

THE DRIVE

After passing her driving test, Dora Mancini Newton, 27, from Glasgow, couldn't resist the drive-thru

Pulling up to the house, I leapt out of my driving instructor's car and headed inside. 'I passed!' I squealed with excitement.

I'd always loved cars, and as soon as I turned 17, I couldn't wait to get behind the wheel.

And with my driving license in hand, I sent out a message.

'Anyone fancy a drive-thru?' I asked my friends.

I couldn't wait to scoff a McDonald's burger and chips.

I'd always loved fast food, and after getting my car, my habits became all the worse.

No longer needing to walk everywhere, I was getting zero exercise.

And with regular trips to the drive-thru, the pounds began to pile on.

I'd never exactly been small, and my diet had always been pretty bad. But the older I got, the worse it became.

My mum Piera, 56, tried her hardest. She was always cooking homemade meals with lots of veg, and splashed out on sports clubs for me and my brother Onorio, now 29.

Yet, now I was 17, I more or less controlled my own diet.

For breakfast, I would munch on a massive bowl of sugary cereal drowned in milk with half a loaf of French toast and a huge cup of tea with two or three sugars.

Lunch was eight slices of toast, cheese and butter, two packets of crisps, a chocolate bar and tons

of full fat fizzy drinks like Irn-Bru or Coca-Cola.

Instead of Mum's healthy dinner, I would usually cook myself a gigantic bowl of pasta smothering it in butter and parmesan cheese.

I ate out of boredom, and soon my weight soared to 17st.

However, in 2014, I met Kyle, now 29, and he loved me for me. 'I don't care about your weight,' he told me early on.

We hit it off, but like a lot of new relationships, we were constantly out for dinner or having a Dominos.

I would devour a large margarita to myself with a side of garlic pizza bread and Kyle would have

a medium meat feast with chicken wings.

And for dates, we often went to dessert houses, where I would have a full waffle to myself, drowned in Nutella, with vanilla ice cream, two dollops of squirty cream and powdered sugar.

It was our favourite, but it was doing absolutely nothing

for our waistlines.

Within less than six months, I had put on a stone and Kyle's weight had soared, too.

When we first met, he was around 12st, but he had also put on a stone.

Our diets were out of control, but we were happy.

However, when Kyle popped the question a few years later, I wanted to shift some weight.

Only, when I went to the gym, everyone stared at me and laughed.

I didn't go again.

When we tied the knot on 20 September 2018, I was still a size 22 and hadn't lost a thing.

However, it was the most magical day of our lives and neither of us cared about our weights that day.

'You look beautiful,' Kyle told me.

And I felt it, too.

Now man and wife, we settled into married life running our own business, a family technology repair service called TechBytes, and we loved every minute of it.

We were glued at the hip and did everything we could together.

However, as the years went by, there's no denying that running our own business was hard.

We barely had any time for ourselves and we relied on junk food to survive.

Only, it was starting to take its toll on Kyle's mental health.

He was anxious and constantly on edge.

'I don't want to rely on

Insecure



The pounds began to pile on



Our happy day

medication to deal with this,' he confided in me in 2019. 'I'm going to join the gym to see if that helps.'

'I'll go with you,' I told him. I had no intention of taking the gym seriously. I was just there for moral support.

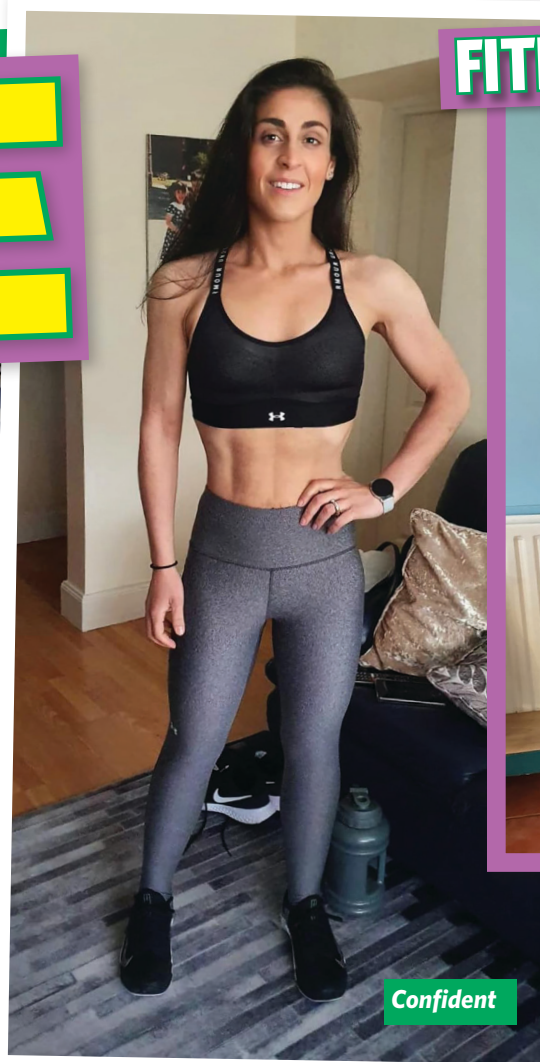
Together we started going a couple of times a week. After my humiliating experience before, we joined a more upmarket gym, and from the moment we walked in I felt much more comfortable.

