

# Life

Editor **Rita DeMontis**  
rita.demontis@sunmedia.ca  
416-947-2247

National Lifestyle Editor **Liza Sardi**  
liza.sardi@sunmedia.ca  
416-947-2491

## How to get in bikini shape

Beat down those unrealistic standards and start to love yourself

If spandex stresses you out, get set for your anxieties to expand.

Getting bare after months of elastic-waisted sweats, comfort foods and nightly dates with the couch can be harrowing.

Most women slip into misery when slipping into a swimsuit.

According to one survey, 68% of women dread shopping for bathing suits and would rather vacuum, do laundry and clean toilets than try on swimsuits.

Three-way mirrors and fluorescent lights are punishing, but so too is public exposure when parading around in small pieces of spandex — the mere thought brings us to our (dimpled) knees.

Swimsuit dread stalks us all, says Dr. Susan Bartell. "Body issues attack everyone. The second you walk into the

swimsuit department you break out into a sweat."

Some stay the painful course of finding the perfect suit to cinch, flatten or camouflage while others flee, crushed and empty-handed.

"Weight isn't the only thing women are unhappy with; it can be saggy breasts, cellulite, ribs showing, stocky thighs — there's always something you hate," says Bar-

tell, a New York psychologist who specializes in body image and eating disorders.

No matter how smart we are, we're all stupid over our body's perceived flaws. "Society has a low tolerance for different body types and shapes, so because of that we're less tolerant of our own bodies."

Unrealistic beauty standards nag us and fuel self-loathing. Stats report an epidemic of body hatred — 90%

of women are unhappy with their bodies.

Bartell suggests that before leaving the house, try on last year's swimsuit so you know what to expect and to minimize shock. "Women have unrealistic fantasies that somehow they'll go out, buy a swimsuit and miraculously look good, and when they don't, they leave the store feeling depressed, awful and disgusted with themselves," says Bartell.

Don't panic. Be proactive. You can always shop online for swimsuits and forget dieting. "Get to a healthy weight you can live with" through positive and healthy lifestyle changes and maintenance, says Bartell, author of *Dr. Susan's Girls-Only Weight Loss Guide*.

Throw off the shackles of body bashing. "Love yourself enough to invest in yourself and your health."

joanne.richard@sunmedia.ca



**Joanne Richard**  
LIFE

### How to tip the scales back

- Cut out carbohydrates at night. These cause major fat storage to occur and send your blood-sugar levels haywire when you eat them too late at night.
- Eat frequent, small meals throughout the day — don't overeat at one time.
- Weightlifting boosts metabolic rate and turns your body into a fat-burning machine.
- Drink at least

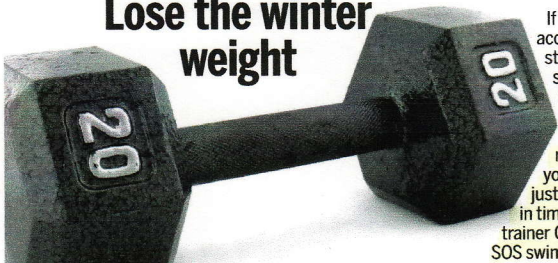
2-3 litres of water daily. Water helps get rid of toxins in the body and transport nutrients.

- Do cardio first thing in the morning on an empty stomach — like a 30 to 45-minute walk. Research suggests that cardiovascular work on an empty stomach can help burn up to three times more fat.
- Lose the booze. Alcohol causes more fat storage and lowers fat metabolism.

— Courtesy of L.A. celebrity nutritionist Rehan Jalali of rehanjalali.com



### Lose the winter weight



If unhealthy pounds have accumulated over the winter, then start pulling your weight. Forget seeking perfection, it's all about maintaining a healthy body weight.

"I recommend making eating right and working out a part of your lifestyle year round, and not just something you do to look good in time for summer," says personal trainer Conor Kelly, who's getting lots of SOS swimsuit stress calls now that the nice

weather has arrived.

"The problem is most people start with unrealistic expectations and quickly lose motivation."

Forget being perfect. "Start with a goal in mind and try to get a bit better each week. Small improvements made consistently lead to big changes over time."

Synergize proper nutrition, moderate aerobic exercise and resistance training, says Kelly. "The whole idea is just to raise your metabolism so you can burn more calories, lose fat and better maintain your

results."

Recent studies tout interval training over regular cardio for burning fat, says Kelly of Transformforever.com. "And resistance training is essential to maintaining your lean muscle as you lose weight. Lean muscle actually helps burn more calories."

Incorporate a "cheat meal" once a week to reward your efforts and prevent you from feeling deprived. "Even a poor plan is better than no plan, and as long as you're consistently making efforts and reviewing your progress, you will be successful."

