

'Diet boot camp was hell but I did drop a dress size in 7 days'

The UK's first diet boot camp claims recruits will drop a dress size in 7 days. Stephanie Clarkson tests it out for *Close*

CAN NO LONGER EXCUSE MY SIZE 16 frame as post-pregnancy bulge – my “baby” is nearly three. I’m 35 and decide something has to be done, and Scotland’s military-style boot camp, known as “The Camp,” seems the perfect solution. Run by former British Special Forces soldiers, it has “the sole aim of burning fat.”

I decide that with its £1,500 price it must deliver results, so I sign up. It may be the price of a family holiday, but if it works it will be worth every penny. The next course falls on my husband’s birthday, but when I ask whether he minds he says he’d rather I go than stay and eat all his cake. Charming!

DAY ONE

The Camp is held in an imposing mansion, surrounded by woodland. In the common room I bond with the 10 other women over our shared goal to shed pounds. We’re

all weighed, and I’m horrified to find out that at 5ft 5, I’m nearly 12st. The principle of The Camp is simple: to lose weight you have to increase the body’s output (exercise) and decrease input (food).

We’re told that each day we’ll consume 2,000 calories but burn off 5,000 by working out in our fat-burning zone. The daily diet will comprise three small meals and two snacks, and plenty of protein and complex carbs – how bad can it be?

Before we slope off to bed a food amnesty is called. We’re strictly forbidden to bring in food from the outside world, but luckily I’ve already eaten my emergency crisps.

DAY TWO

We’re woken at 5.30am and trudge outside for sprints, squats, push-ups and the punishing plank – holding yourself

horizontal to the ground for as long as possible. “David Beckham can do 12 minutes,” we’re told. I manage 12 seconds.

After breakfast it’s a 2km walk. We’re all given a heart-rate monitor to make sure we’re working in our fat-burning zone.

The rest of the day includes boxing, yoga and a seven-mile trek. I snack on Go Lower GI and carb health bars, and for dinner we have butternut squash soup followed by cod wrapped in bacon with veg.

DAY THREE

My body has seized up, probably in shock from the sudden activity, but we’re in safe hands – we’re monitored constantly and given help stretching every night.

Today’s agenda is 40 minutes of intense circuit training before breakfast, then a two-hour hike. We stop for spinach and quinoa salad, then do yoga with weights and boxing. Tomorrow we’re abseiling – I feel queasy already.

DAY FOUR

Not only do we have to abseil down an 80-metre cliff face, we also have to walk five miles to get there. I make it to the

bottom alive, but the instructors have cruelly hidden snacks at the top of the hill, so we clamber back up. We’re promised chocolate – but it’s pumpkin seeds!

As I’m wearing baggy workout kit, it’s hard to tell if I’ve changed shape, but I do have more energy. My body aches – I’ve used muscles I never knew existed and I’m exhausted.

DAY FIVE

Today is river-crossing day. After a 2km walk (I’m getting used to them) and a 2km bike ride, we slide into the river up to our waists. We then have to pull ourselves along a rope to the other side. It’s bitterly cold, but we’re told the adrenalin alone will make us burn 250 calories.

DAY SIX

After breakfast and yoga we walk 750m up Cairnmore, a “hill” resembling Everest. We could all do with chocolate but get oatcakes and pumpkin seeds. It’s all too much for one woman, who bursts into tears.

Thank God for my Millets walking boots – it’s hailing and my feet are the only dry part of my body. That night, we admire each other’s taut buttocks. Everyone says I’m thinner, so I try on my favourite pair

of trousers that I normally bulge out of – and they fit!

DAY SEVEN

It’s the last day. But before tomorrow’s weigh-in there’s a 60-mile bike ride. Thanks to my regulated snacking on pumpkin seeds and health bars, I manage the whole thing! Fired up by our successes we all return home for mackerel and roasted vegetables.

DAY EIGHT

Everyone waits nervously to be weighed and measured. I’ve lost 7lbs, taking me to 11st 5lbs, and have gone from a size 16 to a 14. I’ve lost 5cm from my waist and 4cm from each thigh. Between us we’ve shed 6st – what a result! ■

THE CAMP GETS RESULTS

Stephanie’s verdict: “The Camp was my toughest physical challenge ever, but it works. A week on, I’ve dropped a further 2lbs, and my skin looks amazing.” Health and fitness expert Nikki Waterman advises: “As a quick-fix to lose weight the boot camp is a good idea, but only if you’re already fit. The sensible approach is eating healthily and exercising regularly, not excessively.” A week at The Camp costs £1,495 for a private room, but if you don’t mind sharing you can book the next course for £999. For more details visit www.thecamp.co.uk or call 0870 033 2375.



Stephanie was measured at the start and end of the week



I’ve gone from a size 16 to a 14 and have lost 5cm from my waist

PHOTOS: JESSICA LARDE AND TONY FERRIE FOR GO LOWER BARS VISIT WWW.GOLOWER.CO.UK



Boxing is one of The Camp’s daily activities



At the end of the week a 60-mile bike ride was a breeze



The cold river crossing burns 250 calories alone!