

WEIGHT WATCH 2004

Halfway there

2 months into program, reporter has dropped 24 pounds and picked up lots of confidence (and compliments)

By Meredith Grenier, DAILY BREEZE

Editor's note: This is the third in a four-part series following reporter Meredith Grenier as she tries to get into shape for her daughter's wedding.



Progress report

Goal: Lose 3 to 4 dress sizes, 30-plus pounds, by May 1.

Days remaining: 61.

Weight loss so far: 24 pounds (13 pounds first 5 weeks; 11 pounds second 5 weeks).
Week 6: 2 pounds
Week 7: 4 pounds
Week 8: gained 1 pound
Week 9: 4 pounds
Week 10: 2 pounds

Total inches lost so far: 41½, including: waist 7½ inches, hips 5 inches, low hip 6½ inches and thighs 3¼ each.

Personal trainer tip:

There is no such thing as spot reducing. If you did sit-ups all day, used an ab machine until you turned blue, and did thousands of thigh squeezes, they would do little to remove the layer of nachos and pizza from your midsection. How do you get fat to leave your midsection? Lower your body fat levels with a regimen of good nutrition and exercise.

Motivational tip:

To motivate yourself to lose weight and get healthy, make a list of "why" — the reasons you want this for yourself. Then the list of "hows" will take care of itself.

This photo of Meredith Grenier was taken before she began her weight loss program. Now, two months into her regimen, the extra pounds and inches are fading away.

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ILLUSTRATION BY TOM SCHNEIDER/DAILY BREEZE

Last weekend we baby-sat for our 16-month-old granddaughter, a compact toddler who weighs 24 pounds — the exact amount I've lost in the past 10 weeks.

As I labored to lift her into my arms, I realized I had lost an entire little person.

At the halfway point to my goal of losing 30-plus pounds by our daughter's May wedding, I'm well ahead of schedule.

Overall there's 41½ inches less of me — including 7½ inches gone from my waist, 6½ inches from my low hip and 3½ off of each thigh. I feel 30 years younger and until 9 p.m., at least, I have energy to burn. (I arise at 6 a.m.)

I wish I had the magic words to persuade anyone carrying excess weight to join me in this pursuit over the final two months.

In the time remaining before the wedding (and before summer) you, too, can reinvent yourself, and the journey is truly exhilarating.

When I started, I planned to honestly divulge my pitfalls, frustrations and failures, but everything I have to share so far is positive — the result of taking one day at a time and just doing it.

First you notice little things, such as strange men opening doors for you. Then, after about a month of exercising and eating a low-fat, low-carb and high-protein diet, you begin to feel so much better. Mood swings are a thing of the past. No 4 p.m. blahs, because you've overcome a dependency on carbs (read: sugar). I had heard that in time, people who

exercise actually look forward to their routines. This finally happened to me last week when I found myself anticipating my aerobic workout on the treadmill. (Some days I have to grit my teeth to do it, however.)

My personal trainer, Derek Bimat at Rolling Hills Athletic Club, had me only walking on the treadmill until four days ago. Now I start each walking session with 15 minutes of jogging.

With this new aerobics routine, called "the hit," I jog at a speed of 3.5 mph for 30 seconds, jog at 4 mph for another 30 seconds, then lower the speed to 3.5 for the next 30 seconds, etc. This raises my heart rate quickly, stimulates my metabolism and makes me feel more like an athlete. I couldn't have done it with the extra weight — probably would have pulled a muscle or had a heart attack.

With roughly one-seventh less of me, perhaps the most surprising changes are the mental ones that accompany the physical.

Embracing Derek's conviction — "where the mind will go, the body will follow" — I've come to see myself as an athlete in training, even at my exalted age. Like an Olympian envisioning his gold medal with blinding clarity, working toward it daily, I take my food and exercise program seriously, on blind faith.

Also, it's not so much about being thin just for the wedding anymore. It's the firm belief that lower weight, good eating habits and exercise are the only real fountain of youth on the planet. Walking up stairs with-

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