

Kristi's bouncing back to fitness after Fat Camp [Jul 31 2008](#) By Lisa Adams

FOR the first time in her life Kristi Moffat smiles as she chats about her size. She's fit, brimming with confidence and closer than ever to her ideal weight after losing almost two stone at summer fat camp in less than a month.

By the end of the six-week, gruelling outdoor fitness programme, 16-year-old Kristi is determined to be at least four stone lighter and the size 12 she's spent her teenage years dreaming of.

It comes at a price - sweat, tears, pain and a staggering s5000 bill for her parents. But it's worth every penny when you see how Wellspring UK, a pioneering weight loss camp in the Lake District, is transforming Kristi and dozens of other overweight youngsters' lives forever.



Kristi of Musselburgh, near Edinburgh, says: "It's not a boot camp, it's much better.

"All my friends are skinny and I'm fed up being the fat friend. I always felt the odd one out. I've even cried in clothes shop changing rooms. If I find something nice to try on it never looks good on me as all I see is a fat person looking back. This summer is my chance to change and I'm determined not to let it slip through my fingers. I know I can go all the way now."

It's exactly the sort of positive thinking which would have been unrecognisable in Kristi before signing up for camp.

Tipping the scales at 15st 7lbs, far more than the recommended weight for her 5ft 5in height and slight frame, she grew up knowing she was different.

Kristi was nine when her parents, Patricia, 45, and David, 46, first took her to a dietician for help with her spiralling weight. It hurt to always live in the shadow of her little sister, Linzi, 13, who is naturally skinny and is a promising sports star with medals for everything from running to Irish dancing, judo and football lined up in her bedroom. As Linzi shone, Kristi took comfort in food.

It's a problem which has reached epidemic proportions among Scots kids. In fact, the statistics are frightening.

Record numbers are fat or obese. Recent research of primary seven kids reveals one in three children are overweight, one in five obese and more than one in 10 weigh in at severely obese levels.

Experts predict the health implications are so dire many of this generation of children may be the first to die before their parents.

Overeating and inactivity puts them at increased risk of everything from diabetes to heart conditions and cancer. Many suffer from low self-esteem too as they're bullied.

But Kristi hit rock bottom last Christmas when she was studying for her prelim higher exams. The combination of exam stress and a hatred of the size 18 she had become left her tearful and desperate for a change.

Kristi says: "I never used to like talking about my size. It hurt to compare the way I was with all my friends who are stick thin. I just felt like I was a big blob and I didn't like it.

Even if I did look okay in the mirror I felt a mess inside.

"I thought people who walked passed me in the street were staring at my size and judging me. I couldn't cope any more and I remember sitting in my room crying all the time.

"I knew I had to do something to turn myself around. That's why it felt like such a relief to get to camp as I'm finally doing something about it."

Wellspring UK is the seventh camp opened by the American company. With camps everywhere from Hawaii to New York, Kristi is in the hands of a team of world experts specially trained to help obese youngsters change their body shape, eating habits and the way they think about food forever.

As well as a packed daily programme of calorie-burning activities like hiking, camping, canoeing and running, kids also get one to one therapy sessions as well as group sessions to help them understand why they over eat.

Wellspring programme director, Ian Carter says: "A lot of kids use food as a coping strategy.

"Whether it's to cope with bullying or problems at home, they use it as an emotional crutch to allow them to get through life. We use cognitive behavioural therapy to help reverse that. We look at why they overeat then introduce young people to a healthy lifestyle.

"Kristi's progress has been brilliant. She has an excellent attitude, works hard and is doing so well."

SLEEPING in log cabins near the lake shore in the YMCA'S 400- acre woodland, kids like Kristi know that beating the bulge takes hard work and determination.

You have to be at least 20lb over weight to qualify for camp but some kids weigh a heart wrenching 24 stone, two stone lighter than the 26 stone limit for students.

Applications are treated on an individual basis but any heavier than that and it's unlikely kids will be able to move around freely enough to take part in the camp's strenuous outdoor activities.

