



BEAUTY ENQUIRER
**The game
 changers**

After road-testing virtually every health and beauty regime 2014 had to offer, *Jess Lacey* reveals her ultimate top three

AS SOMEONE WHO'S WILLINGLY volunteered for wheatgrass colonics, had their stomach cryogenically frozen, undergone ultrasound fat zapping, had sculpting tape stuck to my backside and worn an inflatable drainage suit, I'd say I've tried my fair share of body-sculpting approaches. I've also had lash extensions, hair extensions and undergone a five-people-strong speed makeover. Some have worked, some haven't, but it's given me a good idea of what's worth sticking with.

1. 'The year I finally discovered running'

I hate gyms in all their contract-binding, fluoro-lighted, party anthem-pumping,

faux positivity. In my humble opinion, they're joyless places that are completely inefficient – procrastinating on an exercise bike while watching soaps does not equate to an effective workout, and I suspect many people go so they can 'check in' on social media and bank their smug points.

My exception to this rule is Educogym, which is the anti-gym; no contract, no complex machinery, no posing by the water cooler – just high-intensity resistance training for 15 minutes, three times a week. In fact, the space is deliberately tiny so there's nowhere to waste time. You're in, you work your arse off and you're out on the street again in less time than it took to get the bus there. I went there for six months before my wedding and saw my

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body change beyond belief. I was stronger, leaner and dropped two dress sizes, so I'd recommend any bride do the same.

That was great to hit a specific target, but what's really stuck this year is running. The beauty of it is that it's the simplest of all workouts – it costs nothing and you already have everything you need to do it built inside you. OK, there's a world of high-performance Lycra out there, and I'm far more interested in Nike's new Fly Knit trainers than I am in the AW14 Jimmy Choo collection, but I don't technically need them.

I signed up for my first 10k back in May this year and purposefully chose the Nike We Own The Night event for its 'go girl' marketing, great music line-up and the fact that it would be dark, so I could vomit with some dignity. I went out for my first run in March, managed a less-than-impressive 2k and consequently couldn't get off my doorstep for 20 minutes afterwards. Far from inspiring but, hey, that was my start point. Slowly but surely I built up my distance, high-fiving myself every kilometre and managed the race in a respectable hour and four minutes.

In September, I completed another race and can now run 10k in 56 minutes, of which I am positively proud. I've toned up, become fitter and achieved the running badge of honour by losing a toenail, which actually came off as I was en route to a wedding, so I had to paint my scarlet nail polish over skin.

There are only a few things I hate in life, but couples running together is certainly one of them. Whenever I've been passed by a peppy, Lycra-clad couple jogging in unison, it's caused me to roll my eyes like an adolescent and make theatrical mock-puking gestures to anyone who also bore witness. Now, I only find them slightly nauseating, and on a few occasions I've even let my husband run with me, but only if he runs off ahead and laps me while I keep a slow, steady pace and meet him at the coffee shop afterwards.

I read somewhere (most probably one of those inspiring Instagram quotes) that 'Running never gets easier, it only gets faster', and that's 100 per cent true. However, I also tell myself every time I lack motivation to head out (which is ▶

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every time) that you never regret going for a run, but you always regret *not* going.

Now I run three times a week, either a short distance fast or longer at a slower pace. I still wince when I have to jog past youths for fear of them jeering at me and I still stick my tongue out at skinny girls who overtake me, but once in a while I forget the pain and torment, and for a millisecond I actually zone out and enjoy myself. Plus, every time I get home I am on a complete endorphin high. It's liberating, it's my own personal achievement and the only time I get away with listening to Taylor Swift at full blast without anyone finding out.

2. 'The diet that genuinely works'

The 5:2 diet was my New Year's resolution and I've been keeping it up all year, only departing when I've had a holiday or particularly stressful work deadlines. I started it after seeing another beauty journalist, whom I consider a sensible human being, look slimmer and far more bright-eyed and lovely than she'd ever looked before. She explained how she kept to 500 calories two days a week (with at least a day in between), but then just ate normally five days a week, and it made me curious enough to give it a shot.

