

HAIR: JESSIE VERROCA USING ORIBE HAIRCARE MAKEUP: JESSICA SHINYEDA WARDROBE STYLIST: AMY BERLIN PROP STYLIST: COURTNEY DE WET FOR BIG LEO.

WALK OFF THE WEIGHT

Are you ready to slim down? Get inspired by four women who laced up their sneakers, hit the streets and lost big.

BY JANE BIANCHI
PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARC ROYCE

TALLENA JOHNSON

**Lost
113 lbs!**

READ HER STORY
ON PAGE 108 →



MY WEIGHT-LOSS SECRET

ADD *one minute a day to your walk*

Tallena Johnson, Fremont, NE

“When I was really heavy, I felt like people were staring at me, so I didn’t go into stores or restaurants by myself. I’d walk with my head down and avoid eye contact. My mom had a heart attack at age 41, when I was

I joined the Anytime Fitness gym near my house, but at first I could barely walk on the treadmill for 10 minutes. I didn’t want to overdo it and get frustrated, so I decided to add just 1 minute of walking each day. After 20 days, I was up to 30 minutes of walking and the pounds were consistently coming off. If I couldn’t make it to the gym, I’d stroll around town with my then-teenage daughters, Kayla and Kendra. Now, I feel like I am turning heads—in a good way. I hold my head up high with my shoulders back, I smile and make eye contact. I try to radiate positivity.”

19, and that was never far from my mind. On my 39th birthday in 2012, I hit 250 pounds and thought, *I’m going to die if I don’t do something*. So I set a goal to get under 200 pounds by age 40.

» **WHAT ELSE HELPED:** “I ate six small meals a day and replaced soda with water.”



AFTER
**Lost
113 lbs!**

MY WEIGHT-LOSS SECRET

CELEBRATE *small victories*

Rebecca Johnson, Woodbridge, VA

“Six years ago, after visiting relatives in Utah, I looked at my mother in a family photo we’d taken. She was obese and in a wheelchair, and it hit me that I could be in that situation in 30 years. I decided that I needed to take control of my weight now, before it was too late. I was 251 pounds at the time, so walking laps around my neighborhood was all I could muster at first. I knew I had a lot to lose, but I was starting at square one. To stay motivated, I celebrated each 10-pound loss with a new clothing item. As I slimmed down, I noticed shopping was fun again. At one point, I tried on a pair of size 16 jeans and I wasn’t sure if they would fit. (I started out a size 22.) When I was able to zip and button them, I stared at the mirror with my mouth open—I couldn’t believe it! I was so excited that I ran out of the dressing room and hugged my daughter. Today, I still power-walk for at least 30 minutes at a time, usually on a treadmill at home four to five times a week. When I think about what I’ve accomplished, I get emotional. I feel better than I ever did in my 20s.”



AFTER
**Lost
138 lbs!**

» **WHAT ELSE HELPED:** “I joined Weight Watchers. Following the program’s points system helped me swap out processed foods for healthier options, like salads.”

THIS PAGE: COURTESY OF THE SUBJECTS. OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF THE SUBJECT.



AFTER
**Lost
90 lbs!**



MY WEIGHT-LOSS SECRET

DITCH *the car*

Vanessa Herron, Thousand Oaks, CA

"A doctor's visit in February 2014 was my wakeup call. I was 242 pounds, prediabetic, and my blood pressure was sky-high. I knew it was serious, and I had to focus on getting healthy. The problem: I'm a working mom of four kids ranging in age from 14 to 22, so I have limited time. I thought about ways to fit activity into my day. I realized my daughter's middle school was one mile away. So, I started walking her there instead of driving. At the beginning, I wasn't able to keep up. I'd wave Brenda on and go back home. Each day, I went a little farther and was eventually able to make the whole trip. After four months, I was down 40 pounds and could walk without huffing and puffing. Today, my health measures are in normal ranges and I've shaken the 'victim' mentality. In other words, I felt like life was running me instead of me running my life. I now believe that if I can work hard enough to change my health, then I can apply that discipline to other areas. It's been going well—I devote time each day to my novel and other writing aspirations!"

» **WHAT ELSE HELPED:** "I read a book called *The New Lean for Life*, which taught me how to replace 'bad' carbs (like white rice) with 'good' ones (like quinoa)."

“Adding new music to my playlist helped me look forward to my daily walks.”

—VANESSA

WD

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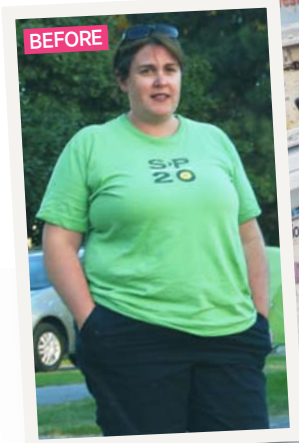
MY WEIGHT-LOSS SECRET

GRAB a buddy and get outside

Dina Skeels, Normandy Park, WA

“Facebook spurred my transformation four years ago. I was 240 pounds and saw a photo of myself at a friend’s wedding. My arms looked enormous. I was so embarrassed that I untagged myself and set my mind to making changes. I started scheduling walking dates with my girlfriends because I thought it’d be a great way to catch up and squeeze in a workout at the same time—and they would hold me accountable. We hiked at state and national parks near my home to take advantage of the beautiful scenery. My friends and I also started a group text to check in with one another about once a week. I realized that the more I walked, the more I lost. (I also started doing Bikram yoga, which helped me improve my breathing and flexibility.) Before, I could barely make it around the block. Now, I outpace people half my age—and rarely untag Facebook photos.”

