

Mind over matter

Hypnotherapy offers help with weight loss without resorting to expensive, intrusive surgery

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For an increasing number of people battling with obesity, the fitting of a gastric band has proved to be a life-saving operation - a cuff is installed around the stomach, severely limiting its capacity for solid food, and those who have had the operation typically lose around 2lbs a week and manage to keep the weight off in the long term. Although effective, it's still a fairly drastic solution to a problem which in many cases could be solved without surgery, with the application of some serious willpower and a better knowledge of what the body needs in terms of nutrition and exercise.

But as most of us know, when it comes of any kind of addiction, sometimes willpower alone isn't enough to break long-held habits. Hypnotherapist Mariette Lobo can help. Lobo is a trained practitioner of a new therapy that aims to mirror the effects of a gastric band, without the expense and possible complications

of the real deal. When I meet her to discuss Hypno-band I'm surprised when she hands me some literature on the subject - nowhere does it mention that the treatment is in essence, pretend. I read about the "surgery" I am about to have, and Lobo talks about the "fitting" of my band and future adjustments that may need to be made after the "operation". It turns out, an important part of the therapy is getting the patient into the mindset that they actually have had a medical procedure, then through hypnosis and cognitive behavioural therapy, the "patient" comes to think of their newly banded stomach as being the size of a golf-ball which limits the amount of food they can eat before feeling uncomfortably full.

As anyone wishing to embark on this therapy must have a body mass index of 30 or more I wasn't eligible for the treatment but Lobo agreed to help me tackle my "boredom snacking" by hypnosis of a more conventional

A four session Hypno-band course costs £150



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kind. I answered a questionnaire about my eating habits and Lobo adapted my session accordingly.

She put me into an extremely relaxed state before working through some creative visualisations with the aim of getting my late-night willpower lapses under control. When she talked me back up to alertness, it felt like I'd been lying on the couch for 30 minutes when, in fact, an hour had passed and I felt ex-

ceptionally calm and rested... and not at all interested in a biscuit and a nice sugary coffee. It's a start.

MERCY BREHENY

The first Hypno-band session with Mariette Lobo lasts 90 minutes, subsequent sessions are 60 minutes. Lobo operates from Dysart Pharmacy, 21 High Street, Dysart (01592 652910, www.mariette-lobo.com)