It was an older crowd and the people there were all on their own journeys.

While Kyle worked hard across cardio and weights, I jumped from machine to machine, not really knowing what I was doing.

And at home, I hadn't really thought about changing my

WE



Confident

FITNESS REAL LIFE



SWEAT TOGETHER, STAY TOGETHER!

diet either.

I didn't want to lose weight. And to be honest, Kyle's goal was more mental health focused than anything else.

But then, a few weeks later, I decided to try a chest machine.

Only, almost instantly I pulled both of my biceps and needed a few weeks off to recover. I felt deflated.

'Come back with me,' Kyle soothed when I started to feel a lot better.

My pride had been hurt, but I knew I had to bounce back and give it a second chance.

And when I returned, I asked a trainer named Scott Atkinson to help me out on some of the machines.

Scott kindly showed me how to use everything properly, so I wouldn't cause any more damage. I was learning. 'Why

don't you try and come for a taster session with me?' Scott suggested.

And so I did. And from there, I never looked back.

Both me and Kyle went for personal training sessions with him and he gave us individual feedback and plans.

Suddenly, something kicked in and I enjoyed going back each week.

Kyle and I had different goals, but Scott taught us both that we could still enjoy our favourite foods in moderation.

With a tailored diet plan and weekly personal training sessions, soon both Kyle and I noticed a great change in our bodies. We felt so much better for it.

One week I dropped 5lb and I just couldn't believe my eyes!

And from there, I wanted to see more drops.

It became an addiction.

And I was even enjoying the food I was eating!

For breakfast, I'd cut the sugary cereal and was having natural yoghurt with zero calorie syrup.

For lunch, I could even have

pizza with a Lo-Dough base, mozzarella and extra salami.

For dinner, we'd have chicken and rice with garden peas.

Scott had taught both of us that we didn't have to cut everything out, so we could even snack on low calorie crisps like Quavers.

It was a completely different mindset to what I had before.

And after years of being behind the wheel, I made sure to up my daily steps.

I decided to park further away from work and would walk the rest of the way.

It was only small changes, but it was working.

Doing it with Kyle made it much easier, too.

Whenever either of us were feeling demotivated, we would bring each other up.

'Your favourite top is baggy,' Scott would tell me.

We supported each other every step of the way.

And when lockdown hit, we kept each other going as Scott found us gym equipment to use at home.

And now, our lives are completely different.

Instead of hitting the nearest drive-thru, we go to the gym every day and walk a minimum

of 10,000 steps.

Whilst we still believe it's important to allow ourselves treats, gone are the days of eating a large pizza to myself!

Today, I now weigh a slinky 9st 5lb and Kyle weighs 9st 8lb.

We're both now on maintenance and bulking up on muscle. We can't believe the difference in ourselves.

Together, we've lost over 13st and the results are incredible. I can't believe it.

Kyle's mental health is as good as it's ever been and my skin is glowing.

I used to suffer with eczema, but that's all cleared up.

I now fit into a size six, and 17-year-old me would be totally shocked!

That's why I'm now in training to become a personal trainer myself.

I know there are plenty of people like me out there who just need a friendly face and a helping hand.

I wouldn't be where I am today without Scott, so I want to help others.

Although Kyle and I have lost a lot of weight, we're still the same people.

We loved each other at our biggest and at our smallest.

Together we really can achieve anything we put our minds to.

We used to spend so much time sitting in drive-thrus, now we're fast and furious!

● Follow Dora on Instagram: @dora.damn.fitness

Our lives are completely different