I won't lie, being hungry isn't fun and lunch hours are rendered useless, but it's made me realise that I've never really been properly hungry. I've conditioned myself to eat three times a day at regular times, but not actually listened to my body or taken the time to think whether it needed fuel or what in particular I should feed it.

It didn't take me long to figure out that fasting only works if you plan it, otherwise you slip and make excuses, thinking you only need to do two days a week so you can just have another go tomorrow. I've found that if I look in my diary, I'm able to choose two days when I don't have any social arrangements. I can happily go out for dinner with friends on my non-fasting days, so I never have to be the boring one who orders a salad with a side of soda water. Mondays are great fasting days, because they're often off the back of a boozy, over-indulgent Sunday and, if I get it done early in the week, I've only got to factor in one other day.

Free-wheeling is not an option, because you just get hungry and panic-eat; you have to plan your food. Breakfast will

often be two mushrooms and two poached eggs, lunch a small sushi box and dinner a fillet of white fish with green vegetables. The worst part is going to bed feeling slightly hungry, but I like to drift off to sleep thinking of strawberry-jam-laden toast come morning.

The 5:2 diet also fits in nicely with my exercise, because although I'd be stupid to attempt a workout on fasting days, there are five other days I can go for a run or cycle to work. The weight loss was almost immediate and started with me dropping 2lb in the first week. Now it's slowed and I lose perhaps half a pound a week, but as soon as I have a break for more than a week, the weight returns. I'm not entirely motivated by shifting the pounds, though; I enjoy the surprising mental clarity that comes with fasting and the clean feeling of having a mini detox, plus my digestion has improved no end (it seems giving your

gut a little break helps it process what you do eat much more efficiently). The reason it works is because it's all just bite size (excuse the pun) and you only have to do it for one day – there's always tomorrow and the prospect of pizza.

3. 'My perfect foundation'

I feel a little embarrassed, being someone who makes a living from informing others on beauty, that it's taken me until now to work this out, but here it is: foundation isn't supposed to cover up your skin. It's not designed for blanket coverage; it's designed to make your skin tone consistent, so you can add light, shade, blusher and bronzer wherever you choose. Then it's the job of concealer to be dotted on here and there to cover up any imperfections, such as blemishes and dark circles.

Five or six seasons ago, when all the backstage make-up artists started talking about 'polished but not overdone' skin, I'll admit I was secretly scoffing and thinking that's all very well if you're a teenage model, but not relevant to the rest of the female population. Then the hoard of BB and CC creams launched and we were told it was all about sheer coverage and 'real skin' again. But what if you have spots, blemishes, dry patches, or perhaps all the above? I carried on applying a full face of foundation regardless, thinking it would pass. I never quite got the shade right and would always be conscious of that telltale tidemark along my jawline, but I presumed that just came with the territory.

Then, this year, I had a make-up artist apply a CC cream to my face for some filming and, looking back at the footage, I was struck by how natural and glowy my complexion looked, so I was encouraged to give it a try. I copied what she had done and warmed it in my fingertips, before working it into my skin sparingly to get an overall smoothness. CC creams are far simpler to apply than traditional thick foundations and the colour is sheer enough not to leave a detectable end point, blending in seamlessly. Some days I still need the extra coverage, so I dot on some concealer where needed, but the proof is there in photos and I'm confident my skin looks good, rather than a passable cover-up job. I think that's what every woman wants, to be complimented on how amazing her skin looks, not how well she's applied her make-up. ■



JESS'S skin favourites

Sheer bases that look like your skin on a (really) good day

Estée Lauder Enlighten Even Effect Skintone Corrector, **£34**

Burberry Beauty Fresh Glow BB Cream, **£30**

Maybelline Baby Skin Instant Fatigue Blur in Warm Apricot, **£7.99**

Olay Total Effects Pore Minimizing CC Cream, **£14.99**

Lancôme City Miracle SPF50, **£24.30**



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