



RED CARPET READY

# Meet our weight-loss heroes

As the Oscars approach, we send these glammed-up wonders down the red carpet to show off their new bodies

## 'I lost 60kg... and feel 10 years younger'

YVETTE

AFTER YEARS of yo-yo dieting and bingeing on chocolate and chips, Yvette Collins's weight hit 121kg. Suddenly, her greatest fear – getting surgery to lose weight – had become a terrifying reality.

"I was petrified about going under the knife to get a lap band," she says. "I woke up one morning and knew I was going to lose weight. It was like I'd been hypnotised – I just decided I wasn't going to fail."

Yvette, 38, joined Jenny Craig and Vision Personal Training at Sydney's Rose Bay, where she ran and lifted weights, and pictured herself in jeans for inspiration. "I wanted to be healthy and feel good about myself," she says.

Soon the weight began to drop off and in just over two months, Yvette had lost 10kg. Within 18 months she'd lost 60kg – half her body weight.

Suddenly, Yvette realised she could enjoy clothes shopping again. "Every time I lost 10kg I had to clear out my whole wardrobe. I didn't keep any fat clothes, nothing."

Yvette, mum to Jay, 9, and Kasey, 4, says losing the weight gave her a new lease of life. Her proud husband, David, 39, threw her a party to celebrate.

"I've never partied as much as I do now," she says. "I want to go out and not worry about how I look. I'm 38 going on 28. I feel happier than ever."

Gorgeous in hot pink, Yvette admits she was worried about fitting into a designer gown.

"I couldn't believe a beautiful size 10 dress would fit," she smiles. "But I'm wearing it and I love it. I feel like I can finally take pride in my appearance."



Pretty in pink Yvette says she's feeling "38 going on 28" after her amazing weight loss.



Clare was so overweight she couldn't play with her children. Now they're racing to keep up with her!

WAS 122KG



## 'I lost 40kg... and became a champion swimmer'

CLARE

WEIGHING in at 122kg, Clare Stone's idea of exercise was the odd stroll around the block.

"That's as physical as I got," says the 37-year-old mum.

She would also eat whatever she could "get her hands on". "I'd have the biggest meal possible, then dessert – maybe even two helpings," she says.

But inspiration struck one day while watching her children, Lucas, 10, and Sophie, 7, run around without her.

"I thought, 'If I don't do something now, I won't see my kids grow up'," she says. "That was the trigger I needed."

Clare joined the Betty Baxter program and started on a mix of healthy meals and shakes.

"In the first week I lost 2.7kg," she says. "It was amazing."

After eight months, losing about 1kg a week, Clare needed a new challenge. She'd always loved swimming but hadn't worn bathers since gaining

weight. "It would have been my worst nightmare to get in a cossie when I was fat."

Nervously, she pulled on togs and joined a swimming club.

"When I got in the pool I could barely even swim a length," she admits. "It was exhausting."

Determined not to be beaten, Clare kept going back and was soon training five times a week.

"I knew the World Masters Games were coming up so I thought I'd enter," Clare says. "I dreamed I might win a medal but I knew it was a big ask."

Clare powered through the 400m individual medley to make her dream come true: she won the bronze medal. "I couldn't believe it," she says.

Beaming in a gorgeous blue gown, it's the first time Clare has ever worn a designer dress.

"I feel amazing," she says. "Who would have thought I could fit into something this glamorous?"

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### 'I lost 80kg... and beat the bullies'

CHRIS

TRIM, TONED and brimming with self-confidence, it's no wonder Chris Butta has tried to block out his "fat years". In that tragic period of his youth he topped the scales at 170kg.

Each time Chris, 22, looks at a picture from that torturous time he is reminded of being cruelly taunted by bullies.

"That Chris no longer exists," says the young man who used willpower and determination to lose 80kg and transform his life.

"I blocked out the fat images and stopped watching *The Biggest Loser*, because it made me cry. And I was sick of crying."

Chris's transformation took place over less than a year, amazingly without expert diets or expensive personal trainers.

"I literally woke up one day and decided I'd do it myself, and I have," he says. "The day I decided to lose weight, I instantly started feeling different in myself. Kids

from school would drive by and yell out abuse but I kept telling myself, "They no longer matter".

