



Ford that stream, lift that log. Korin follows orders

The booted-into-shape camp



Korin Nolan loses inches and gains confidence, GI Jane style, on a military fitness camp in south-west Scotland

I've always loved the idea of a quick fix to get bikini-ready for summer, so The Camp's claims that I could 'drop a dress size in a week' really appealed. Run by a group of ex special-forces military fitness instructors in the wilds of Dumfries, Scotland, I'm expecting this to be a tough week. And so are the other boot-campers, if the anxious glances are anything to go by, as we're weighed in and measured on arrival.

The Camp team are all very friendly and approachable, but that doesn't mean we're in for an easy ride – after a 5.45am wake-up call we meet outside to 'fall in' military style (with no excuses for being late). Before I know it I'm doing press-ups and sprints up and down the lawn of the manor house – and all before breakfast.

We're not given a daily timetable at The Camp, so each activity comes as a bit of a surprise – it's part of the ethos to keep us on our toes, and the adrenaline-boosting tasks help speed up the fat-burning process. On the first morning we have a lesson in map-reading and shelter building (what every city girl needs to know), and the next morning I'm shooting tennis balls off pieces of string (I'm quite a good shot as it happens). Afternoons are spent hiking through the local marshes or attacking the Trim Trail – a series of workouts that involve using logs as dumbbells and trees to do push-ups. It's absolutely chucking it down, but that's apparently not an excuse to head back, according to our trainer, Karl. 'If it ain't raining, it ain't training!' he barks.

Lunchtimes immediately become a focal point of the day. Yet the meals are small, tiny in fact – a teacup of muesli for breakfast, snacks of seeds, chicken salad for lunch, and fish and steamed veg for supper. But they're tasty and surprisingly satisfying – it's clear I normally eat more than I need.

As the week progresses, the activities become steadily more adventurous. One afternoon I find myself waist-high in an icy river – in just my thermals! It quite literally takes my breath away as I lower my chest into the freezing cold water, but we all feel a huge sense of achievement as we make it to the other side.

But the pinnacle of the week's adrenaline rush comes on the penultimate afternoon when we abseil down an 80ft drop. With a fear of heights, I'm slightly apprehensive to say the least. The

trainers reassure us that it's not compulsory, but at the same time they're encouraging us to give everything a try. I decide to go third as I want to get it over and done with, but I'm so terrified I go to pieces before my turn. The guides are absolutely fantastic, not military-like at all, giving me the confidence I need to go ahead, and before I know it, I'm at the bottom and feeling so proud of myself for breaking out of my comfort zone (and a little silly about making a fuss).

While it's often hard to get a group of women together without there being any tensions, the week proves to be an incredible bonding experience – even more so when it comes to the final day's weigh-in. Although I've shed only a few pounds myself, I've lost inches from my waist and hips, my body fat has dropped, and my stomach, I'm thrilled to say, is more toned than it's ever been. The others have lost between 7lb to just over a stone – in just one week! But I'll take away more from The Camp than just a trimmer figure. It's made me face challenges and realise I can overcome them if I really put my mind to it. A successful weightloss programme? Yes. A bootcamp for your self-confidence? Absolutely. ☑

● **THE FACTS** A week at The Camp in Scotland (0870 0332375, www.thecamp.co.uk) costs £1,450 (twin room with en suite) or £1,750 (private room with en suite), including transfers, kit, instruction, meals, drinks, equipment and insurance. The Camp also runs a fitness camp in Spain.

