

NUTRITION • EXERCISE • WEIGHT LOSS • BEAUTY • WELLBEING

# Women's health & fitness

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VOLUME 17 NO.11

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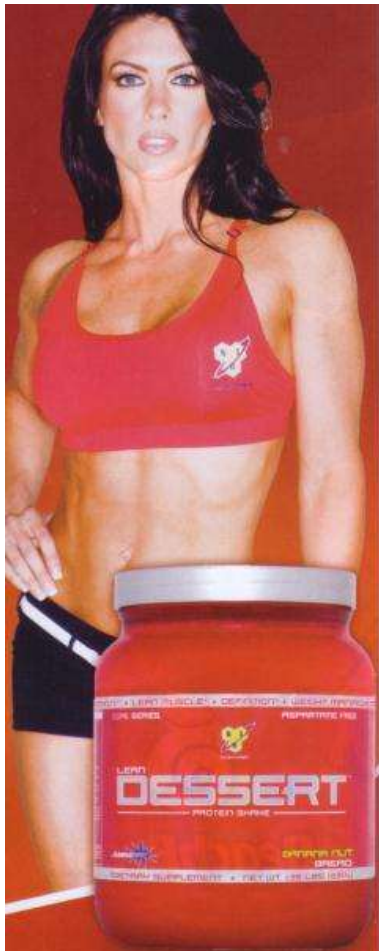


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PHOTOGRAPHY: CHARLIE BURMAN



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YOU CAN'T  
HAVE  
DESSERT?



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## from the editor

# Correct weight

Imagine being weighed, *Biggest Loser*-style, when you got to work in the morning. And being sent home if you'd gained a gram.

Thankfully, I can't – what happens beneath clothes, stays beneath clothes. But working on this issue, it hit me that for some women, the scale is a career maker or breaker. Take the jockeys we channelled for our Winning Form spring racing-inspired fashion spread (p.34), or rower and champion stair climber Alice McNamara (who reveals on p.80 that she's an elevator-junkie). Or the *Black Swan* ballerinas who inspired our fitness road test of fusion craze Xtend Barre (p.70).

While you and I might giggle about fighting flab, for some, weight is a serious daily battle won with tactics that defy the phrase 'healthy weight'. (Some jockeys take a bottle of booze into the sauna to up the dehydration factor: true or false?)

Assuming you don't need to have your kay-gees on the boss' desk by deadline – Derby Day notwithstanding – there's no need to go OTT.

This issue is packed with sensible ways to shape up, whether you're looking to lose or simply maintain your weight. Eat, Swap, Shrink (p.92), for instance, spills the secrets to trimming down while eating as much – or more. Fitness al fresco (p.66) translates calorie-burning training to the great outdoors, where you won't even realise you're working out

(triceps, meet monkey bars). And in *Supersize You* (p.88), we reveal the real reason you're not downsizing, exposing diet saboteurs you least suspect. It really isn't you, it really is them.

If you are races (or miscellaneous party) bound and behind the toning eight ball, see which shapewear items will give you that Beyonce booty in minutes, not months on p.39 – if only 'making weight' was so easy for professional athletes. Your trackside catering is also covered, with deceptively healthy canapes (p.104) from chef Sarah Loh.

Speaking of all things social, if the thought of walking into a room or marquee and making small talk turns your stomach, don't miss our feature on building confidence (p.56) – its step-by-step advice for overcoming self-doubt will get you through a season of schmoozing, and set you up for a lifetime of feeling better about being you. That's got to be worth its weight in gold.

Happy spring carnival,

Rebecca Long  
Editor

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**Nerissa Peach  
Personal Trainer**

Based in Cairns, Nerissa is a qualified group fitness instructor with a Certificate IV in Personal Training. She specialises in outdoor boxing sessions and also teaches BodyPump, BodyBalance and RPM classes. Nerissa enjoys speaking to corporate groups about the benefits of health and fitness.

This month, she shows you how to rip through calories by adding kettlebells to your workout (p.74).



**Sarah Loh  
Resident Chef**

Each month Sarah cooks up a healthy storm in the WH&F kitchen. A specialist in health-conscious cooking, Sarah fuses flavour and spices to create an endless array of innovative recipes.

With spring racing (and party season) in the air, Sarah has whipped up mouth-watering canapes that won't tip the energy in-and-out balance (p.104).



**Diana Timmins  
Yoga Instructor**

Diana is a fully qualified yoga instructor based on the south coast of NSW. Combining her studies in yoga, anatomy, holistic counselling and journalism, she enjoys writing about a range of nutrition and health topics – and, of course, the benefits of yoga.

Ahead of the warmer months' heady social circuit, heed her story on building genuine, lasting confidence (p.56).



