



American dream

by **JANE SCHORER MEISNER** • photo by **JAMES D. FIDLER**

Name: Ildiko Kadar, West Des Moines

Age: 41

Occupation: Business analyst and Zumba fitness instructor

Height: 5 feet, 5 inches

Beginning weight: 187 (2003)

Current weight: 147

Success story: While I lost weight, I became extremely strong and healthy. I can bench press 100 pounds and do a bicep curl with 30-pound dumbbells. I have zero background in running, but I ran the Des Moines Marathon half-marathon a few years ago and two Dam to Dam races.

Motivation: I never had weight issues before I moved to the United States from Hungary in 1996. It seems like as soon as I stepped off the plane, the pounds started creeping up. Adjusting to my new life was exciting but also quite stressful at times. I am an emotional eater, so food was (and still is) definitely comforting to me. Plus, there were so many delicious new things to try. In 2001, I had some health problems and had to take steroids, and my weight just went through the roof.

Exercise regimen: I do weight training twice a week, and I teach Zumba fitness four times a week. (Zumba is a cardio workout based on Latin dancing.) I added spinning and long runs in preparation for the Dam to Dam race.

Working out — love it or hate it. I like to exercise, so I just do it.



Food factors: I experimented with different structured diets, such as South Beach, and it was a great start. Over time, though, I learned a lot about overall nutrition and healthy eating. I am proud to say that I have been a vegetarian for almost two years now! I still eat some dairy and fish, but I am working toward a totally plant-based diet. My doctor says I am very healthy!

Greatest temptation: Chocolate, desserts, pasta, rice, potatoes, breads — carbs all the way. But none of these are really bad as long as you eat them in small amounts and not every day.

New food on your menu: I love sushi and eat a lot of vegetables. This year I bought a CSA share (community supported agriculture), so I will get organic vegetables every week until about September.

BE AN INSPIRATION TO OTHERS

Tell us how you've lost weight and kept it off. E-mail Vickie Ashwill at vashwill@dmreg.com with the details on your success. Attach a current snapshot if you have one.

HER STRONG WILL RESULTED IN STRONG MUSCLES AND A POSITIVE NEW LIFESTYLE.

A pleasant surprise: I went from unhealthy and out of shape to becoming a Zumba fitness instructor. I am now in a position to encourage people to exercise, make it fun and help them reach whatever goal they might have.

The eating-out challenge: If I feel like having a piece of cake at the office, or a certain restaurant dish, I'll have it. But then I compensate for it either by working out more or eating less afterward. Sometimes I feel like it is not worth it, so I'll skip the cake or the pasta in heavy cream sauce. Or I eat a little bit and take the rest to go. The meals I prepare at home are very healthy and sensible, so it all balances out.

Best advice: Make exercise part of your everyday life; find out what works for you, mix it up and cross-train. Be reasonable and consistent, whether it's 30 minutes a day or one to two hours every other day. Figure it out and stick with it. Don't exercise just to lose weight; exercise so that you can live a long and healthy life. Eat well and treat your body right – stop eating and drinking junk; think what you put in your body. Sleep enough. Get massages and pamper yourself!

PERSONAL WORKOUTS AND MORE

Ildiko Kadar sought help from a personal trainer to devise her body-improvement strategy. But achieving success was still her responsibility. "Ildi is very strong-minded," says Tim Vos, personal training director at Gemini Personal Training in Urbandale. "She will do whatever is asked of her, both inside and out of the gym, when it comes to fitness and nutrition. She never misses a workout unless it is absolutely necessary."

At Gemini, the first step to fitness is to make an appointment with a trainer and go over personal goals, Vos says. Workouts are designed to take from 30 minutes to an hour, and their frequency depends on a client's availability.

Fees are from \$25 to \$69 per hour for private training, \$25 per session for semi-private training and around \$150 per month for group training, Vos says. There are also punch-card options for group, yoga and Kraline sessions.