

"A Shopping Meltdown Made Me Lose 75 Pounds!"



When even the size 18 jeans became a tight squeeze, Kristi Dear knew she needed to take action. After cutting down portion sizes and squeezing regular exercise into her weekly routine, she lost 75 pounds -- and even became a personal trainer!

By Charlotte Latvala

"I Did It!"

Name: Kristi Dear

Age: 29

Height: 5'4"

Her Weight Before: 200

Her Weight After: 125

Pounds Lost: 75

At Current Weight: 3 years

Kristi Dear was never a fan of [exercise](#), but when she hit 200 pounds, she knew she had to become one. "I'd lay out my [workout](#) clothes the night before and force myself to put them on as soon as I got up," says the Savannah, Texas, mother of two. "Then I'd turn on a fitness TV show. Watching those happy, healthy people made it easier to join in."

After a few weeks, she began taking classes at a gym. "I blocked out an hour in the morning on my calendar five days a week so nothing would interfere," she says.

Dressing-Room Meltdown

Despite being sedentary, Kristi was a trim 110 pounds until she went to college. "I started eating the way my boyfriend -- now husband -- did: Buffalo wings, tacos, anything greasy," she says. By age 20, she was up to 150 pounds; by 24, after having two babies, she weighed 200. One day Kristi tried to buy a pair of jeans.

"When I couldn't get a size 18 over my [hips](#), I started to cry and then vowed to change," she says.

Dieting Without Deprivation

Along with adding exercise, Kristi cut back on portions. "I'd make a turkey sandwich for lunch but eat just half, along with raw vegetables and a few pretzels. I saved the rest for an afternoon snack instead of chips," she says. "I never felt like I was on a diet." Within a month, she had dropped eight pounds; she reached 125 in about a year.

Kristi's gym enthusiasm has led her to become a personal trainer, and now she makes kids' exercise videos. "If I can't get to the gym, I'll do [squats](#) while I dry my hair, [dance](#) with my kids. My body craves movement every day."

Kristi's Weight-Loss Plan

The Diet: Breakfast is whole-grain cereal with soy milk. At lunch, Kristi has turkey and low-fat cheese on whole wheat with carrot sticks. Dinner is salmon, whole-grain rice, and broccoli. She snacks on apples, bananas, green beans, and half an avocado.

The Workout: Sixty to 90 minutes of strength or interval training three times a week; 45 minutes of [cardio](#) (swimming, kickboxing, basketball) twice a week.

Biggest Temptation: Pepperoni pizza. "I fill up with salad first; then I'm satisfied with just two slices."

What She Couldn't Wait to Wear: Tank tops. "I always wore long sleeves in the summer to cover up my flab. Now I love to show off my [shoulders](#) and upper [arms](#)."