

What better motivation than baring all on the beach to kick-start a serious body blitz? From Hypoxi to hypnosis, boxing to boot camp, the IMAGE team has dusted down trainers, spring-cleaned fridges and diligently vetted the latest fitness crazes, up-to-the-minute diets and quick fixes to see what really delivers a body beautiful.

HOW TO GET

Bikini FIT

BEAUTY

PLAN 2 THIRTY AND NO LONGER FLIRTY PLAN

• KICKBOXING • HORMONE BALANCING DIET • MARINE WRAPS

THE LOWDOWN Having been able to drop weight overnight in my twenties, I became extremely frustrated when my love handles and wobbly bits refused to shift, despite joining Weight Watchers, going to the gym and walking further than Forrest Gump every day. A re-think was obviously required **THE SOLUTION** Individual sessions with kickboxing legend and celebrity trainer Pdraig Murphy, a hormone rebalancing eating plan, coupled with marine clay body wraps to ease water retention **FITNESS REGIME**

Three one-hour sessions per week of a tough personalised fitness regime in Pdraig's private gym in Blackrock, Co Dublin. The first half of each session involves quick anaerobic circuits and developing basic kickboxing skills – punching, kicking, learning sequences, right hooks, left hooks, and going hell for leather at a punch bag – which I found not only de-stressing but bizarrely euphoria-inducing. The focus of the latter is on strength training, of which Pdraig is a big fan, “as it increases bone density, speeds up metabolism, helps prevent disease and certain cancers, balances posture as well as decreasing body fat stores and creating a leaner physique. Overall it's much more beneficial in the long run than the results of cardio exercise.” My strength training involved low repetitions of heavy weights and, since I can hardly lift my handbag, initially this was quite a shock to the system, leaving me nauseous, but within weeks I went from weakling to Wonder Woman and can now bench-press an impressive 30 kilos. Respite comes at the end of the hour when Pdraig performs five minutes of physical therapy (a combo of acupressure and physiotherapy), which increases mobility and prevents the “morning after” aches and pains normally associated with bouts of exertion **IDEAL**

FOR Anyone energetic who has found their usual form of exercise and/or emergency diet no longer effective

DIET Derived from the results of my bio signature test, a method used by Pdraig to assess body fat accumulation in specific areas, which in turn may indicate hormone and dietary imbalances. It was decided that my diet needed to address my abnormally high androgen, cortisol and insulin levels, which were causing weight deposits

on my back, waist and upper arms. So a low GI regime, supplemented with lots of dark fruit and veg, nuts, protein, healthy carbohydrates and an instruction never to go hungry was prescribed. I was also banned from eating chicken unless it was organic or corn-fed as Pdraig believed it was contributing to my high androgen levels. I ended up eating way more than normal and was dubious I'd lose any weight as I was constantly full to the brim **ADDITIONAL EFFORTS** Following all that training, I felt I'd earned a little R & R and a series of Yon-Ka Phyto Marine wraps at Elysian Therapy was just the ticket. A divine slimming treatment that encompasses a deep scrub, light massage to stimulate lymphatic drainage and the application of a full body mask of marine



clay, which when activated by heat draws toxins and excess fluid from the body. The most obvious results were in the tops of my thighs, which even now still have a little gap between them **THE RESULT** The figure I had when I was 21. Results were evident after two weeks, with my body shape slowly changing and my muffin top finally diminishing. In just five weeks, I have lost 4 per cent body fat and dropped over a dress size. Digits aside my physique is leaner, less lumpy, much more in proportion and altogether more streamlined, as if I were wearing Spanx every day. Better still, my insomnia eased off and my energy levels have soared. I've also discovered an exhilarating sport I had no interest in previously and fully intend to join a boxing club. And then there's the fact that I now know how to defend myself and have learnt invaluable lessons on nutrition and how the body operates **THE DOWNSIDE** Exhaustion after each of the first few training sessions and a serious dent in finances, but worth every cent **THE BOTTOM LINE** One-to-one sessions with Pdraig, €100 per hour, group sessions with up to three people, €150 per hour. Yon-Ka Phyto Marine treatments, €100 **CONTACTS** Pdraig Murphy at Evolv Fitness, Main Street, Blackrock, Co Dublin, 01 205 6910, www.evolvfitness.ie. Elysian Therapy, Leopardstown Road, Dublin 18, 01 289 4422, www.elysiantherapy.ie **LD**

“ WE LOSE ABOUT 5-10LBS OF MUSCLE EVERY DECADE FROM 20 UP, NO MATTER HOW MUCH CARDIO WE DO. HENCE STRENGTH TRAINING IS IMPERATIVE. ”
PADRAIG MURPHY,
EVOLV FITNESS

BIO SIGNATURE TESTING EXPLAINED

Bio signature testing is a new and unique concept in Exercise Science, of which Pdraig is the only person in Ireland to hold a degree. The testing involves a detailed lifestyle assessment and the measurement (with callipers) of fat stores all over the body. The theory is that where people store fat on their body is an indication of their hormone profile, and hormonal imbalances can cause you to hold weight around certain spots, such as your waist, arms, bottom and thighs. No matter how much you diet or exercise. If hormones are out of kilter, it's hard to lose inches around your problem areas. Unlike many fitness programmes or diets where one size fits all, this method of assessment enables Pdraig to create a personalised nutrition and training plan that will help rebalance the body first and deliver optimal physical results for each clients.