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'After the pain, the euphoria kicked in'



SHAPE UP FOR 2010
WITH **MATT ROBERTS**

Start your New Year with our fitness programme created by Matt Roberts, Britain's leading trainer, and you could lose up to 10lb in 14 days. His new exercise DVD and diet book are FREE in the Telegraph this weekend. Here he puts **Celia Walden** through her paces and, overleaf, begins his A-Z of fitness



while jogging) is really unfair - like being the overweight kid at school made to do cross-country in short shorts.

Fad diets are the only subject to disrupt the harmony of Roberts's features. "Most of them are total rubbish. They sell a dream, but in reality they are depriving you, and making you lose not fat but weight. The most damaging ones are the high-protein diets. We've all been sold the idea that avoiding carbohydrates is a good thing, but without carbohydrates it's impossible to burn fat."

"There are a lot of women out there who white-knuckle it [virtually starve themselves] through the years, and although in the short term that might be OK, the net effect is that your metabolism slows down and will not be able to shift fat later. It's no coincidence that fad diets have coincided with the biggest rise in obesity."

Deter diets, similarly, are given the thumbs down. "There is no need to go on extreme detoxes - just stop the bad stuff," he says.

The only celebrity diet to meet with his approval is the macrobiotic diet (eliminating all processed and refined foods), which Madonna and Gwyneth Paltrow famously adhere to, "although it is for someone prepared to be a little more extreme," he admits.

Maybe the problem is that sensible eating just doesn't sound sexy. "And maybe we Brits do like the idea of deprivation," he shrugs. "Maybe it's a puritan thing." Yet the key to any successful lifelong diet, he insists, "isn't about eating tasteless food, but making good choices."

Running through the food diary Roberts has asked me to keep does away with any remaining snugginess. Fat, I'm told, which should make up only 20 per cent of our daily intake, is one of the things we are all eating too much of. He advises me to cut out lamb (the fattiest meat) and replace it with steak, ditch the cereal bars ("full of sugar and fat") and read the label on those M&S salads. "You'll be shocked to see how many grams of fat there are in them."

Like the best doctors, editors and politicians, Roberts doesn't just make a convincing case - he lives out his beliefs, too.

Matt Roberts is laughing at me, laughing at the sheer depth of my discomfort - and the worst thing is I brought all this on myself. "I'm not one of those 'long-hunch' style journalists who was last in the gym in PE knickers, learning to do the perfect forward roll," I told him at the outset. "You don't just wake up looking like this. I work out five or six times a week, eat healthily and am known to my friends as a beacon of discipline." One hour with Roberts blew all that out of the water. What he does to you in the confines of his minimalist, graphite-grey gym isn't pretty.

But then he is Britain's leading personal trainer, responsible for creating some of the most famous physiques in fashion, music and politics, including Tom Ford, Naomi Campbell, John Galliano, Trudie Styler and Amanda Holden.

Roberts, 36, isn't an unpleasant man to spend £150 an hour with, looking as he does like a genetic engineer's idea of the perfect male specimen. Tear your eyes away from the perfectly symmetrical model face and they will only adhere themselves to his hard, lean torso.

"Initially, people saw personal training as something for the rich and famous, but now they know that they can get a lot back," he explains, handing me a glass of water. "The goal was always weight loss when I started out 15 years ago, but now people seem to be wanting to look after their bodies purely for health reasons."

"Footballers have completely changed the way the average British male wants to look, which is good. Twenty years ago, big, hairy men like Burt Reynolds were icons. Now it's Beckham, who has single-handedly revolutionised the world in terms of men's fitness and health. Girls, though, have

a real problem at the moment. Which female role model is seen as being a healthy, exercising person?"

When I tell him how shocked I am at fashion shows to see skin hanging slackly from triceps, and thighs that judder with every step, he shakes his head. "Models are thin, but not lean. Look at the original supermodels - Naomi, Cindy and Helena - and you can see that they were an entirely different breed. That was an era when women were pleased to be seen as empowered and in control. The young ones coming through now have got very different bodies."

