

UNLEASH YOURSELF

"You want me to eat how much?" were my initial thoughts when I read the programme received from my new coach, the current Ms Olympia Figure and World Champion, Nicole Wilkins.

I had been following Nicole's journey for some months and it was her balanced approach towards health and fitness that appealed and led me to request if she would mentor me towards my next goal.

Turning 50 was not only exciting for me but also a life changer, as I made the decision that this would be my best decade ever. One of the many things I still wanted to achieve was to take my personal wellness to a whole new level.

My own story about body size, shape and food was now very different to what it once used to be. I realised the importance of building lean muscle, improving my strength and posture, whilst still remaining and feeling my feminine self.

Nicole and I worked together for two three-month segments. She provided me with exercise programmes and suggested proportions of carbohydrates, proteins and fats in order to obtain my desired result.

Each week she reviewed my progress photos and was available to answer my questions and provide any suggestions on what I might need to do differently. And it worked!

Deprivation is never usually anyone's friend, hence it was important to have the variety and freedom to choose the food I enjoyed. Any new lifestyle changes had to be long term and sustainable, not simply a short term fix.

The benefits I received went well beyond any physical changes to my shape. In spite of my own knowledge about nutrition and being a certified personal trainer, I was pleasantly surprised to experience how much more I had to learn, not only about health and fitness, but also about myself.

The increased resistance training and food intake did not at all make me bulky, in fact, I became leaner and stronger and my resting metabolic rate had certainly increased.

My husband would chuckle at the quantity of food I was now eating and how often he would hear me say, "I am hungry again." It was the resistance training, not hours of cardio that ultimately changed my shape.

If you were to ask me why this was different to any other programme I had tried in the past, my answer is without a doubt the availability of regular mentoring and being accountable to another person.

Knowing there is non-judgmental support available for you at all times is what helps us remain focussed, motivated and honest, and of course become better mentors for our own clients.

My greatest lesson on this journey was that age is no barrier to anything we want to do in life. I love the saying: "Just when the caterpillar thought her life was over, she began to fly." All we need to do is decide and take action.

After all, nothing changes when nothing changes.

Listed below are some of my personal tips and tricks I like to practice also share with my clients.



Just when the caterpillar thought her life was over, she began to fly."

- Choose high nutrient foods, such as good sources of lean protein, nutrient rich fats and carbohydrates such as avocado, nuts and kumara and of course lots of greens.
- Drink least 2 litres of water per day.
- Practice mindful eating: eat when your body is hungry and until you have had enough; eat slowly, sitting down and try not to multi-task.
- Eliminate picking - broken cookies have calories too!
- Be kind to yourself and no matter what your shape or size - love your body.

Words: Tanya Unkovich

A FEW WORDS FROM NICOLE WILKINS

Throughout my career I have worked with hundreds of men and women whose number one goal is weight loss and thankfully most have been successful achieving that. However, the clients who make me feel the most rewarded as a personal trainer and health coach are the ones who truly change their life instead of only being dedicated for a few months at a time.

The clients who take more from exercise and healthy eating to improve not just their pant size or body fat percentage but to improve their energy, strength and self-confidence. To be successful long-term, you must start from within and Tanya is a perfect example of this. When I started working with her she was not overweight by any means, in fact, I think she was nervous when I had her increase her calories in fear that she would gain too much weight. She has trusted the process and taken risks and I truly believe she is a stronger woman for it, both physically and mentally.

It is a pleasure working with you Tanya. Thank you for working so hard, not giving up, and being such a positive light, not just to me, but to all who cross your path.