His diet was simple. "I cut out all soft drink." For breakfast Chris ate a "big bowl of porridge", lunch was lean meat and salad, dinner was lean meat and vegies. He snacked on fruit, nuts, cereal and yoghurt.

"I was strict, I ate the same food every day for 18 months. I didn't care – it was working," he says.

Chris exercised with the same devotion: "I walked and walked. I walked for one hour, four times a day, and then did weights at home to stay toned."

*Woman's Day* paid for surgery to remove the huge skin folds left by Chris's dramatic weight loss.

"It was like the last of the 'old Chris' had gone," he says.

"I feel a million dollars, beat the bullies and now I'm more than happy to walk the red carpet."

Visit [www.howllost80kgs.com.au](http://www.howllost80kgs.com.au)



Sally says she improved every part of her life when she lost weight and now she's helping others to do the same.

### 'I lost 53kg... and won my life back'

SALLY

SHE'S LOST half her body weight, but beaming Sally Symonds says she's doubled the quality of her life.

Having spent years avoiding photographs, too ashamed of her size, the former drama teacher turned healthy life mentor is red carpet ready in her figure hugging dress. "I'm finally happy in front of the camera," she smiles.

Sally's remarkable weight loss began with walking and eating less, which led to a 17kg drop. Ramping up her regime, which she went on to share in a book, she lost 45kg in just 33 weeks.

"Losing weight improves every part of your life," says Sally, 37, who eventually lost a total of 53kg. "Looking back, I can't believe I had the energy to be overweight – it's so exhausting. If everyone knew how good it feels to be fit and healthy, they wouldn't hesitate."

Sally says the secret to her weight loss was learning to love exercise.

"I went from someone who loathed exercise to loving it," she says. "I'd do things like wear wrist weights while doing the washing or cleaning. If there was a person standing on one leg in a queue at the bank that was probably me. You may as well strengthen your core while you're lining up."

Sally doesn't count kilojoules or watch portion sizes. "I just don't have the time," she shrugs.

"The people who don't struggle with their weight don't follow a set diet or set exercise plan – they just make it part of their life."

Sally does keep a food diary, so she knows what she's eaten, but she still loves chocolate. "I didn't eat any for six months, but now I have some every day," she says.

Visit [www.sallysymonds.com.au](http://www.sallysymonds.com.au)



Determination and a strict regime of healthy foods and exercise gave Chris the look he'd always craved.

# 'We each lost 25kg... and rekindled our romance'

ALERA-RAE & QUINTON

WHEN Alera-Rae Kingham and Quinton Evans look at their wedding photos, they can't believe it's really them – since that happy day three years ago they've lost a combined 50kg.

"It looks like two different people," says Alera, 27. "I'm four dress sizes smaller and Quinton has gone down five pants sizes."

Quinton, 30, admits their relationship used to revolve around food, especially big dinners with alcohol. But when Alera's confidence hit an all time low, she knew something had to be done. Quinton was right by her side when they joined the Bodytrim program as a couple and got the ultimate encouragement when in the first week Alera lost 3.6kg and Quinton lost 5kg.

Now they've each lost 25kg and "things have got a lot more romantic," blushes the newly svelte Quinton.

