

"Strength Training Helped Me Lose 40 Pounds"

I Like This! (9)

After three children, Julie Minsky Barroukh barely recognized herself in the mirror. But through strength training, she's now in the best shape of her life.

By Charlotte Latvala

"I Did It!"

Two years ago, Julie Minsky Barroukh looked in the mirror and hardly recognized herself. "After having had three babies, practically one after the other, I could forgive myself a few extra pounds, but the woman I saw was fat and frumpy, and I thought, Who are you?" says the 37-year-old TV producer from Los Angeles. "I decided that it was time to get my body back."

For most of her life, Julie hadn't worried about her weight. As a teenager, she was athletic and felt good about her size 10 frame. However, she gradually gained about 20 pounds in her twenties, which she blames on the erratic hours she worked at the start of her career. At 31, she had her first baby, and with each subsequent pregnancy she put on a few extra pounds. "I was constantly hungry and didn't put any limits on what I ate. I indulged in lots of pizza, ice cream and cheese." When her youngest child was 8 months old, Julie weighed 166 pounds. "It hit me the day I caught sight of myself in the mirror. I felt as if I were losing my identity -- and I wasn't paying attention to my body."

Julie went to a gym the next day. "I'd never gone to one before. I was a bit intimidated and decided to invest in some sessions with a personal trainer to get me started." They began with weight training. "He set a routine for me: a warm-up on the elliptical machine, followed by a 45-minute weight concentrating on a different muscle group each time."

Julie worked out three days a week with the trainer and two days on her own. She also adjusted her diet, cutting back on junk food and portion sizes and eating more vegetables. "Instead of snacking on chocolate and potato chips, I'd eat a few almonds or an apple with peanut butter." It took a few weeks for Julie to see results, but then she found she had lost five pounds. "As I added more [cardio](#) work to my routine, the weight just kept coming off," she says. Eight months after she started exercising, she reached her current weight of 126 pounds. Fitness has become part of her family's life. "The kids and I [work out](#) together, playing basketball, doing [yoga](#). They even have their own little free weights," she says. "They have so much energy. Now that I'm healthy and fit, I can keep up with them."

Julie's Weight Loss Plan

Age: 37

Height: 5'6"

Weight: 126

Pounds lost: 40

Months at current weight: 18

The Diet: Breakfast is a protein drink and two egg whites or whole-wheat toast. For lunch, she has a tuna, turkey or peanut butter sandwich. Dinner is fish, chicken or lean beef with veggies.

The Workout: Julie works out five days a week for about an hour, doing a combination of [stretching](#), [cardio](#) and weight training. She takes a [yoga](#) class once a week.

Stick-With-It-Tip: [Work out](#) at the same time every day. "It becomes part of your routine -- like brushing your teeth."

Biggest Temptation: Haagen-Dazs Coffee Mocha Chip ice cream. "If I really want it, I have a few bites, and that's enough to satisfy me."

What She Couldn't Wait to Wear: A midriff shirt and low-cut pants. "I couldn't believe I could fit my [hips](#) into a size 4; I actually called my trainer from the dressing room!"

Best Compliment Since Losing Weight: "A 25-year-old guy at the gym looked at me and said, 'You have three kids?'"

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