

MISSION MAKEOVER

No One Said Making A Change Was Going To Be Easy | By Rachel Clayton



VIRGINIA WILKINSON is a bubbly, single, brown-eyed blond with a great job, a full social life and a goal: to lose some weight, boost her dating confidence and most importantly, get healthy. To help her make the change, TCW set her up with Dr. Lauren Weiss, a nutritionist; Sharon Mehalek, a personal trainer; and Suzanne Newman, an image consultant, for three months. Every month we'll check in to see the progress Virginia's made...

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A 10-YEAR DOWNSLIDE

Virginia wasn't always overweight. But when she began a hectic job managing an Italian restaurant she started to develop bad eating habits—and the pounds

slowly crept on. "Mainly, I started eating out of pure convenience. If I was busy, I'd grab fast food for lunch, and then after work, I'd meet friends for margaritas and chips," Virginia admits. When she did eat at home, dinner was often a Lean Cuisine or Weight Watchers meal followed by loads of sugar-free drinks, Diet Coke, and anything else with a fat-free label. "I didn't realize I was fueling myself on caffeine and diet foods," she says. "Just crap. Just processed crap foods."

TRIED AND FAILED Though she tried many a diet, including a three-time bout with Weight Watchers (and did in fact, lose weight) it was never a permanent change. Since starting her personal training sessions, Virginia's realized her problem wasn't Weight Watchers or Nutri-System or Atkins—it was her lack of real exercise. "I always thought I was really active because I was always doing things. But I wasn't exercising," Virginia says. "A couple years ago I actually did lose 30 pounds on Weight Watchers, but that was because you lose weight faster when you don't exercise (because you're not building muscle)." Now that she's working out, Virginia says she's losing inches, not just water weight.

THE TURNING POINT With a family history of heart problems on both sides—her paternal cousin recently died of congestive heart failure, her grandfather from a heart attack—Virginia was always aware she was fighting bad genetics. But it wasn't until when her father died of congestive heart failure three months ago that Virginia realized she needed to fight harder. "I was sitting at his funeral, looking around and that's when it hit me. I need to do something. I needed to make some changes in my life for the better," Virginia says. And this time around, it's not about finding a quick fix. "This isn't a diet for me," she confirms. "This is a lifestyle

change that I'm making."

BIGGEST CHALLENGE For Virginia, a natural-born extrovert, maintaining control when she's in a social situation has been the most challenging part of the past month. "I'm from Louisiana," Virginia says. "Louisiana is all about food and drink, cooking and eating. Chicago is the same way, there's no question about it. When I go out, I want to have a glass of wine, I want to have what everyone else is enjoying. But I'm trying really hard to stay focused."

STEADY RESULTS Though she's frustrated with the slow weight loss, Virginia says she feels better than ever. "I can tell I've lost inches. I don't have slumps and I'm not as tired overall. I won't say I'm suddenly full of energy because it's still hard to get myself to work out but I definitely feel better. My clothes fit better. And my skin has completely cleared up. It's really amazing."

THE BIG PICTURE Although her immediate goal is to shed the extra pounds, Virginia knows there's more to it. "Most of all, I want to be more confident, more comfortable in my own skin," she says. "I'd rather be healthy than skinny. I'll never be skinny, I don't have that body. I just want to be healthy."



Vitamins, fiber cereal and routine 15 to 45-minute sessions on the elliptical trainer are now all part of Virginia's healthy new lifestyle.



WEIGHING IN

Virginia Wilkinson

Assistant Manager at The Bernadin

Age: 37

Height: 5'8"

Weight: 227 lbs.

Body fat: 39.3 percent (obese)

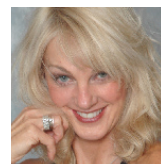
Pounds lost so far: 7 lbs.

STAY TUNED Next month, Virginia shares details about having a heart scan and her complete closet makeover.

The Diet: In the morning, Virginia eats a bowl of fiber-rich cereal with 1 percent milk. (Dr. Weiss says a little fat and protein in the morning is important so that Virginia stays full for longer periods of time.) Lunch is usually a grilled chicken pita or a salad; dinner is sushi and edamame or a chicken breast with a side of black or green beans. During the days she snacks on yogurt, almonds, an orange or a handful of pita chips with hummus. If she gets a sweet craving at night, she reaches for a half cup of sorbet rather than cookies or ice cream. Virginia's also replaced all diet drinks—much to her dismay—with good ole' H2O.

