

The real 10 years younger

After a lifetime of being fat and frumpy, Nadine Hakney, a PA from Lincolnshire, decided to take action

Can you imagine never being able to look in the mirror? Well, that was me three years ago. What was the point? I'd only hate what I saw. I was just 38, but fat and frumpy – I looked and felt 10 years older.

'I think you're beautiful,' my husband, Simon, would say. Sweet, but I didn't agree.

Instead, I avoided looking at myself. I had my brown hair cut into a short, simple style, and my clothes were dowdy tents to camouflage my size 28 bulk.

There was no point in fussing over hair, make-up and clothes like other women. I hated the way I looked, and had for as long as I could remember.

I'd always been chubby, and I spent most of my twenties

yo-yo dieting. I would go up three dress sizes in a matter of months.

My craving for carbs always caught up with me. Potatoes, bread, pizza and crisps were my weaknesses. And it was a vicious circle – I hated myself for putting

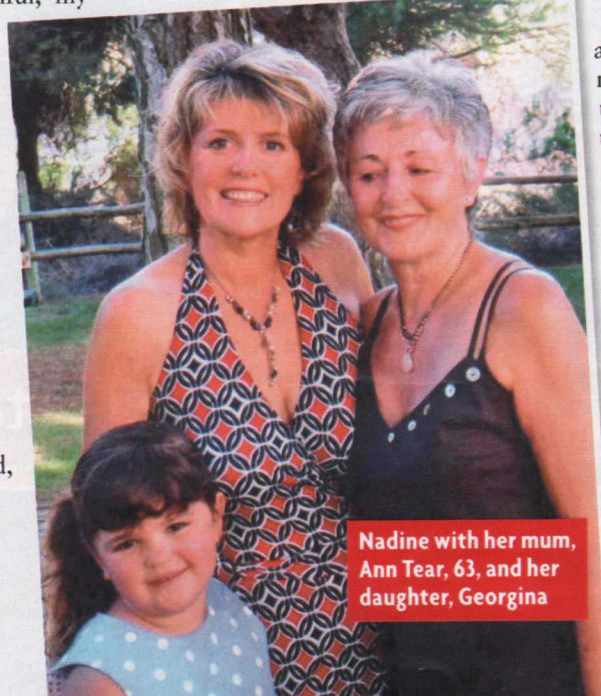
on a few pounds, so I ate more and more, getting bigger each time. I was soon a size 18.

At 24, I met Simon and when we were due to get married, I starved myself on a piece of fruit a day to fit into my size 14 wedding dress.

But my stressful job as a trainee store manager meant I was soon back to bingeing again. By the time I had my children, Georgina, seven, and Fraser, five, I weighed 19st and was a size 28.

At mother and toddler groups I'd stand in the corner holding the coats while I watched other mums run around with my kids. I couldn't keep up with them at my size.

On the rare occasions I did catch a glimpse of myself in the mirror, I felt depressed, and it just made me eat more. I did try going on diets,



Nadine with her mum, Ann Tear, 63, and her daughter, Georgina

1999
SIZE 24
At a Christmas party,
weighing 16½st

once losing 4st with WeightWatchers, but I just couldn't stick to them for long.

I was abusing my body, and couldn't stop. Would my lust for fatty foods eventually kill me?

Then, in January 2005, I was reading *Woman's Own* when I saw a story about a lady who'd lost weight with LighterLife. It explained how the programme used counselling to help people get to the root of their eating problems. I wondered if it could it work for me?

I called up to find out more. On the eating plan, I had to have four meal-replacement shakes or bars a day and drink 4ltr of water.

For someone who adored food, it'd be tricky. But I was supported with weekly



**2007
SIZE 12**
At 10½st, Nadine's finally learnt to love herself

What exactly is LighterLife?

- To qualify, your BMI must be at least 29, and you need written permission from your GP.
- Meals are replaced by soups and shakes until you reach a healthy BMI of 25.
- Foods are reintroduced over a 12-week period, starting with small amounts of protein and veg, building up to a varied diet.
- Weekly counselling sessions identify situations that trigger overeating. 'I was terrified of going back to normal food after being on the shakes,' recalls Nadine. 'Even now, I'm still afraid of carbs! I just have treats in small quantities.'

Five ways to look younger

- 1 BOOST YOUR HAIR COLOUR** Try a shade that's a bit richer than your natural colour.
- 2 UPDATE YOUR MAKE-UP** Ditch your old foundation and try the latest anti-ageing, radiance-boosting formulas.
- 3 BEAT YOUR STYLE RUT** Black's draining. Go for jewel hues like emerald green, deep purple and cobalt blue.
- 4 CHANGE YOUR HAIRSTYLE** Get a soft, face-framing bob, feathery layers or a flattering fringe.
- 5 WHITEN YOUR TEETH** The costs are coming down, and yellowing teeth are very ageing!

one-to-one counselling sessions. It was a struggle at first, but losing 11lb in the first week made me determined to stick at it. Because I felt so motivated, I never felt hungry. Counselling made me realise that, like many people, I used food as comfort. I learnt how to control my cravings by thinking before stuffing my face. As the pounds fell off, it was as if a new person was emerging. I felt younger than I had in years. In just five months, I lost 8½st, reaching my target of 10st 7lb. The next time I had my hair cut, my hairdresser couldn't believe how much I'd changed. 'Why don't we try something different?' he suggested. I'd worn my hair short for more than 10

years, but now that I was starting to feel happier and more confident, I wanted to experiment, so I agreed to grow it out. I later had gold highlights and invested in some fake tan. 'I look incredible!' I beamed when I saw my new style. I hardly recognised myself, and neither could my friends. A year after I'd started dieting, I'd gone from fat, frumpy and mousy to slim, bronzed and blonde. That Christmas, Simon paid for me to have my teeth whitened. Staring in the mirror as I flashed my new gleaming smile, I knew my transformation was complete. Simon loves my new look, and he's thrilled that I'm so happy. He just worries about all the



Long hair, highlights and a fake tan have taken years off her

attention I get! I have to reassure him that he's the one I love. When I look in the mirror now I love me, too. I'm just sad for all those wasted years. But now that I look and feel 10 years younger, I'm determined to make up for lost time.