



ANDREA PEYSER

NEWS

# This former fatty shed 131 pounds to become a fitness trainer

By Andrea Peyser

September 26, 2014 | 3:48am



Shanna Fried shed 131 pounds and is now sporting a svelte frame.

Photo: Matthew McDermott (2)



MORE FROM  
**ANDREA PEYSER**

Emma Watson has the wrong  
idea about feminism

---

Put a hard brake on heartless  
speed demons

---

Not sure whether these parents  
are 'Extreme' or just terrible

---

The Met Opera's new musical  
celebration 'promoting bigotry'

---

A mother load of nonsense

Growing up in Westchester County, Shanna Fried was decidedly chubby. Pleasantly plump? Try unpleasantly porky.

Her parents hired a personal trainer for her and she went on Jenny Craig and Weight Watchers diets. But for every 10 pounds she lost, she'd gain back 20.

Kids teased her. Boys ignored her. She met every jab to her self-esteem with the only weapon available in her arsenal — a hamburger.

Chances are good you know someone just like her.

Fried grew into a shy, introverted adult with a monkey on her back — a three- or four-Big Mac-a-day habit, combined with large fries from McDonald's and the biggest, most caloric sodas she could find. ("I didn't discriminate," she told me.)

The more Fried ate, the more she disliked herself, and the more she ate. By the time she was 31, Fried tipped the scales at a mountainous 296 pounds, though she

stood just 5 feet 3. She was no longer just flabby. She'd joined the millions of Americans who make up the ranks of the morbidly obese.



"Looking back on my journey, weight became a shield," Fried told me. It kept people away and it prevented her from getting hurt.

"I wasn't motivated to do something about it," she said. "I was wearing a size 18 to 20. I didn't love myself. I couldn't give myself in a relationship."

This scary story has a triumphant ending. About five years ago, a friend introduced Fried to boxing. And a light went off in her junk-food-addled head.

She started working out in a boxing gym, regularly sparring with partners and punching away years of pent-up aggression and pain.

Now 36 and living in Manhattan, Fried has dropped 131 pounds, about the weight of a non-obese person. Candy bars and Taco Bell are a distant memory. At 165 pounds and a fit size 10, Fried's body is composed of more muscle than fat. She's dating men and is the happiest she's ever been in her life. She's also started a personal-training business that, she hopes, will help others who are addicted to behaviors that hurt their chances at a normal life.

You see, fat is not just aesthetically unsightly. Obesity kills.



"I wasn't motivated to do something about it," Fried admits. "I was wearing a size 18 to 20. I didn't love myself."

Photo: Matthew McDermott

Each year, an alarming number of Americans eat themselves into early graves. According to the National Institutes of Health, being overweight or obese make up the second leading cause of preventable death in the United States, close behind tobacco use. An estimated 300,000 deaths a year are due to excessive weight, which can lead to potentially fatal health woes, from cardiovascular disease to certain cancers.

In a study published last year, researchers from Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health concluded that being overweight or obese were associated with 18.2 percent of adult deaths — nearly 1 in 5 — from 1986 through 2006. This is not just an aesthetic emergency.

Yet few are doing much to halt the crisis. First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! campaign fights childhood obesity by, among other things, encouraging public schools to serve unpopular healthful school lunches. Former Mayor Michael Bloomberg tried to fight fat with his unsuccessful effort to ban the sale of sodas and sweetened drinks over 16 ounces in New York City eateries. That plan would not have prevented sugar lovers from going back for seconds. Or thirds.



Fried has started a personal-training business in the hopes of helping others.

Photo: Matthew McDermott (2)

Fried first noticed that she was getting lean when she looked down and saw that she had crossed her legs, something she hadn't been able to do for a long time. In March, she launched Shanna Fried Inspired Training ([shannafried.com](http://shannafried.com)) and also runs the Badass Boot Camp, in which she gathers weight-loss wannabes each Monday in Carl Schurz Park on the Upper East Side for punishing workouts.

Fried has credibility in the crowded field of personal trainers and life coaches. "I've not always been athletic. I come with a past of being obese," she said.

She wouldn't mind marrying and becoming a mother. But first, she's got to cure large people of their afflictions. And the only way to turn them svelte is to help folks realize that they'd prefer waistlines to cupcakes.