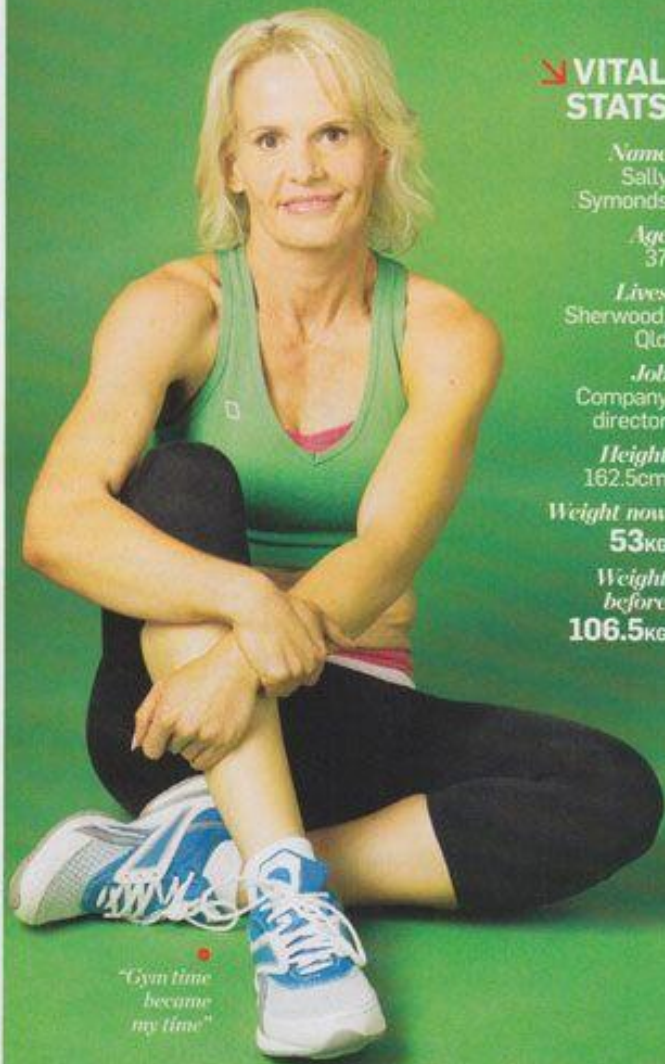


Making the finals

This woman mastered the work-life balance



"Gym time became my time"

VITAL STATS

Name
Sally Symonds

Age
37

Lives
Sherwood, Qld

Job
Company director

Height
162.5cm

Weight now
53kg

Weight before
106.5kg



You know being a workaholic can do a real number on your health, right? Well, Sally Symonds witnessed what it can do to your weight. Big time. In her 20s, this speech and drama teacher worked up to 116 hours a week. "I thought being a success professionally was all that mattered," she says. "I couldn't see the value in having a healthy lifestyle."

In 2002, Symonds went for a promotion at work and was gutted to miss out. "I didn't draw the parallel between job success and health – now I can see my weight and health impacted on my job opportunities. Around the same time, my partner and I broke off our engagement – the amount of time I spent at work was a major issue."

Reality check time. Symonds started walking, stopped skipping breakfast and ate oats or eggs instead. She cut out chicken and brie focaccias and Coke, and started making soup she'd freeze in portions for quick microwave lunches. She also unearthed her inner gourmand – "I'm now the queen of quick, healthy pizzas – scallop and truffle is my favourite!" she says.

In November 2003, after dropping 17kg, she joined her local Fitness First. She hired a trainer, Enoch Behzadpour, who guided her through fitness ball work, weights,

boxing and planks. "I saw results – not just how I looked but in other areas: I had more energy." Within eight months, she'd lost a further 28kg – a total loss of 45kg. Since then, Symonds has lost a further 8.5kg and is now a svelte 53kg.

Entering Fitness First's New You Achievement Awards, Symonds became a finalist in the "shape" category for her impressive new appearance.

Despite her new physical strength, Symonds feels she's gained more mental strength from the work it took to get from size 24 to 8. "It gave me the confidence to quit my job and go into a private practice. And I've written a book: *50 Steps to Lose 50kg... And Keep It Off*, due out in September." Symonds is now married, with a "fur kid" (dog), Naughty. "I could never have envisaged how much I've changed my body, my mind, my whole life."

Sally's tips

Aim higher "I don't set myself goals anymore. They limit you to aiming for what you think you can achieve; everyone is capable of more than they realise." **Don't worry about what weight-loss costs** "The time and money you spend on it will never be wasted." **Think of workouts as time-out** "Gym time became my time to de-stress and problem solve."

To enter the 2010 Fitness First New You Achievement Awards, head to fitnessfirst.com.au/nyaa for an entry form.

FROM HEAVY TO HEALTHY

2002
106.5kg
At her heaviest, size 24

late 2003
89.5kg
Joined the gym after losing 17kg through walking and eating better

mid 2004
61.5kg
Personal training helped her lose a further 28kg

2008
66.5kg
She gained 5kg while her mum spent five months in hospital

Now
53kg
She lost that extra 5kg, and shed another 8.5kg

Got a minute? Before paying a panel beater to fix a car dent, try this: wet a plumber's plunger, push it over the dent, then pull back sharply.