



## THE PERSONAL TRAINER

# 'Clear your mind and get confident'

**Ladan Soltani, 44, from west London, overcame a history of eating disorders and is now a personal trainer.**

In my late teens, I studied dance at stage school. My friends were obsessed with their appearance, and like them, I wanted to look perfect. The only way I could see to achieve this was to starve myself. For a while, I'd feel really good about myself, then suddenly I'd crack and binge eat. I was caught in a destructive cycle. I became addicted to laxatives, taking five to seven tablets a



## ● Reach Your Goals

day and suffering terrible diarrhoea, all in an effort to expel what I'd eaten.

My relationship with food finally started to improve in my twenties, when in an attempt to combat my increasing weight I qualified as an aerobics teacher and taught 20 plus classes a week. Thankfully, a friend at the health club could see I had a problem. I still remember her words, 'You need help, don't you?' She'd had issues with food, too, and suggested I go to Overeaters Anonymous.

I began Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) when I was 26, followed by a year on antidepressants. Knowing that these could change my brain chemistry for the better and devouring every self-help book out there, I learnt that exercise, done in the right way, could have the same effect, too.

That inspired me to become a yoga teacher and, in 2007, I went on a yoga training course in the Himalayas. It was radical and a real Eat, Pray, Love experience. But, I found it life changing and an incredibly spiritual experience. Meditation, breathing and

## Stay motivated

### ● CREATE A VISION BOARD.

If you have an ideal goal of what you want to look like, create a board of images to keep you motivated.

### ● MAKE A DATE.

If you're not enthusiastic about working out, do it with a partner or a group. If one person doesn't want to do it, I guarantee you another person will say 'come on, we're going'. That will be all you need. You won't want to let others down.

### ● DRAW UP A TIMELINE.

Set yourself weekly deadlines and work towards your ultimate date. Even if you only see a tiny change each week, it will keep you going.

### ● DEDICATE YOUR PRACTICE TO SOMEONE ELSE.

If you're feeling tired, work out for somebody you love. The minute you set that positive intention, you'll find a renewed energy. Find out more at [ladansoltani.tv](http://ladansoltani.tv)

being positive made me realise I didn't have to make horrible pacts with myself about starving and bingeing. Those disciplines helped me learn about myself on a deeper, emotional level. I discovered that if I worked from the inside and disciplined my mind, it had an amazing effect on me physically, too.

Returning home, I also qualified as a personal trainer after doing a course every weekend for six months. I liked the idea of working one to one with people. For me, personal training isn't just about fitness. It's about understanding the psychology of people. I give them the drive and enthusiasm to keep going. If a client is doing sit-ups and gets to the point where they're about to stop, I distract them by talking to them and they keep going almost without realising it.

When I watch a client develop, reach their goals and get confident, it's like I'm watching myself. I can now eat whatever I want, whenever I want. That, combined with a job I love is incredibly liberating.

## Get fit without the gym

For home use, I recommend a Swiss ball and a skipping rope.

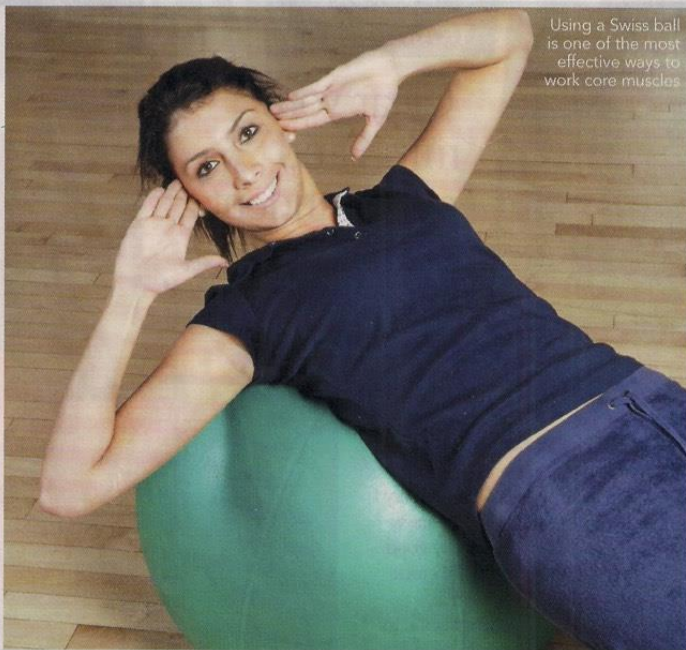
● With a Swiss ball, aim for 15-20 minutes of a variety of exercises every other day. Doing sit-ups on a Swiss ball is 60% harder than doing them on the floor.

● Sit on your Swiss ball for three 10-minute intervals daily while working at a desk or sitting at a table to improve your posture.

● With your skipping rope, do three intervals of five minutes' skipping every day. Fifteen minutes of skipping is equivalent to 50 minutes of running. Warm up before you skip by going for a brisk walk. Avoid skipping if you have lower back or knee injuries.

● When you go shopping or walking, wear a rucksack. The more you carry the more calories you burn.

● Power walk with half litre water bottles in each hand for 20-30 minutes a day. ♦



Using a Swiss ball is one of the most effective ways to work core muscles

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