

Three women reveal they took control of their health and reaped the rewards

We overhauled



50s

Lucy Walter

Refusing to believe a multiple sclerosis diagnosis would confine her to a wheelchair, Lucy, 52, turned to raw foods.

When I was in my mid-thirties I started suffering chronic stomach pains, shocking migraines, numbness on my left side and vision problems. It took a lot of doctor and hospital visits before I was finally diagnosed at 42 with multiple sclerosis [MS].

The outlook was bleak – doctors told me to prepare for life in a wheelchair, and I fell apart. I was terrified.

My husband and I wanted to simplify our lives, so four years later, when I was 46, we sold our three-storey home in Brisbane and moved up to the Sunshine Coast hinterland into a cottage that had scope to be

renovated to make it wheelchair friendly.

The pain-relief drugs made me chronically ill, even causing me to go into anaphylactic shock. So when a friend told me about Don Tolman, a raw food advocate, I signed up to attend one of his workshops. I realised I had the power to heal myself through what I put in my body. Already vegetarian, I started eating only unprocessed, plant-based foods, and cut out dairy, bread and pasta so I could get as much nutrition while putting as little stress on my body as possible.

I did a lot of research about all the nutrients I needed. I eat a large variety of wholefoods throughout the week to ensure I cover all bases. For breakfast I usually have a green smoothie with fruits, leafy greens from my garden, linseed, chia and hemp seeds; a large salad for lunch with almonds, sunflower seeds and homemade dressing of garlic, olive oil and tahini; and dinner is usually just a broth or a small snack of fruit, nuts and seeds.

After a few months, I was virtually symptom-free and feeling fantastic. I've kept it up ever since. I don't find it a burden – people accommodate me at barbecues or

gatherings, and restaurants have so many great wholefood options now. If I'm ever in doubt, I'll just pack my own foods.

I only see a GP now, who says to keep doing what I'm doing. MS is supposed to be incurable and I'm happy to leave it at that. As long as I don't have symptoms, I'm happy.

Health issues ranging from weight gain, arthritis and disease can play havoc with the quality of our lives. But the natural approach

Helen Watters

When Helen's husband died suddenly, she was devastated and her weight spiralled out of control. But since joining the gym five years ago, Helen, 63, has regained her health, her spark, and discovered a surprising strength.

In my younger adult years, I was a stay-at-home mother of four children and always had lots of energy.

But when my husband died suddenly of a stroke in 2001, I became incredibly stressed trying to keep the household together and wondering how my life was going to go on. My youngest daughter was doing her HSC, and I was so busy I didn't even think about my health.

The pain-relief drugs made me chronically ill



60s