

* HOLLY WHITE ROAD-TESTS...

HOT PANTS



The phrase 'a moment of madness' is often used to describe the frenzy that takes over people when they commit hideous crimes.

Although not entirely a life-or-death situation, something weird came over me a month ago when I told my editor I wanted to take a hot pants challenge — ie, be photographed in *Weekend* in mere inches of fabric, looking confident.

The fog of enthusiasm soon passed. The business of employing the skills of the professionals then began.

With not a moment to waste, I pulled on my tracksuit bottoms and my ill-used runners and entered The Fitness Dock on Camden Street. Manager Stephen Ward took out the calipers and cruelly measured every inch of me. I was declared to have 15pc body fat. I winced. Into the gym we went and the first of many gruelling sessions began. I squatted, lunged, pressed and stepped my way through his prescribed programme, at least twice a week, for the four weeks.

Diet-wise, I was lucky enough to score a meeting with Fergus Connolly, mastermind to the Department of Sports Science for the Welsh Rugby Union.

"I've only ever done one WAG programme," he grinned. I was already embarrassed. He hummed and hawed through descriptions of my erratic, irregular eating and left me feeling mildly ashamed of cheeky Galaxy bars and litres of red wine mid-week.

A fan of oils, protein and regular eating, he encouraged me to never feel hunger pangs and to proactively snack before I felt hungry. Udo's oils and fish oils seemed to have multiple uses. In my instance, they helped control insulin levels and fat absorption and were prescribed in bulk with every meal.

A week in, I felt physically exhausted and really hit rock bottom in the morale department. I needed something that felt like a

treat but would still allow me to move me in the right direction.

Endermologie at the Renew Clinic on Baggot Street was just the ticket. I slipped into a gauze, all-in-one kid's pyjama-type ensemble and lay on the table while Sinead pummelled my thighs and cellulite. I found it deeply relaxing and almost enjoyable in comparison to my agonising squats at The Fitness Dock. Endermologie acts on a controlled suction motion that lifts and rolls the skin.

Six sessions later, the tone of my skin had entirely changed and felt much smoother. Upon measuring, I found that I had lost an inch off my hips and two inches off my waist, which not only impressed me but made my flatmate stare at my results in amazement.

A month on, the training regime and oil-supplemented eating had whittled my body fat down to 12pc, although my weight didn't change.

At this stage, my legs needed to be hair free. In my opinion, lasering is a much better investment than waxing, and many clinics are now offering 50pc off.

FAB on South William Street is offering six full-leg sessions for €1,000, so about €165 a session. I went in expecting pain and was

amazed at how almost anguish-free the actual procedure was. Shaving is allowed in between visits, and after the requisite six sessions most people are hair free.

Two days before the shoot, I headed in to FAB again to be layered in tan. All I can say is, fake tan works wonders, and the resulting golden limbs I left with were miles away from those I bore four weeks beforehand.

Feeling confident, the hot pants shopping began. I ventured into H&M and came out laden with many pairs. Oasis and Zara had abundant hot pants stock, too.

A €12.95 pair from H&M almost resembled big knickers when I put them on. I felt so near-naked that a big, grey, woolly jumper on top was the only consolation. I tripped

down the steps of my home and braved Grafton Street, semi-mortified. I felt naked. I felt cool Irish breezes in places I never thought possible. And the eyes, dear God, the eyes that pried where no eyes should pry. I stopped for lunch at the café in Brown Thomas and I felt vilely self-conscious. As I sat down, the leather seat felt horrible on my naked thighs.

Outside it was raining, and then I became truly miserable. My legs were soaking wet and I was freezing cold. I looked ridiculous in the typical Irish weather.

The next day I avoided the cursed shorts, but when evening came the challenge was heartily embraced. There was something about venturing out in darkness that gave me the boost I needed. Denim shorts and tiger-print shoes from Oasis and a Penneys black vest all felt fine. I had a glass of wine, added a blazer and headed off into the night.

Through the doors of the Sycamore Club my girls and I went. An ex-boyfriend was visibly agape. I was pleased; this was not the Holly he knew. In the darkness of the club, any worries of cellulite being visible disappeared. I took on a certain confidence and was almost proud of the attention they garnered. I strutted about the place. My heels made me teeter above the masses and suddenly it all clicked into place.

The challenge ended and I have a fitter set of pins and a leaner frame, which I hope to hold on to. Whether you will see me strutting about in hot pants is uncertain, but I'm not afraid of them any more. Best of all, I'm now an official gym bunny. ☑

Nutrition advice by Fergus Connolly. Enquiries to info@fergusconnolly.com
Endermologie at Renew Aesthetic Clinic, 4 Convent Close, Dublin 2. September offer: Eight sessions for the price of six, €450. Tel: 01 661 9261; www.renewclinic.ie.
Laser hair removal and tanning at Face and Body, 4a South Anne Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 01 633 6640; www.faceandbody.ie.
The Fitness Dock, 1-4 Lower Camden Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 01 405 3777 or email membership@thefitnessdock.ie

HOT PANTS: HOW TO WEAR THEM

- Heels are a must. In my experience, they also gave me a confidence that's necessary to pull off hot pants.
- Keep it loose and casual on top. Think the perfect white T-shirt. I found a great bargain at H&M. Or try a long vest and a cardigan. Bare on top and bare down below equals slutt, unless you're on holidays.
- Tan up. A wide expanse of pale, pasty leg is not sexy. Tan works wonders and turns legs into great accessories. Leg make-up is also great for the less well prepared. Try Face and Body by MAC, €28.
- Keep accessories to a minimum. Think a few bangles or earrings. This look works best when it appears casual and not too done up.



Top left: Denim shorts, €29.95, Zara; black vest, €9, Penneys; zebra shoes, €75, Oasis. Left: Black shorts, €12.95, H&M; shoe boots, €106, Oasis; grey jumper, €69, Oasis