

BELLA BLISSETT



LILY Allen has recently dropped two dress sizes, attributing her success to hypnotist Susan Hepburn. Now, with just six weeks until Christmas, we're all looking for a way to tone up, lose weight and fit into our party dresses — and there are a variety of ways to do so.

From an online nutritionist to hypnotherapists and chefs, these are London's top gurus in weight loss who promise to help you lose those unwanted inches. If Lily can do it, so can you.

THE PERSONAL TRAINING DOUBLE ACT

WHO: Cousins Tom Stockwell and Paul Ellis — both of whom started off as sportsmen — run an intensive course of gruelling exercise. Their chirpy-chappy manner will keep you motivated but expect to feel the burn.

THE PROMISE: During their six-week programme at their north London fitness studio (involving three 90-minute sessions per week), Tom and Paul work together on clients, guaranteeing they will gain lean muscle and lose at least one dress size.

WHY IT WORKS: Rather than imposing an unrealistic fitness regime upon their clients, Ellis and Stockwell approach fitness and weight loss from a lifestyle angle: the programme fits around clients so there's no excuse for slacking.

With two personal trainers dedicating their time to each individual, greater balance and variety is brought to the programme — clients are less likely to get bored and give up before losing the weight.

Whether the trainers work with you at the same time or alternate, you'll do everything from boxing and resistance work to cardio, core stability and Pilates-based exercises to ensure you lose inches fast. Together they'll devise your individual programme and monitor your progress, proving that when it comes to weight loss, two heads really are better than one.

WHERE: 47 St John's Wood High Street, NW8 (020 7251 9080, www.ellisstockwell.co.uk).

COST: £1,400 for 20 sessions over six weeks.

THE FOOD-MOOD GURU

WHO: Katie Peck is a nutritionist with a background in psychology. With her nurturing manner she'll guide you through your lapses rather than punish you further.

THE PROMISE: To change bad eating habits for ever. Clients are equipped with practical nutrition advice that fits in with their lifestyle. Expect to lose a healthy and achievable one kilo per week.

WHY IT WORKS: During an initial one-hour consultation, Katie uses "motivational interview techniques" to identify practical or emotional factors that may stop weight-loss. Clients are encouraged to eat little and often in order to maintain their blood sugar levels, balance their moods and stop them from making "mood-based food choices". They learn to eat the right balance of lean protein, low GI carbohydrate and essential fatty acids spaced evenly throughout the day.

By staving off hunger, you are less likely to eat too much of the wrong foods at night when you're ravenous — causing weight gain. Katie will monitor progress through food diaries and follow-up consultations and build the confidence of those



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London's down-sizers

From personal trainers to Chinese herbalists, here are the weight-loss gurus who will help you fit into your party dress

who have fallen prey to unsuccessful yo-yo dieting.

WHERE: at Stephen Price's holistic health and fitness gym, 3 Jubilee Place, SW3 (020 7351 3332, www.stephen-price.com).

COST: £120 for the initial consultation then £90 for follow-ups.

THE VIRTUAL FAT-BUSTER

WHO: Nutritionist, naturopath, reiki and kinesiology practitioner Vicki Edgson is the best advert you'll ever meet for healthy eating.

THE PROMISE: To provide you with your own online weight-loss programme that you can tap into wherever you are, whenever it suits you best.

WHY IT WORKS: Not everyone has the time or money to visit a nutritionist

face-to-face but by devising your programme online, Vicki makes weight-loss achievable, whatever your lifestyle and financial restraints.

After filling in an in-depth questionnaire (that takes 20-30 minutes), you'll receive a comprehensive profile of your digestive health, your lifestyle and any nutrient deficiencies that may be preventing you from achieving your ideal weight. You'll also be emailed a diet programme containing the top 20 superfoods — including therapeutic herbs and spices — most relevant to your body. Vicki provides ongoing advice via email.

WHERE: www.vickiedgsonnutrition.co.uk.

COST: £30 per

THE HYPNOTIST

WHO: Hypnotist and psychotherapist Susan Hepburn who helped Lily Allen to lose weight.

THE PROMISE: to re-programme your mind so your food choices are naturally more healthy. Lily Allen went from a size 12 to size 8 after two months of working with Susan.

WHY IT WORKS: often we associate fattening foods with comfort. By addressing the hidden thoughts and feelings that might be stopping you from losing weight, Susan helps you break the habit of "comfort eating". People who are locked into a restrictive/binge cycle are encouraged to eat whatever they want — as long as they do it slowly and to satisfaction. As well

as making healthier food choices, exercise becomes linked with the feeling of happiness, caused by the release of endorphins.

WHERE: the Susan Hepburn Clinic, 136 Harley Street, W1 (020 7487 5200, www.susanhepburn.com).

COST: three sessions of one hour over six weeks are £275 each.

THE CHINESE DOCTOR

WHO: Professor Mei of the Chinalife and AcuMedic Medical Clinic comes from a background in medical physics and has been practising Chinese medicine for nearly 40 years.

THE PROMISE: To combat water retention, suppress appetite and stimulate metabolism with acupuncture and Chinese medicine. Followers of the weight-loss programme can lose up to three kilos in five weeks.

WHY IT WORKS: According to Chinese medicine, obesity is a term that covers many "syndromes" — anything from excess water retention, psychological and emotional factors such as stress or addiction and what the Chinese call having too much "fire" in your stomach (an overactive appetite). A consultation will identify your syndrome. A course of acupuncture may be prescribed, plus Chinese herbal medicine to tonify the spleen, balance the body and reduce an incessant craving for food.

WHERE: 99-105 Camden High Street, NW1 (020 7388 6704, www.chinalifefeweb.com or www.acumedic.com).

COST: £79 per one-hour session. You can currently book four and get one free to make up the recommended total of five sessions. Herbs prescribed from the fresh dispensary will cost an additional £6 per bag per day.

THE BODY-BLITZ TREATMENT

WHAT IT IS: The Super Balance Body Ritual plus Enzyme Wrap

THE PROMISE: To calm the mind, improve digestion and help you lose up to four inches in a single session.

WHY IT WORKS: The enzyme-rich sea body-wrap claims to extract toxins from the skin, reduce water retention and bloating, treat eczema and tighten the skin overall. A Himalayan salt scrub improves circulation and an oil-based massage replenishes moisture to the skin. Included in the treatment is an abdominal massage that improves digestion and helps eliminate waste from the colon — for a flattering flat stomach. Also essential for anyone wearing a backless dress where the skin is often neglected.

WHERE: Glow Urban Spa, 8 Motcomb Street, SW1 (020 7752 0652, www.glowurbanspa.co.uk).

COST: £195 for the Super Balance treatment (two hours) and the wrap.

PS — THE DIY KIT

WHAT IT IS: The Bliss slimming and anti-cellulite system. It might not shed pounds but smoother skin gives the illusion of looking streamlined.

THE PROMISE: The combination of the slimmer scrub, cellulite fighting system and stimulator body brush has been designed to treat orange-peel thighs, and it works equally well on the upper arms to improve the appearance of dimply, bingo-winged upper arms.

WHY IT WORKS: The sea-salt scrub exfoliates the skin to leave it smoother, while the rubber stimulator boosts circulation and encourages lymphatic drainage, minimising the lumpy appearance of excess fluid retention. The serum contains a lypolitic (or fat burning) micro-algae extract and essential oils that tighten and firm the skin. Use all three in tandem a couple of times a week.

WHERE: Bliss (0808 100 4151; www.blisslondon.co.uk)

COST: scrub, £24, serum, £29 and stimulator, £29