

The Programme

Change your routine, change your diet, change your life

'I rang the trainer after a year to say that I had finally lost a stone'

The story so far

Over the last year, 18 readers have taken up the challenge of Sportsactive's personally tailored health and fitness regime: The Programme. Each of them sweated buckets to achieve their goal – be it to lose weight, get fit or just feel better all round. And, with the help of top nutritionists and personal trainers, those who paired up to tackle The Programme – friends, siblings, couples, fathers and daughters – have transformed themselves. But how have they got on since they completed The Programme? Have they managed to run as far, lift as much or eat as well? We caught up with half-a-dozen graduates of The Programme to find out...

Next week: Ed and Stu, friends and team-mates, try to get in shape for the football season

The team

Jeff Archer, trainer
Everyone loves the idea of having a personal trainer – what could be better than someone to plan your exercise for you, help you understand why you're doing it and to make sure that you do it right?



But what happens when the trainer is no longer there? Keeping up an exercise regime is a tough task and one that not everyone can succeed with. Many clients say that they struggle without the discipline of a trainer encouraging them week in, week out. Embarking on your own routine, you have to dig deep to find the motivation and take time to plan your weekly routine so you know exactly when you will be working out – if you really want to succeed with each week to devote to it. You've also got to be strong enough to fight the temptations that will lead you astray. It's not as simple as it may appear – as the candidates from The Programme will testify.

For information: The Tonic, 0700 4348 6377, www.the-tonic.com

Matt Lovell, nutritionist
I've mentioned before that The Programme distils between three and six months of normal nutritional support into six weeks. But combining the nutritional



demands with training appears to keep motivation levels high – at least while candidates are on The Programme. I'm very interested to see if those people I have worked with over the last year have continued to improve. The problem with long-term success in any lifestyle is willpower – and as such it is easier to instil new habits in clients than it is to break old ones. Over the course of The Programme, candidates should be proud if they've managed to pick up a term success will come – for instance, sugar in your tea tastes strange after three weeks without. As you proceed without our help, though, remember to measure yourself little and often, and devise a rewards system – you can be good to yourself once in a while!

For information: 07956 998 410

Name and age **Dona Croll, 47**
Occupation **Actor**
Initial Programme weight **10st 12lb**
Final weight **10st 8lb, Sept 2001 (below)**
Current weight **9st 12lb (right)**



“As happy as I thought I was when I completed The Programme, I'm even happier now because I managed to achieve my target weight loss of one stone a couple of months ago. Even though I completed The Programme nearly a year ago, I rang my trainer to tell him that I'd finally done it! Even better than that, I've stuck to my exercise regime religiously – I now manage three runs a week and three exercise classes, with Saturdays off for rest and recovery. I've also stuck to the nutrition advice and have managed to stay off cheese since The Programme began. This is a big step for me as I love the stuff and have to admit that I still get cravings for it. I managed to stop eating white bread, and white rice and to switch to brown. But hardest of all was weaning myself off white pasta and on to brown – I never thought that I would manage it, but I guess it seemed a logical progression after the rice and bread, and I soon got used to the taste.

There many aspects to The Programme that I benefited from, but the most positive aspect for me was that it showed me how to incorporate various techniques and routines into my daily life – to dramatic effect. The only downside has been that I have had to restock my wardrobe with clothes that fit my new healthier and fitter body!”



I feel fitter than I have for a long time

Name and age **Simon Manley, 30**
Occupation **PR consultant**
Initial Programme weight **11st 3lb**
Final weight **11st 0lb, Oct 2001 (left)**
Current weight **10st 3lb (right)**

“The Programme was a fantastic kick-start back into exercise for me, and I went from doing the occasional run to visiting the gym three times a week, every week. I've kept it up since The Programme ended and I'm really chuffed to have got my weight down by a stone since I began. I'm the lightest I've been in years and feel fitter than I have for a long, long time. I now drink about half the amount of alcohol that I used to in the week and I don't miss it at all. I'm much more aware of the type of food that I'm eating and which food belongs in which food group. I only have fibre for breakfast, I eat lots of salads and am very wary of big meals in the evening.

The nutrition information was a lot to take in at first but I have learned how to incorporate the advice into my lifestyle and to use it to widen the variety of what I eat, which makes mealtimes more interesting. I used to fall asleep in the middle of the afternoon but that's no longer a problem. The only downside of the whole thing is the guilt I feel when I don't put what I know into practice!”



