

## STAGE ONE: HONEYMOON PERIOD

**Average weight loss:** 5-10lb  
**Maxine:** Lost 1st 1lb (11st 8lb to 10st 7lb)

"I met Chris, who's now 27 and an accountant, on a blind date in 2001. I was 25 and a size 14/16 and two weeks before we were due to meet, I started worrying that he might think I was too big for my 5ft 7in frame.

I lived on my own and although I wasn't a junk food fiend, dinner was usually a microwave meal for one. I worked long shifts as a beautician at a health farm and I'd have a few glasses of white wine to unwind at night.

I desperately wanted to wear my favourite dress for our date, so I had a body-shrinking wrap treatment and cut right down on carbs. After two weeks I'd only lost 4lb. But six months after we got together, I was a stone lighter - the adrenaline of a new relationship made me feel less hungry. Chris lived in Northampton and I was in London, so I'd spend the week hyped up and looking forward to seeing him at the weekend. Being so much slimmer felt great and knowing that Chris loved my body gave me a huge boost."

2001  
DRESS SIZE: 10/12  
WEIGHT: 10st 7lb



2002  
DRESS SIZE: 16  
WEIGHT: 12st 7lb

## STAGE TWO: COMFORT ZONE

**Average weight gain:** 10lb  
**Maxine:** Gained 2st (10st 7lb to 12st 7lb)

"Eight months after meeting Chris, we moved in together. Within a year I'd ballooned to a size 16. I felt so comfortable in the relationship and the pressure to look amazing all the time wasn't there any more. I also came off the Pill and gave up smoking.

We ate three meals a day, whereas when I was single I'd often skip meals. Chris can pack away huge quantities without gaining weight so I cooked bigger portions and we loved our Sunday roasts.

The bigger I got, the more I was in denial. I refused to weigh myself or have my picture taken because I was so ashamed. Chris never said anything, but he recently admitted he used to look at me and think: 'How can I tell Maxine she needs to lose weight?'"



2006  
DRESS SIZE: 10/12  
WEIGHT: 10st 6lb

## STAGE THREE: THE BIG DAY

**Average weight loss:** 8lb  
**Maxine:** Lost 2st 1lb (12st 7lb to 10st 6lb)

"We got married in July 2006. When I went wedding dress shopping, I looked in the mirror and saw a blancmange. I was desperate to look good for the photographs, so I went on the Lighter Life plan.

For the first 100 days you only eat meal-supplement milkshakes and bars. After a week I'd lost 3lb. At first it was hard to watch Chris tuck into proper meals but I got round it by cooking things I didn't like!

Six months later, I was 2st lighter. My best friend Sarah burst into tears when she saw me, and I lost so much weight, my dress had to be taken in two days before the wedding.

It was a wonderful day and I was so proud. Chris said I looked amazing and people who hadn't seen me for ages couldn't believe their eyes."

2008  
PREGNANT  
WEIGHT:  
12st 6lb



## STAGE FOUR: BABY BOOM

**Average weight gain:** 1st  
**Maxine:** Gained 2st (10st 6lb to 12st 6lb)

"When I fell pregnant, the thought of gaining weight terrified me because I'd put so much effort into losing it - but I still piled on 2st. Instead of three normal meals a day, I grazed on five small ones. I found myself snacking on dolly mixtures, jelly babies - anything sugary. I also ate 12 portions of fruit and veg a day and got through gallons of juice.

Chris liked my new shape. I loved my bump but hated my love handles and I worried about not being able to lose my tummy after the birth."



NOW  
DRESS SIZE: 14  
WEIGHT: 11st

## STAGE FIVE: REINVENTION

**Average weight loss:** 10lb  
**Maxine:** Lost 1st 6lb (12st 6lb to 11st)

"Hugo was born on July 10, 2008. Since then I've become very aware of what I eat. Breakfast is usually wholemeal toast, lunch will be a salad and low-fat yoghurt. For dinner, I'll cook something simple like lasagne or risotto. I still eat lots of fruit and veg.

Hugo was born by Caesarean so I couldn't exercise for the first six weeks, but I do a workout video regularly now.

When you have a bump, everybody can see you're pregnant. But after the birth I felt very self-conscious about my body. I've lost weight but I'm still not confident enough to wear a tight top. This year I want to lose another stone."

Don't blame chocolate for piling on the pounds - blame your relationship. Experts have identified five stages in a woman's love life that affect her size. Here Maxine Williams, 32, shares her body journey from dating to procreating BY BEVERLY KEMP

# 'My HEART always rules my HIPS'

## STOP YOUR MAN MAKING YOU FAT

Clinical psychologist Dr Funke Baffour specialises in the psychology of weight management. She says:

- A new romance makes us happy and content, but romantic meals and cosy nights in can mean the pounds creep on.
- An unhappy relationship can lead to comfort eating to blot out the sadness or controlling our food intake because we can't control the relationship.
- Learn to separate food from emotions. You should enjoy food but not rely on it to make you feel happy.
- Stop using food as a crutch. You won't find the answer to relationship worries in the biscuit tin.
- If you're an emotional overeater, find a distraction - go for a walk or find a hobby to keep you away from the fridge.