

# HOW MUCH DOES HEALTHY COST?

Meet four women who have revitalised their lives with very different budgets

**Nothing**

**'I GOT FIT AND HAPPY FOR FREE'**

After losing her job, Sue Came, 51, found a cheap way to stay in shape, using nothing more than a garden fork at the Green Gym

'When I was made redundant last year – ironically, from a recruitment job with a chain of fitness clubs – I needed to find an inexpensive way to exercise. I also wanted to do some voluntary work while I was looking for a new job, so the Green Gym seemed a perfect match: during each three-and-a-half hour session, you lay hedges, plant trees and dig up flower beds in local community spaces. It's not exactly a bootcamp, but you do work up a sweat.

'I go twice a week, which is easy to do at the moment as I don't have a job or any children to worry about. It's made a huge difference – I've lost half

a stone, have so much more energy and my muscles have really toned up. But the biggest surprise has been the emotional boost it's given me. Rather than become obsessed with the scales, as I used to when I went to a regular gym, gardening has made me focus on the mental and emotional boost I get from working out. Being made redundant really knocked my confidence, and this has helped me get it back. Plus, being outside in the fresh air is so much nicer than spending time in a sweaty gym – and I'm immensely proud of the projects I've been involved in, such as building

the compost bin at a local church. It means I go because I love it, not because I feel guilty about wasting an expensive gym membership.

'Now, I grow vegetables and herbs in my own garden, too, which has cut down on my shopping bills. And I eat more healthily simply because I want to taste the food I've grown, naturally reducing my calorie intake in the process. I've found a way to lose weight, boost my confidence, lower my stress levels and increase my strength, all for free.' To find a Green Gym near you, contact the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers at [www.btcv.org](http://www.btcv.org).





£70 a month

## 'I'M CASH CLEVER WITH MY WORKOUTS'

Beverley Glock, 45, mixes gym sessions with swimming, tap dancing, bike rides and dog walking for a mid-priced exercise regime that gives maximum results

'An old ski injury has weakened one of my knees, so my monthly £40 gym membership is really a necessary expense as I have to keep my leg muscles strong. I do knee-strengthening and stability exercises three times a week at a sports centre, otherwise I can't ride my bike, walk up hills or tap dance properly. I also pay £30 per month to swim. I'd much rather run for free with my dogs, as I used to, but swimming is gentler on my joints.'

'I'm cash clever with my workouts – I time my gym visits so that the personal trainer is there. I paid for one £25 session with him to learn how to use kettle bells, and now he lets me use the equipment for free while he sees other clients. It only takes 40 minutes and it's an amazing all-body aerobic and strength routine. Last year

I also paid for 10 swimming sessions, at £20 each, to learn how to do front crawl. I'd begun triathlon training before I injured my knee and, after years of doing backstroke because I don't like putting my face in the water, I decided to learn some proper swimming techniques.

'Through triathlon training I also discovered that I love open-water swimming, so I had one group training session with a triathlon expert. Paying for one-off teaching is cheaper than having a personal trainer indefinitely and it keeps me motivated during my workouts.'

'Not only have I made my lifestyle more healthy without spending a lot, I've also made it fit around my husband, three kids and my job. I hit the gym early so that I'm back in time for the school run,

I walk for an hour every day after work with my dogs and I go for a bike ride at the weekend.

'I'm a TV presenter and run a cookery school, so it's important I look good, but I'd much rather exercise than cut down on what I eat. My food bills are high, especially as I always buy organic and free range, but I'll walk twice as far if it means I can have a chocolate bar. I also adapt recipes to make them healthier – like my Chinese chicken, which is steamed then stir-fried in lemon juice, rather than coated in batter and fried.

