

# Get fit and trim with Hayley Lewis

Find out how Hayley beat her own battle of the bulge. Interview by Alex Bernard

Hayley Lewis is trying to describe the feeling of standing on the blocks in the final of the 800m freestyle at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, knowing the hopes of an expectant nation were resting on her 18-year-old shoulders. "It was only slightly more terrifying than my first time hosting *The Biggest Loser*," she laughs. "I'm serious! My heart was in my mouth."

Hayley's successful career as a swimmer made her a familiar face around the country in the early '90s, but she re-entered the spotlight when she became host of Network Ten's reality weight loss show *The Biggest Loser* in 2009. "My own struggle with my weight is well-documented and I could really relate to what the contestants were going through."

Hayley started racing competitively at the tender age of four and success followed with world championship titles and Olympic and Commonwealth medals. But with this success came pressure and teenage Hayley struggled to adjust, using food to cope. "I was simply eating too much,

and even though my coach, nutritionists, the head coach and my parents - everyone - kept telling me to stop, it just made me want to eat more! Part of that was a maturity thing but also how I dealt with the pressure. Even now, when I'm stressed I'll reach for the chocolate."

Over the years her weight increased and in 1998 she was approached to become a spokesperson for Jenny Craig. "I knew I had a weight problem and I would never have had the guts to walk into a place like that on my own, so I embraced it. It was about getting the help I needed." Now fit, healthy and loving life, each week Hayley combines several 10 kilometre runs and swimming sessions and sticks to a healthy diet. But she also knows how to enjoy the good things. "When I'm filming *The Biggest Loser*, I fly back to Brisbane every Friday night and Greg and the boys pick me up and we have Indian. I just know that I have to rein it in for a few days after that, but I would never let it rule my life and say 'No I don't want to eat out.'"

In addition to being busy mum to Jacob (13)

and Kai (8), hosting *Biggest Loser* and running her homewares store in Bulimba, Hayley, now 37, is the new face of Kellogg's myspecialk.com.au, a free personalised online weight management strategy that incorporates food and exercise plans. It takes a long-term approach to weight management, encouraging users to make food and exercise lifestyle changes as opposed to taking up quick-fix diet fads. Kellogg's nutritionists have developed a program that includes daily



meal planners, recipes, shopping lists and even healthy options for eating out and Hayley has helped to design the exercises for gym, outdoors and indoors.

"It's so positive in its approach. It's about embracing a healthy lifestyle, eating real food and not focusing on being on a diet and depriving yourself of things," Hayley says. "It's not about wanting to look like Miranda Kerr or Jennifer Hawkins, because let's face it, nobody looks like that! I just want to feel good, have energy and look good and I think most people want that."

Hayley advises people starting out on their own weight loss journey to write out their goals and keep a weekly food diary to see what unnecessary unhealthy foods can be cut out. "And don't beat yourself up if you fall off the wagon," she says.

See a sample weekly plan on the next pages

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