**Cassandra Tyndall  
Astrologer**

Cassandra is a Sydney-based astrologer, writer and teacher. She offers readings to individuals, couples and businesses locally and overseas, and is known for her passion, honesty and insight.

If you're a Scorpio, you're in the spotlight, along with celeb birthday candidate Anne Hathaway. See what's in store for you this month (p.116).



**Sarina Lococo  
Dietitian**

Sarina is a qualified accredited practising dietitian and fitness instructor who operates Naturally Fit, a healthy lifestyle consultancy in Melbourne. She also lectures around Australia in health, nutrition and fitness, and has co-authored two books – Fat Loss for Life and The Supplement Guide.

In this issue, Sarina gives one WH&F reader's diet the twice-over (p.52).



**Dr Cassy Richmond  
Medical Expert**

Sydney-based Cassy graduated from the University of Sydney with a Bachelor of Medicine/Surgery (Honours) in 2000 and now works as a health writer with a special interest in women's health issues. Cassy is also a member of the brain cancer committee, called Grey Matters, established through the Cancer Council.

For this issue, she translates the complexities of the thyroid into everyday language (p.60).

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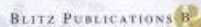
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# KILLER CONFIDENCE

Forget faking it 'til you make it. Genuine, lasting confidence is within your reach, writes **Diana Timmins**

**D**oes a profound lack of confidence or fear of failure hold you back in life? While it may feel as though you're the only one, rest assured, you're not. Almost everyone has experienced being knocked off their perch when self-esteem runs out of puff – even the people you see as boisterous and gregarious.

And don't think sportspeople and celebs get off lightly. Gold medal Olympic swimmer Susie O'Neill was so intimidated by the prospect of standing on the podium that instead of wanting victory, she feared it. Even millionaire songstress Barbara Streisand was so plagued by self-doubt after forgetting her words at a 1967 performance, she took 27 years to summon

the courage to perform publicly again. Abraham Lincoln was so fearful around women, he couldn't eat at the same table as them.

In fact, far from being the exception, such social fears are to blame for most people's failure to reach their full potential, according to psychologist and author of new book *Be Confident*, Anthony Gunn. "It's similar to

driving a four speed car in first gear in fear of going too fast," he says.

If you can relate, it's time to change your relationship with fear and take action. Simply thinking about what you want to achieve won't reap the benefits, but taking that liberating leap of faith beyond the confines of your comfort zones will.

## Take action

Executive coach and author of *The Confidence Gap* Dr Russ Harris, reveals a golden rule that reinforces why avoiding confronting situations can be counterproductive: the actions of confidence come first, while the feelings of confidence come later.

"This is a fundamental point that often gets missed, as people say, 'when I feel confident, then I will do X, Y and Z'. It's not natural to feel certain of performing well if you don't at first have competence. The confidence cycle is to practise the skills, apply them effectively, assess the results and then modify as need be," says Dr Harris.

Gunn agrees that actions speak louder than words when it

comes to confidence, particularly considering the scientifically-proven concept of neuroplasticity. "Learning a new habit involves the brain developing neural pathways for that action. For example, writing your name with your non-dominant hand will initially feel awkward, but through practice new pathways develop and make it more comfortable."

Feelings of discomfort are normal and natural when bridging these pathways to enhanced confidence, but try to work through them – or with them – as Gunn assures they will eventually subside.

## Mind your mental chatter

According to Dr Harris, one of the biggest barricades that may

prevent you from taking action and acquiring confidence is negative self-talk.

"The mind is like a reasoning machine. As soon as you even think about stepping out of your comfort zone into a challenging situation of an uncertain outcome, the reasoning machine is going to crank into action, giving all the reasons why you couldn't or shouldn't do it: too busy, not good enough, I'll fail..." says Dr Harris.

The mind can be a talented multi-tasker, simultaneously munching and mulling over different obstacles, harsh negative self-judgements, comparisons with others, and predictions of what terrible things await you. Rather than trying to