AFTER
Lost 90lbs!



» **WHAT ELSE HELPED:** “I signed up for Jenny Craig. The packaged meals helped me learn what a smart portion should look like.”

YOUR TURN

TRY THIS WALKING WORKOUT

This routine pairs cardio progression (just 1 extra minute of strolling per day, like Tallena, who lost 15 pounds in her first two weeks!) with strength moves to increase calorie burn and tone all over. Follow it to go from rookie to rock star—and kickstart any weight-loss goal.



Snap to see these strength-training moves in action. Get the WD app, page 10.

	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
WEEK 1	Walk 15min	Walk 16min	Walk 17min	Rest	Walk 18min	Walk 19min	Walk 20min*
		+ 15 squats			+ 30-sec plank		*Or two 10-min walks
WEEK 2	Walk 21min	Walk 22min	Walk 23min	Rest	Walk 24min	Walk 25min	Walk 26min
	+ 10 wall push-ups	+ 20 calf raises			+ 12-15 bench dips		+ 45-sec plank

SMART EATING

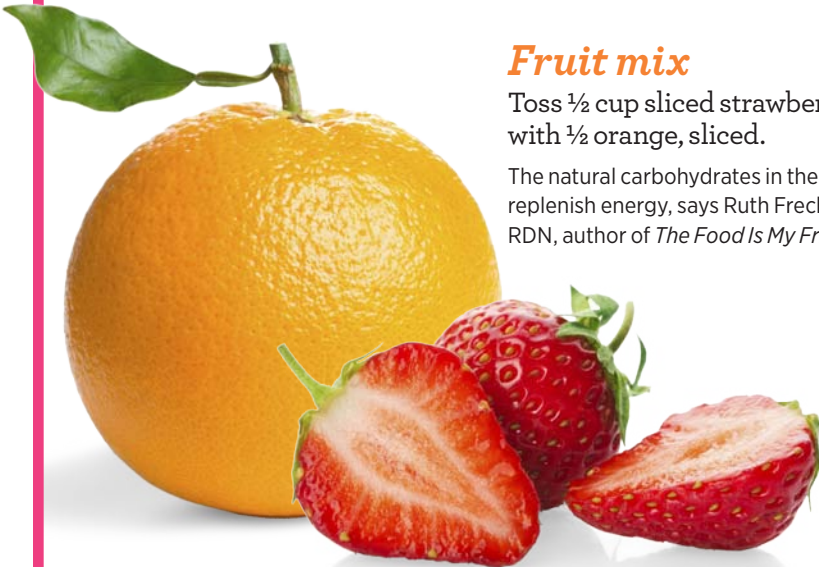
POST-WALK POWER SNACKS

Three light but strategic picks to grab after your stroll.

Fruit mix

Toss ½ cup sliced strawberries with ½ orange, sliced.

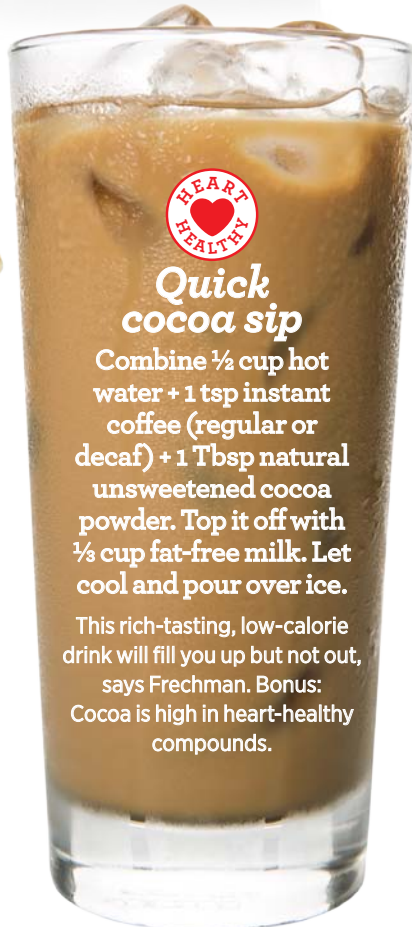
The natural carbohydrates in the fruit replenish energy, says Ruth Frechman, RDN, author of *The Food Is My Friend Diet*.



Pistachios

Eat 1 oz unshelled nuts.

You can consume 49 pistachios for just 160 calories, which is a surprisingly large amount, says Kerry Neville, RD, a Seattle nutritionist. These nuts also contain antioxidants that may help reduce inflammation.



Quick cocoa sip

Combine ½ cup hot water + 1 tsp instant coffee (regular or decaf) + 1 Tbsp natural unsweetened cocoa powder. Top it off with ⅓ cup fat-free milk. Let cool and pour over ice.

This rich-tasting, low-calorie drink will fill you up but not out, says Frechman. Bonus: Cocoa is high in heart-healthy compounds.



And when you're craving something sweet, indulge in **NEW Special K** Divine Fudge Brownies.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: GETTY (2); SHUTTERSTOCK; GETTY