereal with added psyllium

fibre for breakfast; psyllium is a soluble fibre that helps keep cholesterol under control.

OVERALL HEALTH

Dawn’s body mass index (BMI) is now 25, which is just one point away from being in the healthy range for her height. Continuing on her current path will get Dawn there in no time. Having a BMI within a healthy range is an important goal because it means Dawn will reduce her risk for illnesses such as stroke and heart disease, says Dr. Joseph Massad, Dawn’s family doctor in Toronto. Her blood pressure is normal, which is important because she has a family history of hypertension. Dawn’s cholesterol levels have improved, too – and that also reduces her risk of heart disease. Dawn’s smaller waistline also cuts

her risk of having a heart attack because abdominal fat is a key culprit in heart disease, as well as diabetes. Overall, she has improved her energy, mood, self-esteem and confidence. **NEXT STEPS:** Like her trainer, Massad would like Dawn to take up a social sport to help her spice up her routine and get more cardio training.

LIZ PAPPAS

Liz, 43, is a busy mom who lives in Mississauga, Ont., and recently started working again. Liz has lost 17 pounds in seven months and, while her clothes are baggier, she’s frustrated that she’s not losing weight as quickly as she would like. “A lot of things have gotten in the way of me getting to the gym,” she says, citing errands, chores and family commitments. A knee injury has also kept Liz from going full-out in her exercise classes.

At the same time, Liz has improved her health in other ways. She’s cut back on smoking, from »



LIZ PAPPAS

	MONTH 1	MONTH 4	MONTH 7
Height:	5'7"		
Weight:	222 lbs	213 lbs	205 lbs
Resting BP:	120/60	108/60	104/60
Resting HR:	60 bpm	60 bpm	56 bpm
Total body fat:	36.5%	35.5%	34.5%
Body mass index:	35	34	33

MEASUREMENTS (inches):

Dress size:	16	16	16
Arms:	15½ R, 15¼ L	14½, 14¼	14¼, 14¼
Chest:	46¾	44½	44½
Waist:	40	37	35½
Hips:	45½	44½	44

half a pack to about four cigarettes a day. Another positive change is that Liz is trying to ensure she gets enough sleep each night. (See “Get Your Best Sleep Ever,” page 65.)

FITNESS

Liz takes spinning and weight classes, and works with weights and on weight machines on her own and with her trainer, Sarah Mulaner. Her goal is to get to the gym four times a week, but that’s a challenge.

NEXT STEPS: Mulaner would like Liz to change her weight goal to 175 pounds from her original goal of 162, set when she began the makeover seven months ago. With four more months to go, this would mean a weight loss of 30 more pounds, or seven and a half pounds each month. It’s challenging but achievable, says Mulaner, who suggests that Liz use rewards along the way for motivation, such as treating herself to a manicure when she stays on track with her workouts.

Keeping up weight workouts is important, says Mulaner, because increasing her lean muscle mass will help Liz burn extra calories through the day. Mulaner adds that weight training also improves mood control and confidence.

FOOD

Liz reads labels and has decreased the amount of salt in her diet. She has also learned to substitute healthier ingredients in favourite recipes. For example, she now uses whole grain pasta instead of white rice noodles in pad thai. But Liz has also picked up a few fad diet “tricks,” such as cutting out all bread (she says it’s a trigger to overeat) and having a soy protein shake instead of a balanced breakfast.

NEXT STEPS: Rosenbloom isn’t a fan of dieting fads. “The best way to lose weight is to eat less and move more,” she says. “It’s also helpful to understand the triggers that make you overeat so you can slowly work on changing your behaviour. While I encourage Liz to continue working with me and her fitness coach, a behavioural therapist of some kind could help, too. Once Liz understands why she’s overeating, she may be able to make permanent changes.”



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OVERALL HEALTH

“Liz has lost weight, she has gotten back into going to the gym, and she is more conscious of what she eats and how much she smokes,” says Dr. Valerie Kubazky, her family physician. She encourages Liz to quit smoking altogether to reduce her risk of stroke, heart disease and other diseases, such as cancer. Kubazky applauds Liz’s efforts to get to bed on time, adding that adults need seven to nine hours of sleep a night.

“Fatigue can make portion control and exercise goals tougher to achieve,” she adds.

NEXT STEPS: “I encourage Liz to work closely with her fitness and nutrition coaches,” says Kubazky, who is seeing Liz regularly to monitor her progress. She adds that people who find it difficult to change their eating habits may also benefit from thinking about their behaviour around food choices and eating. ■