No more crisps or fizzy drinks for me

Name and age **John Judkins, 57**
Occupation **Sales manager**
Initial Programme weight **14st 3lb**
Final weight **13st 5lb, June 2002 (left)**
Current weight **12st 10lb (right)**

“Since I began The Programme I have felt massive health improvements and have steadily lost weight. I was really pleased to lose nearly a stone during The Programme and am amazed that I have now lost a stone and a half. My wife gave me a gym membership for my birthday recently, so I get up early three times a week to go there to swim and I also do two evening gym sessions every week. As I feel fitter I am enjoying my swimming more and more.

We've changed the food that we keep in the house and I no longer snack on crisps and fizzy drinks. Instead, I have only healthy snacks and everyone is commenting on how much better I look these days. I can fit into clothes that I haven't had on for 10 years and I have a marvellous feeling of increased vitality. The nutritionist taught me how to regulate my blood-sugar levels through what I eat and drink, and the result is that I am eating much more healthily. Just as importantly, I now understand why it is important to eat more healthily and more wisely and I feel so much better for it.”



The diet was tricky but I've cracked it

Name and age **Jo Nisbett, 34**
Occupation **Nurse**
Initial Programme weight **13st 5lb**
Final weight **12st 12lb, Dec 2001 (left)**
Current weight **12st 12lb (right)**

“Looking back at my time on The Programme I found the nutrition advice very useful but somewhat restrictive for my lifestyle. In my work, I often need to eat on the go and get bored very quickly if what I am eating doesn't stimulate my taste buds enough. Also, I find 'being on a diet' psychologically difficult – consequently, I spent about six months after The Programme developing a food regime that works for me and I think I'm just about there now.

On the exercise side of things I think the most helpful bit about The Programme was that it got me back into regular exercise. I used to exercise a lot, but I hadn't done anything for a while and had begun to feel like I would never get back into the habit. Having a trainer gave me great encouragement and now I'm cycling to work two or three days a week, and that's good exercise, a round trip of eight miles. I'm also running once or twice a week and have even managed to run home from work – and I haven't done anything like that since I was seven years younger and nearly three stones lighter!”



I fell off the wagon when it all finished

Name and age **Rachel Sinclair, 29**
Occupation **PR account executive**
Initial Programme weight **15st 3lb**
Final weight **13st 12lb, May 2002 (left)**
Current weight **13st 0lb (right)**

“I really enjoyed my time on The Programme and found it extremely useful to get expert help on exercise and nutrition. The trainer and nutritionist were very motivating and helped me to overcome the bit I liked least about it – the dreadful feeling of guilt on a Monday morning after a long weekend of indulgence.

Sticking to The Programme was a challenge and I don't think I realised how much I was learning while I was doing it. Only now do I realise how much I know about fitness and food. I have to admit to 'falling off the wagon' as soon as it was all over – but I quickly realised the exercise and the positive feelings I had when I was eating well. I have signed up for full gym membership which means that I can use the gym near work as well as one near home. I have also started to swim and begun yoga classes. On the food front I haven't been as strict with myself as I was, but I'm putting this down to the stress of moving house. I still hear the voice of the nutritionist in my ear when I am in the supermarket and this persuades me to make sensible choices. Above all, I'm still losing weight at a good rate, so something must be working.”



It has fallen apart in the last few weeks

Name and age **Andrew Perera, 30**
Occupation **PR director**
Initial Programme weight **10st 2lb**
Final weight **9st 12lb, May 2002 (left)**
Current weight **10st 1lb (right)**

“I continued on from The Programme in great style, going to the gym regularly and following my fitness routine – but everything has fallen apart in the last few weeks. I've been very busy at work and have been away a couple of times, so I've been struggling to exercise and have been a bit naughty with my food, particularly on holiday. I'm determined to get back into my routine with my fitness and my diet as I can vividly remember the feelings of increased energy and motivation through the results I achieved during The Programme, and I am keen to feel the same way again.

Because I have slipped into my old ways a little, I have been experiencing the old feelings of lethargy in the office and tiredness in the afternoons, which I don't like. I didn't have this during The Programme and I now know what I need to do to increase my energy levels – it's just a case of getting on with it. One good thing is that I am always aware of what I am eating and how much exercise I'm doing and although I may feel guilty, I'm always aware of what is going on and what I need to do to fix it.”

Interviews by Jeff Archer