

# New boyfriend, NEW BODY..

OK, so you meet a guy, fall in love, get comfy...what's next? Do you become a couch potato, a gym junkie or simply feel content to be you? Whoever you're hooked up with (and whatever he's into), chances are your body might just be going along for the ride



Before meeting carb-loving Paul, Maria was living off salads...

Digital marketers **MARIA GALLIFUOCO, 25** and **PAUL DI FRANCESCO, 24**

## Embraced her weight gain

SHE SAYS "When I met Paul through friends, I was in peak physical condition – a svelte size 10 and weighing 56kg. I upheld a strict single girl's regimen of morning runs on Bondi Beach and a diet of salads and freshly squeezed juices, careful to avoid too many carbs."

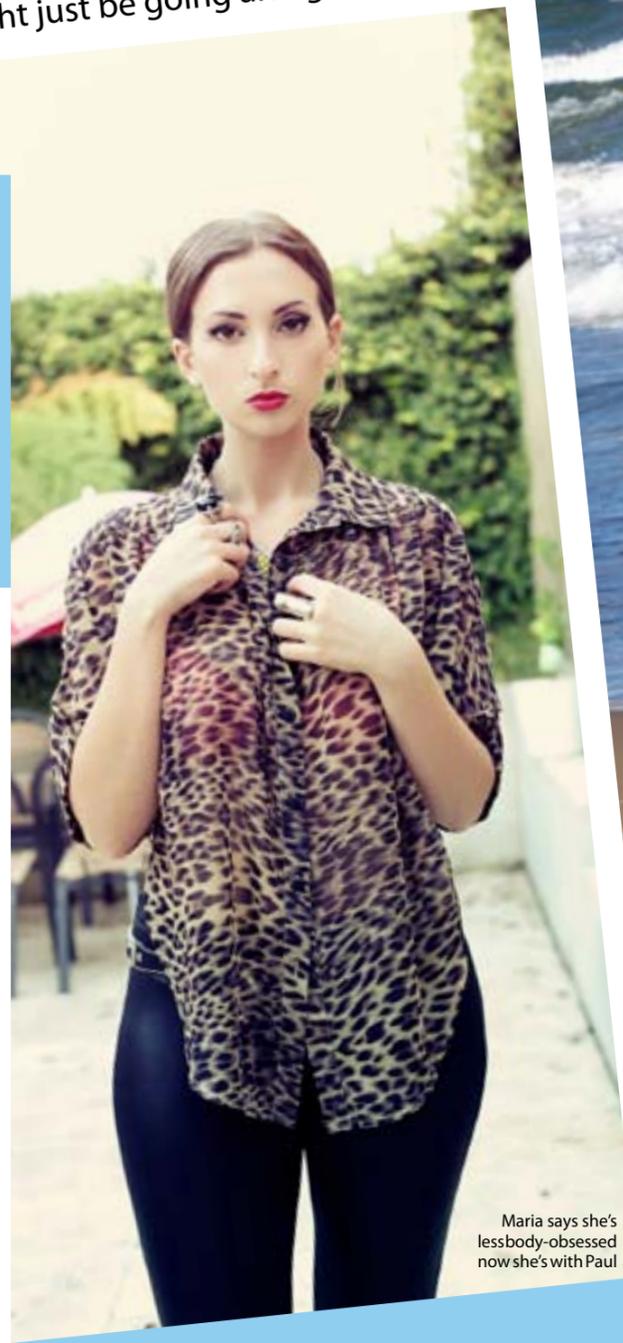
"So when I started dating Paul, a second-generation Italian and self-confessed foodie, my carb-free lifestyle went out the window. In the five years we've been dating I've put on 10kg."

"My weight gain started early on in the relationship – most of our dates involved eating. And no, it wasn't wholefoods... we're talking pizza and pasta! But being in a relationship has made me more relaxed about

my body – it's no longer a priority. We now have these amazing role models like Beyonce, who is now my body idol, and Kim Kardashian."

"When I was younger, I went to a high school where I was the only ethnic girl. There were lots of gorgeous, tall, super-thin blondes, and I had bigger thighs and giant boobs. Now I realise I have a very different body shape and I've grown into that. It took me a long time to get to the point where I now embrace my Italian heritage."

HE SAYS "The changes to Maria's body have hardly been noticeable. I think she has always looked good – and she still does."