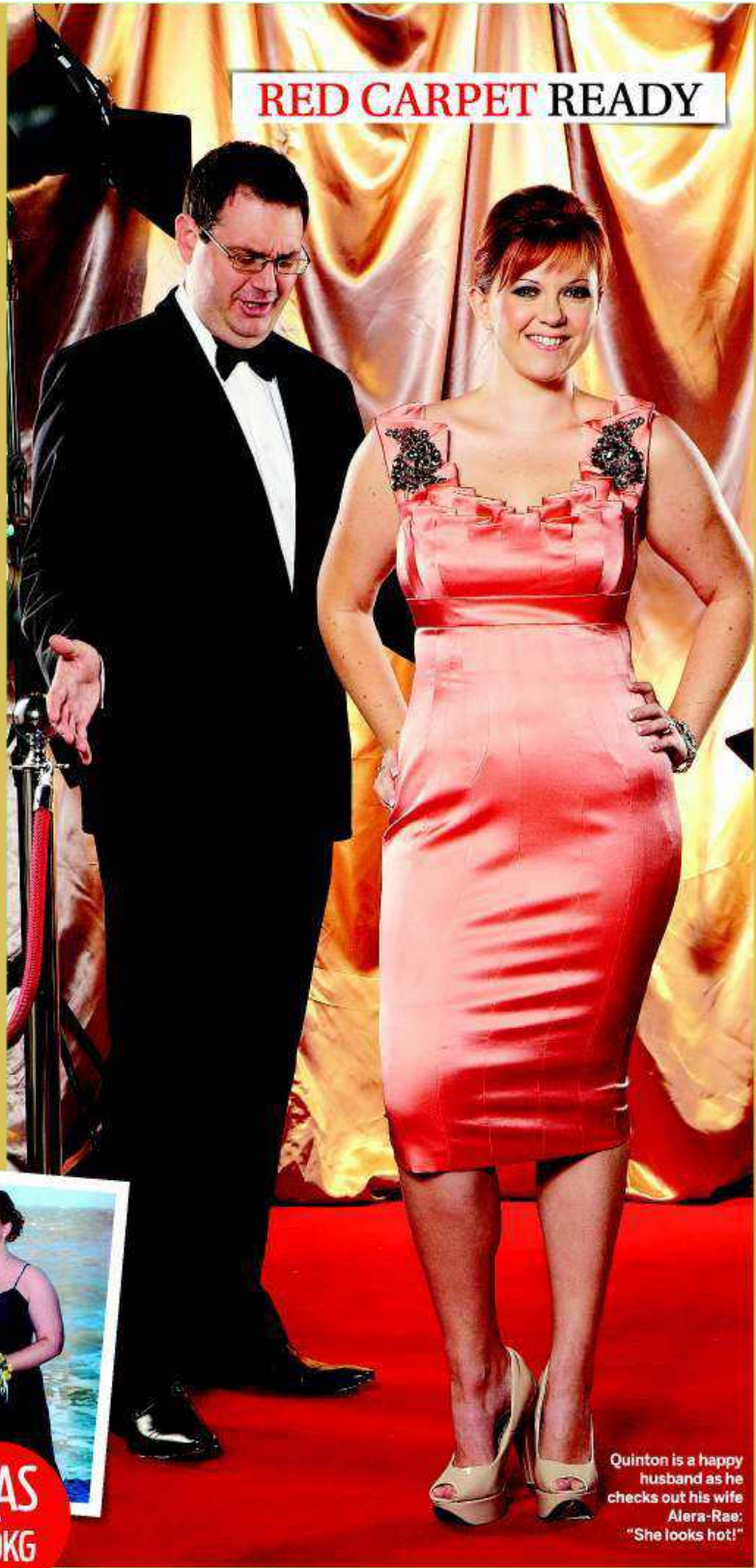
"We're more in tune with each other because we've experienced it together," Alera adds. "We've got more of a zest for life now. Our life isn't centred around food anymore."

When Alera and Quinton donned their slimline threads for this shoot, they couldn't take their eyes off each other.

"I never ever imagined I would be slipping into a size 10 dress," says Alera. "Before, I'd cover my arms with cardigans or wear black, even in summer. But I feel fantastic today."

She runs her hands over her husband's jacket – "He looks amazing," she says, smiling proudly. Quinton nods and grins: "Wow, Alera looks hot."

## RED CARPET READY



WAS  
100KG



WAS  
85KG



Quinton is a happy husband as he checks out his wife  
Alera-Rae:  
"She looks hot!"

Words: Glen Williams, Katherine Chatfield, Jonica Bray. Pictures: Alana Landsberry. Styling: Amanda Newman, Hair and make-up: Samantha Symonds, Sarah Damichi, Jen Bazzi. Clothes: Yvette; George dress, Peter Lang earrings. Clare: Charlie Brown dress, Diva bracelet. Chris: Spurling Formal Hire @ Myer tuxedo suit, shirt and bow tie, Aquila shoes. Sally: Ely M red dress, Payless shoes, Peter Lang earrings and bracelet; George Gross purple dress (group shot), Payless shoes. Quinton: Peppers Formal Hire tuxedo, shirt and bow tie, Aquila shoes. Alera-Rae: Karen Millen satin beaded dress. Payless shoes, Peter Lang bracelet, own rings.