

# Body & Spirit

ESSENCE  
**Weight  
Loss**  
CHALLENGE



## No More Excuses!

This is it. The advice that will get you over your biggest weight loss hurdle. From the experts who know just what you need to succeed

PHOTOGRAPHY BY NATHANIEL WELCH

**T**his is *your* year to get your best body ever. And ESSENCE will show you how. We started with the biggest challenges Black women face with slimming down: No motivation. No time. No success with previous diets. Then we found three of the best experts in the country to help you tackle those problems: fitness pro Kacy

Duke, exercise guru Donna Richardson Joyner and health expert Ian K. Smith, M.D. But wait, it gets even better! You're not going it alone. We paired these experts with nine readers who are determined to get fit, too. Over the next four months you'll see their stories here and on ESSENCE.com. Ready to transform yourself? Just turn the page. >

STYLIST, JOAN VAN HEES. HAIR, CLARK VINCENT/KENBARBOZA.COM AND JULIETTE FISHER/KENBARBOZA.COM; MAKEUP, CLARK VINCENT/KENBARBOZA.COM AND MARCELLO COSTA/KENBARBOZA.COM.

## If you swear you don't have a second to spare to work out...

Follow Ian for the next four months

### Getting Started

Have trouble finding the time to get the body you want? Spend this month executing Dr. Ian's seven-step plan for changing your thinking so you can change your physique.



Food choices are just as important as workouts.

### STEP #1: ELIMINATE PITFALLS

"I don't care how good the plan is. If you aren't mentally prepared for the obstacles you'll inevitably run into, you may fail," says Smith. Ask yourself what caused you to be unsuccessful at weight loss in the past. Is it junk food at the office, no time to cook or no gym nearby? Then write down ways to handle the obstacles.

### STEP #2: CREATE MINOR MILESTONES

"Constantly thinking about big milestones can overwhelm you to the point that you can't get started," says Smith. Smaller landmarks—like losing a pound a week—seem more doable.

### STEP #3: FIND YOUR MOTIVATION

Pick one that's going to last beyond, say, looking hot for a friend's wedding. Maybe you want to ward off the type 2 diabetes that runs in your family or be able to keep up with your kids. "Your motivation is the foundation. If you have a long-lasting motivating force, you can fall back on that when you hit a rough patch," explains Smith.

### STEP #4: MAP OUT YOUR SWEAT SESSIONS

Find a simple, safe one-mile loop around your home or office, or locate an indoor or outdoor track that you can walk in the A.M., during lunch or after work. If you prefer to exercise at home, find a library with workout DVDs or search the TV Guide for fitness shows. "The point is that you're planning ahead," says Smith.

### STEP #5: EQUIP YOURSELF

"Besides walking shoes, you'll need sweatpants and a T-shirt and enough of these

workout clothes so 'I don't have anything clean to wear' doesn't become an excuse," Smith says.

### STEP #6: CLEAN OUT YOUR KITCHEN

"Focus on all the tempting foods in your cabinets and refrigerator," suggests Smith. If you have the discipline to resist temptation, reduce the amount of these foods. But if you know you can't forgo a particular treat, toss or donate it.

### STEP #7: BUILD YOUR CHEERLEADING SQUAD

"The more people you can recruit in your weight loss effort, the better," says Smith. Tell others your get-fit plans so they'll be more respectful about foods they offer you or where they invite you to eat.

—Michelle Bender

## MEET YOUR MASTER OF MAKING IT HAPPEN

If you haven't read one of his best-selling books, including *The 4 Day Diet* (St. Martin's Griffin), you've probably seen Ian K. Smith, M.D., on commercials for his 50 Million Pound Challenge, a free national health initiative. His straightforward approach has helped close to 2 million participants slim down. This President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition appointee knows you have a jam-packed schedule, but has the secret to shedding pounds anyway.



“If you only have 15 minutes, I can work with that.”