

After a Lifetime of Failed Diets, Over-40 Mom Finally Drops 100 Pounds

If you're an adult who has been overweight all your life, you might think losing weight and getting fit after age 40 is impossible. Not so, says a woman whose 40th birthday served as the motivation to shed 100 pounds.

Martha VanCamp slimmed-down from a size 20 all the way to size two. She says the size she is now is the size she was always meant to be. She looks and feels better today, in her forties, than she ever has.

"I always felt like there was this fit body stuck in this fat girl's exterior," she said.

VanCamp's story is one many women can relate to. She juggles a full-time job as well as a husband and kids. Eating junk food was a way to de-stress. It was also the easiest way to feed her family.

A Lifetime of Dieting Failures

VanCamp had battled her weight since childhood.

"I remember wearing a size 12 in middle school and not being able to shop in the shops that other girls my age were shopping in," she recalled, "My junior year of college, I literally looked like a balloon that was ready to be popped. I was so overweight."

After endless failed attempts to lose weight, she gave up. She made a point never to weigh herself or look at the scale when she went to the doctor's office. But after one appointment following a milestone birthday, she looked at the number.

“Hit the 250, hit the age of 40, never exercised, realized something had to change,” she said.

And change she did. After doing extensive research on nutrition, she gave up processed foods, also known as convenience or packaged foods. These are the products that line the shelves of the interior portion of the grocery store and are the bulk of what’s available at fast-food restaurants.

Ditching the ‘Chemical Storm’ of Processed Foods

Fast and easy processed foods have become the working mom’s best friend. But when it comes to gaining weight, processed foods can be our worst enemy.

That’s because processed foods are loaded with ingredients that can pack on the pounds, such as high fructose corn syrup and grains that have been stripped of their goodness. Processed foods often contain flavorings, preservatives and other additives that can cause weight gain.

“It’s a chemical storm,” VanCamp told CBN News. “We are so allergic to some of the things they have put in food that our bodies just blow up.”

VanCamp’s body shrank when she stopped eating foods made by big companies and started eating food she made at home from scratch. This includes lean protein like turkey, chicken, fish and egg whites. She also loads up on plenty of vegetables.

VanCamp really noticed a difference when she replaced processed, simple carbohydrates—such as white bread, cereal and pasta—with complex carbs, such as sweet potatoes, old-fashioned oats and beans. She also replaced hydrogenated oils and other highly industrialized fats that are common in processed foods with health fats such as raw nuts, avocados, coconut oil and extra-virgin olive oil.

She said eating this way not only helped her dropped the excess weight, it also makes her feel terrific. "After, like, two or three days of eating the right way, oh my gosh, your energy is incredible!" she exclaimed.

Understanding the Science of Food

VanCamp admits she has cut back on calories, especially from sugar. But she says unlike the low-calorie diets she tried before, this one is easy to stick to because these satisfying foods make her feel full longer.

"I was fat because I didn't understand the science of food," she explained, "Twelve hundred calories of Cap'n Crunch is different from 1,200 calories of chicken and oats."

VanCamp says in order to stabilize her blood sugar, which minimized cravings, she has to eat one of her small, home-cooked meals every three hours or so. This is not easy for a working mom, but she figured out a way to do it.

Every weekend, she cooks meals for the upcoming week, then packs them in plastic containers that she puts in the freezer. Then, each morning before heading off of to work, she grabs what she'll need that day.

"It does take a couple weeks to get on auto-pilot, but then it's totally worth it," she said.

VanCamp says eating right is the main reason she lost weight but noted that exercise plays a big part in keeping her fit and healthy.

"I remember I couldn't even do three air squats when I started. I couldn't. It was embarrassing. I was so winded," she recalled, "But I felt great every time I left, and I was proud of myself."

VanCamp boosts her metabolism by lifting weights because muscle burns more calories than fat does, even when those

muscles are at rest.

So even if you've always been heavy, hate exercise and think you're over the hill, Martha VanCamp is living proof that avoiding eating from a box or the drive-through and embracing a clean diet rich in whole foods can help you lose weight and feel great at any age.

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