

Can you beat a retreat?

For Julie Bailey, shifting fat once meant getting a gastric band fitted and eating tiny portions. Then she went on a Tesco Weight Loss Retreat...

JULIE'S STORY

Two years ago, Swindon mum Julie Bailey weighed 18.5 stone. The 46-year-old had been busy raising kids and running a family business – and the more successful the business became, the bigger she got. “I spent hours in my car, long days at my desk. Then I’d come home, cook, help with homework, crash in front of the telly and pick.” Eventually, Julie was buying size 26 work suits.

Julie went to her GP for help but didn’t feel she got the support she needed. So she opted for surgery and had a gastric band fitted. Within weeks of sipping liquidised food and eating toddler-sized portions, ▶

JULIE'S STATISTICS

	BEFORE	AFTER	TOTAL LOST
Body fat	40%	35.5%	4.5%
Hips	46.5in	44.5in	2in
Waist	39.5in	38in	1.5in
Weight	13st 5lb	13st	5lb



KEEP WELL



she had lost 5.5 stone. But then the band became infected and had to be removed last summer. By autumn, the pounds were creeping back on – and then she heard about the Weight Loss Retreat...

INSIDE STORY

The retreat is located in rural Devon, but don't expect facials and fluffy dressing gowns. "The first thing we want for clients is significant weight loss – it gives a confidence boost," explains Director, Stephen Cole. "Exercise is key. We know from studies that it's hard to lose weight – and more importantly, keep it off – by just dieting alone. It needs to be 50:50 diet and exercise."

With the support of a nutritional therapist, sports science experts and an award-winning chef, guests follow a programme of physical activities and eat meals devised to keep blood sugar levels on an

A DAY IN JULIE'S LIFE ON RETREAT

5.30am Get up and drink a little fruit juice before the circuits class at 6am. Felt in safe hands, with two instructors and a warm-up and stretching session after.

8am Breakfast was home-made baked beans and bread, and mushrooms.

10am Got on the minibus. There are all shapes, sizes, ages and abilities in the group. No one was relishing the seven-mile power walking session ahead.

1pm Made it back in one piece. Shattered but on a high. My legs were burning, but I was spurred on by everyone else.

1.30pm Had soup and salad for lunch. Booked a massage – my legs will be grateful.

2.30pm Played a kind of scavenger hunt game where we had to search for clues and answer questions – good fun, but it involved 90 minutes of no sitting down!

4pm Had snack of raw veggies then off to a Pilates class at about 4.30pm, followed by more circuits.

6.30pm Dinner was beef stew with broccoli (delicious) followed by yogurt. Smallish portions, but really full of flavour.

7pm Joined in with the line dancing – yee haw! Everyone took part and we all had a laugh. I was desperate for a shower afterwards – and bed.

9pm Fell into bed and slept like a baby.



even keel. "On average, clients lose around 3.8% of body fat in a week," says Stephen. "But it's not just about short-term targets. During their stay clients do workshops to give them the tools they need to continue losing weight once they get home." (See box, right.)

THE RESULTS

After power-walking 34 miles in a week and doing six hours of exercise every day, Julie returned home glowing. Her jeans felt looser as she had lost 5lb, shed 3.5in from her waist and hips and had dropped her total body fat by 4.5%.

"It was an incredible seven days," she said. "Before the Retreat I thought you had to starve to lose weight. Now I realise how important exercise is and how good it can make you feel. I'm off to the gym..."

Visit www.tescoweightlossretreat.com for more details.

TOGRAPHY: DAVID R

RETREAT TIPS TO SHIFT WEIGHT AT HOME

- Don't skip meals – it can lead to over-eating and slows your metabolism (and weight loss) down.
- Cooking from scratch is better than processed foods. Use plenty of fresh, seasonal ingredients.
- If you do eat pre-packaged foods, such as breakfast cereal, read the

- labels. If sugar is in the top three ingredients, avoid.
- Don't exercise on an empty stomach in the morning. A small glass of juice is all you need.
- Swap tea and coffee for water and herbal teas – you'll save calories by not adding milk and avoid dehydration.

KEEP WELL