'Paying to exercise helps me stay fit and toned, but being careful with my budget means I've found the right balance for my body and my bank account.'  
*Find out more about Beverley's cookery school at [www.splatcooking.net](http://www.splatcooking.net).*



## Real-life inspiration

£230 a month

## 'THE OLDER I GET, THE MORE I NEED TO SPEND ON HEALTH'

Sarah Billson, 42, went from an occasional gym user to a workout devotee after turning 40

'I didn't want to be fat and 40, and that motivated me to get fit. It isn't cheap, though – I belong to two gyms because I was a member of one, then joined a running club that's based at another. They cost me £90 per month each. I also spend around £50 per month on exercise kit and I did a week-long "New You Boot Camp", which cost £1,850. But the financial outlay is part of the reason I'm still exercising – it's what gets me to the gym when I'd rather stay in bed. I'm lucky as I run my own business consultancy and can fit my workouts around my clients, although it means doing classes at 6.30am and running at 9pm.'

'A few years ago, I'd just drink coffee at the gym while my son went to a sports class. Now I still drink

coffee, but it's with my running club friends after a 10-mile jog on a Saturday morning. We also do a mid-week training session. At the other gym, where my husband Patrick is also a member, I do three spinning classes, a Bodypump class and a Pilates session each week, so I do a workout every day. I did lose weight initially when I began my routine, but now it's more about stopping everything from going south. The first three weeks were the hardest, but I made it through that barrier and now I love how fit I feel. I even ran the London Marathon in 2009 and 2010.'

'Doing the bootcamp was the kick-start that I needed to start working out again. I did so many shuttle runs – short sprints between two markers

– that I thought I was going to be sick. It was worth every penny, though. I can easily sit on the sofa and endlessly devour chocolate, so I need a good incentive to go to the gym – now, missing a run costs me the equivalent of £12.'

'Getting fit has changed my diet, too. Patrick and I buy our fruit and vegetables from a farm shop now, and good meat from a local butcher, although we still have our "naughty drawer" for treats. We're trying to cut down on that because eating well means we have more energy to exercise. It's about how you want to spend your money, really – and I'd rather go to a class with Patrick than the pub.'  
*For more information on New You Boot Camp, log onto [www.newyoubootcamp.com](http://www.newyoubootcamp.com).*



## Real-life inspiration

£460 a month

### 'INVESTING IN MY BODY AND MIND FEELS GREAT'

Nahid de Belgeonne, 43, is a yoga and Power Plate instructor who runs her own gym. She believes the feel-good factor comes at a price

'Investing money in my fitness is absolutely essential – because being healthy makes me feel invincible. And I couldn't spend time worrying about my health and then not do anything about it. Of course, teaching yoga and Power Plate gives me a fitness advantage, but I still have to squeeze exercise into my day. I do a yoga warm-up when I get up at around 6am, and a 25-minute Power Plate session when I arrive at work at 8am. Then I go to a yoga class at 6pm.

'It's taken me a long time to find exercise that works for me. When I was younger I used to go running, literally as a way to escape problems at home. I did kick-boxing when I was in a bad relationship, which helped me to release my anger. But I gradually realised that I'm a bit of an adrenaline junkie by nature, so I need to focus on exercise that slows me down. I discovered a love for yoga 10 years ago, and even now I'm amazed at what it allows my body to do. I also love its calming, meditative aspect.

'Power Plate, which I began teaching five years ago, was the missing link. It works on a purely physical level, testing my body

and tweaking muscles I never knew I had. Now I can eat a dessert and it won't show on my waistline.

'The final element in my health routine is food – I have calorie-counted meals delivered direct to my door, to which I just add fruit and veg. The diet is tailored for the individual and mine provides 1,000 calories a day, as I have a small frame and I'm only 5ft 2ins. I've struggled to stay slim as I've grown older, but these meal packs are great as they mean I eat well even when I'm busy. I've lost half a stone with no effort since starting the programme.

'My monthly routine costs a lot – I spend £200 on my food delivery, £50 on supplements, £90 on a massage, £90 on yoga classes and £120 on Power Plate classes. Once a year I also go on a week-long yoga retreat, which costs about £800, and a weekend yoga course, which is £400. But I know I've found a way to look and feel good for life.' *The Good Vibes Kick Start Course costs £550 for five weeks, including three Power Plate sessions per week and delivery of calorie-controlled food.* Visit [www.goodvibesfitness.co.uk](http://www.goodvibesfitness.co.uk). □