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Leigh Richardson-Hill, 35, had a rather different approach to losing weight. Now, having shed five stone, she tells us her secret...

The woman WHO SNIFFED HERSELF SLIM

The smell of the freshly-baked baguette filled with ham and runny brie was calling to me from the shop window. It was tantalising and taunting, saying: 'Go on, eat me!'

So without giving it another thought I bought the 'snack' from the bakery and wolfed it down.

Now, this wouldn't have been a problem if I hadn't already eaten three iced doughnuts, a plate of stodgy carbonara and a bowl of chocolate ice cream – and

with back problems. Being so large made things worse. And now my doctor was concerned.

'Having a baby will put far too much strain on your back,' my GP warned. 'You may end up in a wheelchair after giving birth.'

An image of me fat and confined to a wheelchair was just awful. My love of cakes and bread was

eating proper healthy meals, and now I knew when to stop. But one thing threatened to break my resolve – the smell of food.

Sitting in a café with my mum, I looked over at her frothy hot chocolate with whipped cream. I found myself trying to waft the smell of it towards me.

'What are you doing, love?' Mum asked.

'I'm sniffing myself thin,' I replied.

It sounded stupid but from then on whenever I spied chocolate, cake or a fattening pasta dish I'd just sniff it. I kept thinking: 'It smells great. But it'll be nothing compared with how good I'll look once I'm slim.'

Four months later I weighed 11 stone and felt fabulous. For the first time in my life I was able to buy a pair of size-12 jeans.

I'm never going to let food rule my life again. And now the only foods I sniff are the low-fat meals I prepare at home! ■

'I wafted the smell of the hot chocolate towards me'

it was still only 12 noon!

I'd like to say I had a problem with food since childhood, that I comfort ate to make myself feel good, but that would be a lie.

I was just a greedy pig – end of story. I simply loved food.

My job managing an Italian restaurant was a dream come true as I got to eat my favourite foods every day – pasta, crusty bread and cake.

My size-22 figure had never bothered me before. I had a wonderful husband, Matthew, 28, and lots of friends. In many ways my life was complete, except for one thing – a baby.

But a car accident had left me

stopping me from being a mum. I needed to take action – fast.

When I stood on the scales the needle hit 16 stone. At 5ft 11in I was far too heavy for my frame.

I'd heard about the **LighterLife** weight-management programme and it sounded right for me. I knew it would be tough but I had to get my eating under control.

I stuck to the plan, living on meal-replacement drinks, soups and bars. In my first week I lost 11 pounds and after a month I'd shed nearly two stone. The classes taught me how to read the signs that I was full. Before that I just ate until I felt sick.

Soon I was able to move on to

Fact file

Name: Leigh Richardson-Hill
 Age: 35
 Height: 5ft 11in
 Weight before: 16st
 Weight after: 11st
 Total loss: 5st