The Workout: Cardiovascular training four to five times a week for 15 to 45 minutes each session (walking outside or elliptical training). She spends 30 minutes two days a week strength training with Sharon.

COACH NOTES



SHARON MEHALEK,
Personal Trainer and
General Manager of
LifeStart at Riverpark
Athletic Club:

"Virginia has been extremely diligent about not missing a workout and coming across town, mid-day, from her full-time job, to meet me for her weight training sessions," Sharon says.

Sharon wanted Virginia to start moving as much as possible while taking things slow so that Virginia doesn't burn out too quickly. "We've set realistic goals for her to lose a maximum of two pounds a week so she'll lose body fat, not muscle mass," Sharon says. "I included strength training in her routine because as we increase the muscle mass in her body it will increase her metabolism and allow her body to be more efficient and burn more calories, even at rest. Initially the strength training, with building lean body mass, may prevent her from seeing more of a result on the scale because muscle weighs more than fat. But once her body adjusts to this change the results will then become more visible, both on the scale and in reshaping



SUZANNE NEWMAN,
Image Consultant with
Find Fashion Happiness:

In their initial discussion, Suzanne asked Virginia the ten simple, yet revealing, "image inventory questions" she asks every client including: When you look in your closet do you know what to wear? Do you understand what works on your body type and how to bring out your best look? Do your clothes fit? Suzanne found that, "Basically, Virginia is very well put-together, but she's uncomfortable with her weight and not quite certain what to wear in non-professional situations such as Saturday afternoon lunches or fancy attire for weddings. I observed that the stores she shopped at were not always the best choice for

finding a feminine sexy look." Suzanne plans to help Virginia move toward this sexier look, but in an approachable, feminine, not-over-the-top way. Next up: A home visit to check out Virginia's closets. "We'll make sure that her main closet contains clothing choices that work for her present body shape like skirts and dresses to show off her great legs," Suzanne says. "And we'll remove the emotionally cluttering items such as pants that are too tight or suits that are out-of-date, as well as determine if any items can be altered to fit better and/or keep in line with the current trends. I'll also help her put together items she already owns that can project her sexy, feminine new image."



DR. LAUREN WEISS,
Certified Clinical
Nutritionist:

Dr. Weiss' first measure was to get Virginia off the fat-free, sugar-free kick Virginia thought was working. "I can't stress this one enough," Dr. Weiss says: "In a world of quick, processed foods, mineral-depleted soils, we're overfed and undernourished. Even if a girl eats tons of food, if it doesn't contain the nutrients the body needs, she'll still be hungry. Artificially sweet foods cause insulin levels to rise and can elicit cravings for foods and sweets. I switched her from processed to fresh and gave her a high-quality women's multivitamin." Dr. Weiss also instructed Virginia to shop the perimeter of the store when grocery shopping. "Remember that Odwalla bar? If you bought one today and opened it two years from now, it would still be just as tasty and delicious. That's kind of scary. What that means is that if it doesn't break down easily on the shelf, it doesn't break down easily in your stomach. If Virginia sticks to the perimeter of the grocery store, she has no choice but to eat fresh foods. After all, this is where the produce, dairy, bakery and meat, fish and poultry are."

DR. WEISS' SHOPPING LIST

Snacks to eat at home or take with you on the go . . .

- Fruit: cantaloupe, oranges, berries, apples, pears, etc.
- Vegetables: broccoli, asparagus, cherry tomatoes, carrots
- Hard-boiled egg
- Low fat yogurt with whole grain cereal such as Kashi
- Whole wheat pita bread dipped in hummus
- Low fat string cheese
- Low fat cottage cheese and fresh fruit
- Lentil salad and whole grain crackers
- Ezekial Bread
- Dried fruit: apricots
- Nuts: raw walnuts, almonds
- Seeds: pumpkin and sunflower
- Natural Ovens cookies and granola bars
- Tuna with whole grain crackers
- Frozen yogurt
- Frozen grapes
- Fruitside

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