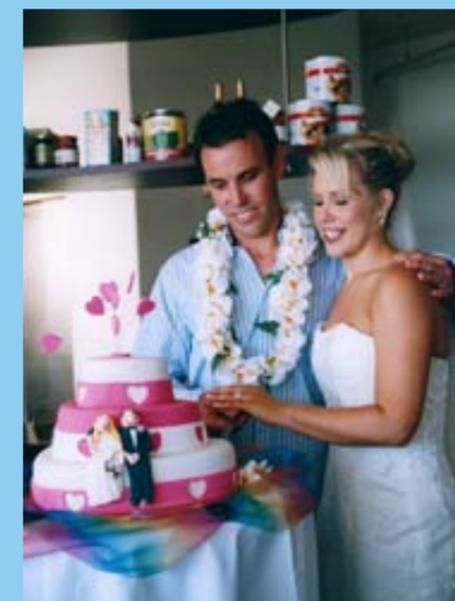


Maria says she's less body-obsessed now she's with Paul



Mum-of-two Nadine's now training for the New York Marathon

**'I was AWAKENED to the benefit of health and fitness...and lost a WHOPPING 30kg!'**



Personal trainers **NADINE, 33** and **DANIEL SULLIVAN, 39**

## Lost weight & got fit

SHE SAYS "For most girls, the thought of a first date with a cute guy would be something to look forward to – but what if that date is mountain-climbing in stifling heat and you're 40kg overweight and struggling with self-doubt?"

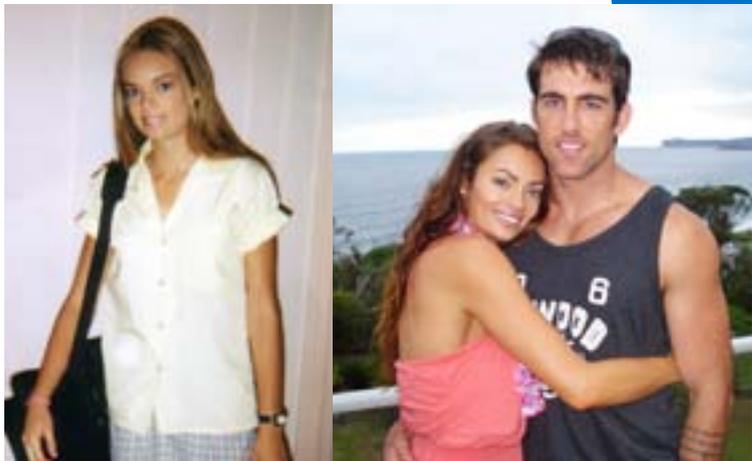
"I've had a difficult past: an unstable home, bouts of depression and panic attacks that developed into agoraphobia – a debilitating disorder that left me crippled with fear and unable to leave the house for two years. At my lowest point I weighed 37kg. When the pendulum swung, I ballooned to 90kg."

"Then I met Dan. He was extremely fit and confident and I wasn't. I remember thinking, 'Why would he pick me?' Our dates always involved some sort of physical activity."

After only a year dating, the couple opened Activeliving, a holistic health and fitness centre. A year after that, they got married.

"Although I never felt pressured by Dan to lose weight, I was awakened to the benefit of health and fitness, eventually losing a whopping 30kg in our first year of marriage. I'm now training for the New York Marathon. I never thought I'd make it to 25, let alone have two beautiful children, a supportive husband and a full life – it's incredible just how far I've come. My body is strong and healthy and I owe much of this to Dan."

HE SAYS "The outward appearance isn't nearly as important as the girl on the inside. But my active lifestyle meant Nadine got involved. Her body is a completely different shape now. She looks so fit – the changes have been incredible." ▶



Business owner and model EMILY SKYE, 27 and entrepreneur partner DECLAN REDMOND, 33

**Discovered strong is better than skinny**

SHE SAYS "I grew up miserable with the way I looked. I always hated my lanky body and big eyes. Girls in my class nicknamed me Frog Eyes and they bullied, bashed and berated me.

"I moved schools several times before embarking on a modelling career at 15, which in itself was fraught with problems. I never felt good enough for any of the jobs.