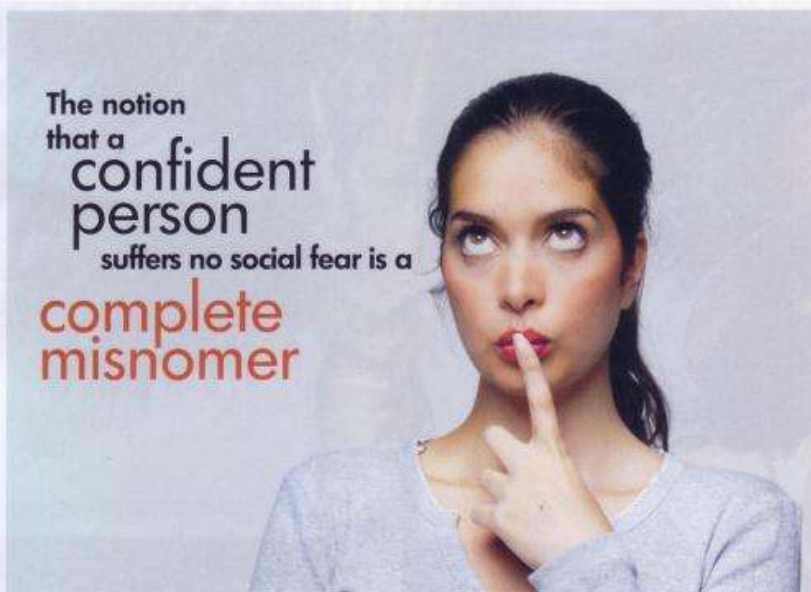
shoot unhelpful thoughts down in flames, Harris and Gunn suggest changing your relationship with them so that when they show up they have less impact and influence over you. Mindfulness techniques, for example, offer productive methods to remain level-headed in the present moment rather than getting caught up with elevating thoughts of doom and gloom.

"Mindfulness practices are not relaxation techniques, but rather an opportunity to observe and let the feelings be as they are," explains Dr Harris, who implements such practices



PHOTOGRAPHY: THEISTOCK





widely as part of his Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACT) programs.

There are many mindfulness-based techniques, but the following exercise provides a helpful introduction:

- Sit erect with your feet pressed flat onto the floor – this will help you remain grounded, centred and focused.
- Close your eyes or fix your gaze comfortably upon a specific point.
- Take a moment to notice how you are sitting, and what you can hear, smell, taste and see. Notice what you are thinking, feeling and doing.
- Bring your attention to the breath: focus on completely emptying the lungs, and allow them to naturally fill back up in their own time and rhythm.
- Deeply observe the changes in your body as you breathe; for example, nostrils, rib cage, chest and abdomen.
- Notice feelings or reactions in the mind and body without trying to control or change them. Dr Harris suggests

naming any feelings that may be particularly unpleasant: 'Oh, there is boredom' (or anxiety, frustration or impatience).

"The challenge in this exercise is keeping your awareness on the breath," advises Dr Harris. "Unless you're a seasoned meditator, your mind is going to tell you all sorts of stories to hook you and pull you out of the experience. Let your mind just chatter away like a radio in the background. Don't try to turn that radio off as you will just make it louder; simply let it chatter away and keep your attention on the breath."

### Face the social fear factor

Have you ever felt so fearful in a social setting that in a mad moment of mind-freeze you couldn't remember someone's name seconds after being introduced? Or maybe you found yourself nervously mumbling and fumbling at the speed of light. Perhaps you accidentally toppled yourself slightly beyond tipsy as you

frantically tried to drink away the blushing, dizziness, racing heart and perspiration. Relax – social fear is completely normal.

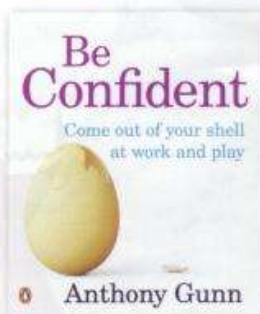
The notion that a confident person suffers no social fear is a complete misnomer, as Gunn confirms the two go hand in hand. "Imagine social fear and social confidence are like hot and cold; related to one another, but at opposite ends of continuum. You can't have one without the other – if you join a new group where there is nobody you know, expect to feel a degree of social fear," says Gunn.

"Social fear is caused by being overly concerned with the risks associated with facing a social situation and prevents people from going new places, making new friends, starting conversations or expressing opinions. Alternatively, social confidence is what allows us to face these new social challenges and develop our potential."

Gunn says the key to developing social confidence is respecting your social fear, and keeping it in balance rather than

being overwhelmed by it. This may become easier to manage by following Gunn's five top social skills tips:

- **Listening:** Have a trusted support person speak to you for two minutes on any topic of their choice. At the end, ask them whether they felt heard and, if not, what you could've done differently.
- **Speaking:** Record yourself talking to your support person. Notice whether your speech displays signs of social-comfort behaviours: like rapid or slow pace, monotone, swearing or jargon.
- **Body language:** Practise your handshake with your support person. Is it too soft or aggressively firm? Look for balance; a good handshake is comfortable, yet firm.
- **Self-disclosure:** Say 'hello' to someone new and disclose a little about yourself. Begin with minor details and aim to share three to five tidbits in ten minutes.
- **Empathy:** Can you think of someone you might not entirely respect? Imagine if you were in their shoes, what would it feel like? What would the world look like through their eyes? Notice whether you have enhanced your compassion toward this person. ✨



*Be Confident is out now through Penguin Group.*