

PAULINE DRYSDALE decided she'd had her fill of diets and resolved to take a military approach to her waistline

Pauline, 40, lives in Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbrightshire on Scotland's south-west coast, with her husband and two daughters, Phoebe, six, and Poppy, eight

AS HEAD of a catering company and mother to two young daughters, I'm the one who usually barks orders. So, when I found myself in the middle of nowhere, being told to get up at 6.30am by an instructor in army uniform, I wondered what I'd let myself in for.

It was my first morning at The Camp, a week-long extreme fitness programme developed exclusively for women, which is held at a secret location in Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland. Designed to help you lose a dress size in a week, this course is run by ex-special forces instructors who put you through your paces.

When my friend told me about The Camp I jumped at the chance. But as I stood in the freezing cold, looking at my instructor and feeling hungry and tired, I began to wonder whether my enthusiasm for the military-style training had been misguided.

I had been unhappy with my figure for a while. Having two children hadn't helped and by the time I hit 40, the confident, me seemed to have disappeared.

I was stumped. There are plenty of diets around but at 11st 7lbs and 5ft 10ins, all I needed was something that would give me quick, effective results, which is why I signed up for The Camp.

Every morning would start with an exercise regime of yoga and circuit training. After that, we had breakfast of porridge topped with cinnamon and mixed berries, and a cup of herbal tea.

Then it was back outside for more activity. A typical morning would involve us cycling up into the Highlands for a spot of abseiling. Swinging down Scottish mountains is something you cannot experience in even the poshest of gyms.

LUNCH was usually a quick salad with avocados, oat cakes and herbal tea before setting off for what was known as the "trim trail".

I had high hopes - trim was exactly the look I was going for. It involved jogging through the woods using logs and trees to complete exercises designed to tone and firm up our upper bodies and legs. It was a good job we were tucked far away from civilisation as we would definitely have got odd looks from any passers by.

After all that fresh air we were ravenous by dinner time - fortunately the food was delicious. I had a one-on-one session with the nutritionist Helena Oades who told me dieting was a matter of balance.

Before The Camp, I used to eat a lot of pasta. Now I don't eat any white carbohydrates and instead choose healthier wholemeal alternatives. I have been introduced to couscous and lentils, which I adore. My girls love it, too.

I dropped a dress size at boot camp



COMBATING FAT: Out-of-shape Pauline Drysdale is put through her paces by her Army-trained instructor

They didn't have a bad diet before but now I make much more of an effort to think about what I prepare for them. I steer clear of processed foods and go for organic products whenever possible.

I didn't manage to completely give up caffeine. I lasted a couple of weeks without coffee but eventually succumbed to temptation and now ration myself to one or two cups of organic tea a day.

My exercise routine has been transformed by what I was taught at The Camp. I used to go running three times a week and play the odd game of tennis but none of this seemed to make any noticeable difference to my weight.

The Camp's fitness instructor

told me I should be using more weights to work out my whole body. Since then, I have started to run with weights and have noticed a dramatic difference.

INOW walk the dog on Mondays, and do running with weights on Tuesdays and Thursdays. After each run, I do a fitness ball workout. I do all of this after I've dropped the kids off at school and it no longer feels like I'm having to squeeze in my exercise time.

I also don't have that post-weekend slump on Mondays. After my week at The Camp, I lost 7lb and went from a dress size 14 to a

size 12. Since leaving two months ago, I've lost a few more pounds well. I now weigh less than 11 stone.

All my friends and family have noticed the difference and my husband is delighted. I feel like a new person - my eyes and skin are so much clearer.

This weekend, I'm having a party and feel confident enough to throw on a pair of Kylie-style gold hot pants for the occasion.

● A week at The Camp costs £1,495 which includes training, accommodation and food. The next camp session is on May 5. Female Express readers can sign up for the reduced price of £1,299. Information: thecamp.co.uk

Interview by CATHERINE BOYD