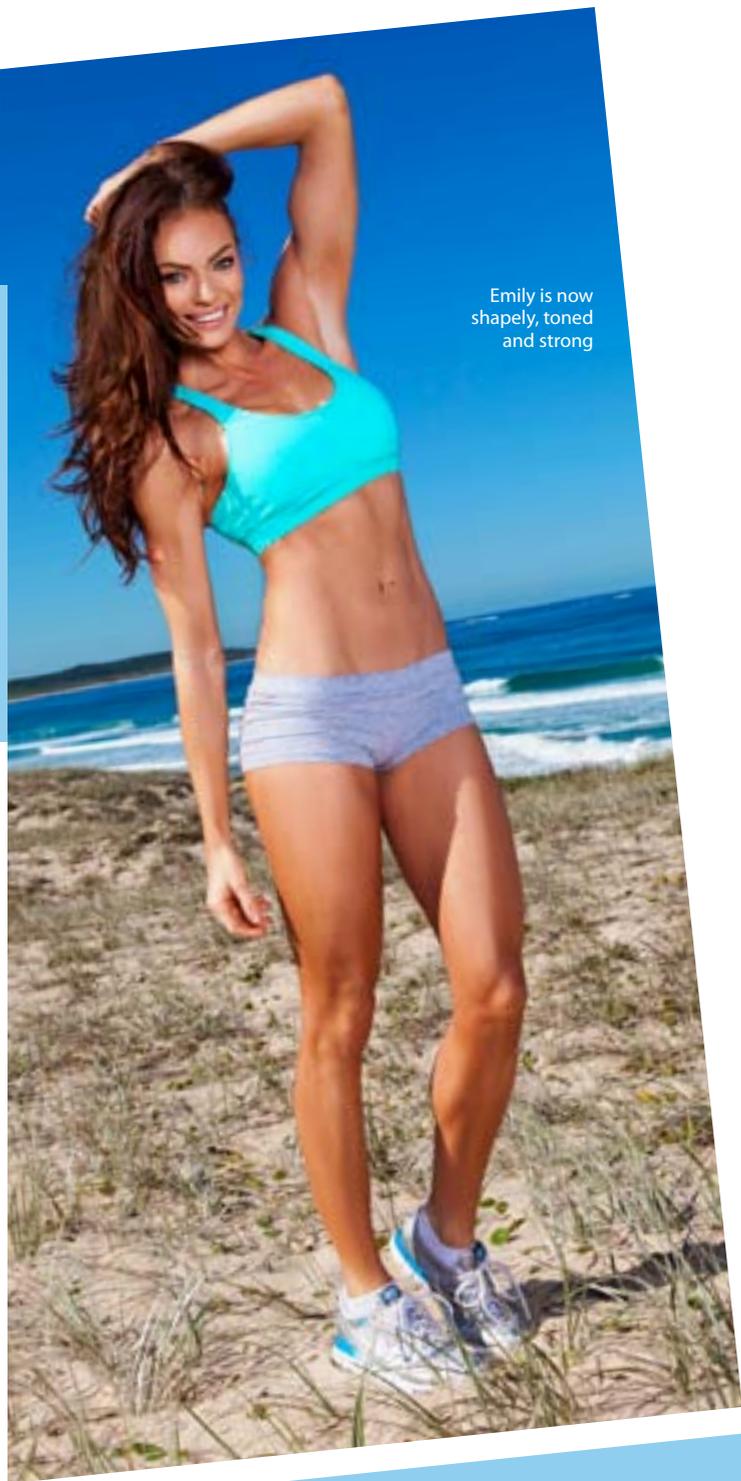
"My self-esteem hit rock bottom when a guy I was dating took pleasure in pointing out the 'hot chicks' he saw when we were out on dates.

"When I met Declan through friends at 24 I discovered not all men are jerks. For me, he was just the ticket, helping me shift from my waif-like 46kg frame

to a healthy 56kg with correct diet and exercise. I used to go crazy with cardio, thinking the goal was to be skinny – Declan showed me exercises to help me become strong and fit and taught me to be grateful for what I have.

"I'm so happy with my weight and my look now. I'm no longer obsessed with being perfect or comparing myself to others. I've found contentment. I'm healthy and strong, both mentally and physically, and finally, at 27, I'm happy with who I am."

HE SAYS "The changes in Emily's body have been amazing. Before, she was underweight; today she's shapely and toned. She's a completely different person."



Emily is now shapely, toned and strong

WORDS: NICOLE PARTRIDGE

**'Most WOMEN have a perception of themselves that has LITTLE to do with whether their PARTNER finds them attractive'**

**LIKE WHAT YOU SEE IN THE MIRROR?**

HOW YOU feel about yourself and your life has an enormous impact on your body, both directly and indirectly, according to social psychologist and relationship expert Dr Dina McMillan.

"If you're prone to feeling miserable or hopeless, those feelings will increase your body's tendency to pack on the kilos. Depression is linked with reduced serotonin and higher cortisol levels, both of which will reduce your metabolism and create weight gain.

"The indirect effects of misery can also impact your body. When you're

sad or insecure, your energy levels go down. When you're happy you're able to set goals – physical or mental – and have a better chance of meeting them.

"You also tend to have a healthier relationship with food. It doesn't mean you'll be your ideal weight or fitness level, but if you're feeling good emotionally and recognise that you need to get fit, you'll be more likely to do something to change it.

"Most women have a perception of themselves that has little to do with whether their partner finds them attractive. As much

as we may love our guys, our standard of beauty is usually a social construct, not a romantic one.

"This doesn't mean your partner's view is irrelevant. If you're with someone who cherishes and desires you and doesn't spend a lot of time ogling other women, it can definitely improve your perception of your looks. The rest is probably based upon how well you feel physically and if you like what you see when you look in the mirror. After all, your opinion of who you are and how you look is the one that counts most." ■