



editor's letter

Sweet treat

We enjoyed a batch of the *Lemon and sultana slice* on page 89 as a little treat while putting this issue together. It's an old-fashioned Weet-Bix based slice that's lovely with a calming cup of tea!

Late last year I took part in the EXPLORE study run by Massey University, which is looking at women's body composition and aiming to understand how different body weight and body fat profiles are related to the risk for chronic disease. As a participant in the study I was weighed, measured and blood tested. I also had my body composition analysed using the Bod Pod, a state-of-the-art machine which is considered the gold standard in measuring how much fat, muscle and other bits and pieces we are made of. This was a great opportunity. It was also something of a wake-up call.

I've been a slim person my whole life – as a child and teenager I was often called 'Nik the stick'. Last November, my BMI – the measurement we use to determine healthy weight

range – was a lowish 20. My blood results were all good, my blood pressure normal. The Bod Pod, however, found my body fat percentage was in the 'excess fat' range. Although I looked normal on the outside, inside I had more fat than is ideal for good health. I was one of those 'skinny fat' people I'd read about! I felt like I didn't know my own body.

Thinking about it, I had to admit to myself that I'd noticed things getting 'softer' over the years. I'm not a natural exerciser, and I had often prioritised work and play over working out. As I'd gotten older I'd lost muscle and gained fat, even though I hadn't gained weight, and this is what the Bod Pod had picked up.

So what to do? I needed to face the fact that Pilates once a week and a bit of walking was

not enough exercise. I started a programme of strength training at Bodytech in Auckland – a gym where the focus is on high-intensity training as a means of replacing lost muscle and reducing body fat. It's hard work, but I find I like the feeling. And the best thing? Nine months later I had another Bod Pod screening and found I had lost almost three kilos of body fat and gained one kilo of muscle. I'm going to keep at it. This has been a great lesson for me that being healthy is a bigger picture thing than the number on the scales.

Niki

Niki Bezzant

editor@healthyfood.co.nz
twitter: @nikibezzant