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## THE HARDCORE BOOT CAMP

*The Camp, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland, military-style Drop a Dress Size week*

**BOOT CAMPEE** Stacey Duguid, ELLE executive fashion editor.

**FITNESS LEVEL** Non-existent.

**AIM** To drop a dress size.

**BEFORE** To say I've partied in excess for the past 15 years is an understatement. I only go to my gym to shower before a night out straight from work, and I'm nearing my mid-thirties with a thickening waist and a steadily drooping bottom. I fell in love with the Lanvin collection at the Paris shows, but need a drastic physical overhaul to get into any of it, so this hardcore, women-only boot camp is for me.

**DAY ONE** I get a train to Scotland, my suitcase full of waterproofs, completely devoid of Chloé shoes. At Dumfries, the 16 other campees and I are met by seriously fit-looking army boys – our ex-special forces trainers. Fear is etched on everyone's faces.

Our base is a beautiful Scottish manor in 300 acres of woodland. The course director gives us a safety lecture and explains the programme: almost constant exercise from 6am until 8pm. The meal plan is equally strict: porridge at 7am, seeds at 10.30am, salad or soup with oatcakes for lunch, a protein dinner and no alcohol, one (weak



cup of coffee a day. That's 2,000 calories a day and exercise will burn up at least 5,000.

**DAY TWO** By 6am I'm running on a muddy lawn, stopping to do sit-ups and push-ups. After breakfast, we're taught map reading while we sit on exercise balls to work our core muscles. Then we take a brisk walk and do circuit training. More runs and circuits in the afternoon, then dinner, boxing and yoga. Bed at 8.30pm.

**DAY THREE** An identical start to yesterday is followed by a spinach salad

*'It's WEIGH-IN day and from my room I hear SCREAMS of joy. I've lost six and a half pounds and am overjoyed at the NEW ME in the mirror'*

with seeds lunch and a brisk, three-hour hill walk, then circuits through woodland, cycling, running, dinner, boxing, then bed.

There have been tears today as the detox affects our hormones. This is hardcore.

**DAY FOUR** After breakfast there's a two-hour walk, then a steep rock climb, which we abseil back down. I'm scared but, with lots of encouragement, I start my descent. Halfway down, I get distressed and feel I can't continue, but the army boys talk me down, and when my feet hit the ground I'm all tears and laughter. Looking back up the cliff is indescribable – I feel a real sense of achievement. Then it's back to the house for lunch, more circuits, dinner, boxing, yoga and bed.

**DAY FIVE** After the dawn circuits, we embark on a five-mile walk. Today is the river crossing. The theory is, the colder you

get, the more calories you'll burn. We're told how to cross, and there is a safety rope tied from shore to shore. In just a T-shirt, thermals and trainers, I plunge in and cross in two minutes.

We're all so overcome with our achievement!

**DAY SIX** I wake up moody and teary – the detox has kicked in. It's

a big day – an intense 15-mile walk and a mountain to climb. I'm told the metallic taste in my mouth and nausea is ketosis, which is due to the high-protein/low-carb diet and intense exercise, and it means I'm burning fat. I feel much better! At the top of the mountain, we shelter from icy winds in a sheep pen to eat soup, and I see that Lanvin dress float past my eyes – I'm clearly delirious! For the first time, I enjoy boxing – I know I'm getting stronger.

**DAY SEVEN** After breakfast and the morning lesson, we're off in the Land Rovers with a trailer full of mountain

bikes. This is a tough 30-mile bike ride over rocky hills and I'm the last one of my group to reach the rest point every time. But I have a quick feel of my thighs as I'm cycling up a hill and am cheered up – wow, I have muscles now!

**HOME DAY** It's weigh-in day, and from my room I hear screams of joy. I go and find out that some of the campees have lost nine pounds; I've lost six-and-a-half pounds. I feel fitter and more flexible than ever, I have a waist again – so next season – my bottom looks firmer, and I'm down from size 12 to size 10. I'm overjoyed at the new me in the mirror. Lanvin, here I come! *A one-week stay at The Camp costs £1,650 for a private room, £1,350 sharing, including full board, activities, use of equipment, private transfers and liability insurance. Enq 0870 033 2375; thecamp.co.uk*