Of all theWellspring camps worldwide, Kristi's in the UK performed best this summer, losing a record breaking average of 8.8lbs of weight per student in the first week alone. Of the 70 kids signed up this summer aged between 10 and 19, there are four Scots including Kristi.

The Calorie King, a pocket calorie, fat and carbohydrate counter and a daily journal become the kids' Bibles, helping them stick to a maximum of 1,200 calories a day and a low fat diet. Kids are shown how to cook healthy, low fat alternatives like buffalo meat for lasagne rather than regular beef.

A pedometer clicked on to each student's belt helps them hit the 10,000 minimum steps a day. Kristi is up to between 25,000 and 30,000 steps now and loving her new outdoor lifestyle - even the scary bits.

Kristi says: "We've even done caving.

"I was crying at first then I just thought 'well there's no way to get out of this.' Here at camp if you're scared of something you still do it. There's no point in backing out as you only really have one chance to do it. At the end you feel so great that you've actually done it.

"One of the toughest days was a hike up hill following a map. It was hot and sunny and we were out for seven hours. I was so exhausted I was crying by the end. That's the closest I've come to quitting but I know I never would."

Kristi has already lost 21lbs but knows it's likely to be much more on Sunday when she has her dreaded weekly weigh in. She's been told she needs to lose 69lb to be a healthy weight.

"The weigh in every Sunday is the worst part of the week but I'm getting results.

" I feel happy as I've never had such a big weight loss. It gives me confidence and makes me want to lose more. I know I can do it now.

I just fall in to bed at the end of the day. I've already had four blisters on my heel, my feet are throbbing and the muscles in my legs are aching by the end of the day but it's all worth it."

Strict rules mean Kristi is rationed to a 10-minute phone call once a week to her family. And for proud mum Patricia, waiting anxiously by the phone back home in Scotland, the transformation in her daughter is already startling.

Care worker, Patricia says: "Kristi was emotional last Sunday when she phoned.

"She sounded quite tearful and explained she'd lost nine pounds. At first I thought she meant money and I told her it didn't matter.

I then asked her how she was doing with the weight loss and Kristi said, 'mum that's what I'mtelling you, I've lost nine pounds in weight. I was just overwhelmed."

The distance between mum in Scotland and daughter in the Lake District will seem even greater on August 5 when Kristi's higher exam results drop on to the mat.

Being unable to open an envelope which is a clue to her daughter's future will be torture, Patricia admits. She's desperate to know how Kristi has got on in exams such as Higher English, Maths, French, History and admin which will help her take a course in social care at Esk Valley College.

But Patricia only has to wait until August 16 when she drives down to pick her up.

Patricia says: "I'll give her the biggest hug.

"I am so proud. I've been saying to Kristi I don't know if I'll recognise her. But I don't just think it's going to change the way she looks. I think camp has given her a lifelong confidence to go out and live her dreams."

For details about Wellspring Camps log on to www.wellspringcamp.co.uk

KRISTI'S CHANGE IN HER DIET...

BEFORE

Breakfast: Toasted white bread, water.

Lunch: Subway sandwich on white, tuna salad, mayonnaise and a can of Sprite. Galaxy chocolate bar.

Snack: A bag of salt and vinegar crisps. Can of Sprite.

Dinner: Pizza and chips, Can of Irn-Bru, Galaxy chocolate bar.

Snack: A bag of salt and vinegar crisps. Can or Irn-Bru.

AFTER

Breakfast: Bowl of cornflakes with skimmed milk, glass of water. (between two and three litres of water a day)

Lunch: Wholemeal pasta and tomato sauce, salad complete with tomatoes, lettuce and onions. Watermelon and an apple. Diluted juice.

Snack: Two jaffa cakes or party ring biscuits.

Dinner: Mushroom soup, Leek and potato bake with low fat cream sauce, Strawberry jelly.

Snack: Tesco Be Good To Yourself raisin and apple bar.

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