He may not have worded his life mantra in quite the same bold terms as Kate Moss did recently, when she professed that "nothing tastes as good as skinny feels", but the essence is there. "What Kate was trying to say probably has some truth," he maintains. "Being healthy and lean does feel better than almost anything."

Which woman, in his eyes, has the perfect physical shape? "Naomi," he answers immediately, "because the proportions between her shoulders and hips are perfect, as is her waistline. Then there are these incredibly long legs. If you mapped out female perfection on a piece of paper, it would look like Naomi."

With both sexes it's about working within the person's physiological comfort zone and outside of their physical comfort zone," he says.

In response to my smug admission that I work out five times a week, he says: "Well, you're not working

No pain, no gain: Matt Roberts works Celia Walden hard to snap her out of her comfort zone, above. Left, supermodel Naomi Campbell, whose physique Roberts describes as 'female perfection'; right, David Beckham, who, he says, has single-handedly revolutionised the world of men's fitness and health

hard enough. Four or five times a week is when your body will start to change," he explains, "but only if you're working at an effort level of nine out of 10."

Is there anyone in the public eye that he desperately wants to get his hands on? "Some politicians," he admits, "because if you are the leader of a country, for example, you should look the part. Sarkozy may be being pushed hard physically but as long as he is under proper medical supervision, he'll be fine. Gordon Brown, on the other hand, is grey and exhausted, so he needs to get the heart and lungs working a little bit more."

"That said, having to do it in public [the PM was recently spotted looking uncomfortable

My gruelling fat-busting workout with Matt



THE PLANK WITH LEG LIFT
Support your torso on just your forearms and toes, raise one leg in the air and maintain a level pelvis throughout.



THE HAMSTRING CURL WITH BALL
Lying flat, place the heels of your feet on the Swiss ball, keeping your feet raised up. Then pull your heels into your bottom and extend legs back to full length.



THE PULL-UP
Keep your shoulders down and pull your arms up through your shoulders, out to the full extension of the elbow and back to your chest.



THE RAISED PRESS-UP
Starting with your hands on the block, push yourself up, then slowly lower yourself, keeping your core braced tight. Then drive up through your triceps and shoulders.



THE STEP
Keep one foot firmly placed on the step and drive up through your heels, squeezing through the gluteal muscles and quads as you step up. Slowly lower down on the return.



12 REP PRESS-UPS
12 rep press-ups and a plank with leg lifts for one minute. When that's done, he chuckles some more, mutters something about "writhing pain in a controlled environment" and just as I'm about to thank him and head to the changing rooms he gets me to do the whole routine all over again.

"I am clinging to the walls for support, my limbs temporarily without function, and my breath coming in great, serrated gasps. It's our first workout, and Matt has asked me to estimate my effort level. My answer is invariably nine out of 10 as opposed to the five out of 10 I now realise I have been stuck at for the past five years. "Even for people who exercise regularly, the body can plateau," he maintains, "so what you need is to keep

stripping it out of its comfort zone." Something he seems to be achieving nicely.

After a 10-minute set of intervals (alternating running and walking on the treadmill at 10km/h), he takes me on an hour-long circuit without giving me a moment's rest. We go from two sets of walking lunges to tone the legs to 12 pull-ups, then 12 hamstring curls using the Swiss ball, a minute of rapid step-ups to give me a Beyoncé-style bottom,

12-rep press-ups and a plank with leg lifts for one minute. When that's done, he chuckles some more, mutters something about "writhing pain in a controlled environment" and just as I'm about to thank him and head to the changing rooms he gets me to do the whole routine all over again.

My goodwill evaporates, but then, weirdly, the euphoria that professional athletes talk about kicks in and I suddenly

feel motivated again. Sadly, this intensity is followed by the desire for instant death.

Then come the results: after just three sessions, my body feels sleek and taut and I find myself days ruminating about running up and down steps in a Spandex all-in-one to a Pioneer Siders soundtrack.

"How soon before we can film a fitness video?" I ask Roberts, half way through a leg raise. "Give it some time," he replies grimly.

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