

He charges a fortune and fires clients if they don't obey his orders. So, could **Caroline Phillips** survive the world's most demanding personal trainer?

JEMIMA KHAN has the giveaway sinewy arms. Then there's Leonie Frieda with her sculpted body, not to mention Lady Cosima Somerset, former confidante of Princess Diana, with her gym-toned physique. These are all Bean's Babes: girls who have been put through their paces by Tim Bean, probably the world's most sought-after personal trainer-cum-nutritionist.

He doesn't come cheap (clients are told they must pay a £5,000 penalty fee to charity if they don't achieve their goals. "One man," says Bean, "offered his Bentley keys as his penalty stake"). But money is not the only requirement for prospective clients. Bean interviews each of them like a prospective employer, claiming to turn down one in three. "Only the truly motivated are signed up." Clients then have to sign a contract agreeing to attend all exercise sessions and adhere to directives.

Bean and his partner, Anne, have taken 60 clients through their Institute of Physique Management programmes over the past two years. He offers lessons in diet, he measures your body, oversees your exercise (though he doesn't usually do the training him-

self), checks your food intake and nags you. In effect, he takes over your life. "He can get me out of bed and into the gym with a text," says Lady Cosima, managing director of Concierge London. The rich and famous are willing to pay his incredible fees because he gives them absolute confidence that they will achieve their goals.

Bean has a shaved head and the body and presence of a minder. He is regularly to be found rifling through clients' dustbins. "When they know I'm coming, they hide fattening things or throw them away," he says. When he's not ransacking clients' cupboards and foraging through wheelie bins, he's springing surprise inspections in restaurants.

"I just want to check you're making the right choices," he told one startled client in Nobu. He "fired" another client by mobile phone after spotting her tucking into a full English breakfast at the Connaught. He can be a bit scary.

Despite all this, I agree to put myself through the peculiar Bean brand of torture. I'm not obese and have no desire to enter a body builders' competition, but I would like to lose 10lb, tone up my muscles and get back to regular exercise (reduced to rapid eye

movement since the advent of motherhood). I sign up for Tim's programme, which involves an awful lot of polite badgering through personal visits, phone calls and text messages.

First I have to go for a full Bupa medical. When I pass that, Bean instructs me to start popping endless Higher Nature vitamin supplements; afterwards I shake, rattle and roll — my hair becomes lustrous and my nails strong. To make life easier, I follow his directive and order Pure Package's personalised diet programme, a sort of upmarket meals-on-wheels with healthy food delivered to your door for £29.99 a day.

Next I have to have my age-profile checked out at Heather Bird's splendid Knightsbridge clinic, HB Health, where I sit among Stepford-style wives rapidly becoming younger. I breathe pure oxygen in the oxygen station, drink organic sweet potato and blood-orange juice and have my reaction times and memory checked out on the HB Age-Scan computer ascertaining my biological age through tests such as reaction times (my reactions are youthful, but I have a short-term memory like that of a cow in formaldehyde.)

My blood is analysed to get a biochemistry, blood count and hormonal profile and check the rate at which I'm ageing. My testosterone levels prove low so I am prescribed hormone supplements designed to replenish them to their youthful levels, boost my energy, strength and, er, libido. (They do.)

Bean arrives for the first consultation at my house. Wearing a navy suit and policeman's shoes (he is a former police officer and hails from New Zealand), he is courteous, punctual, professional and obsessive. To my horror, he sets to work with fat-measuring callipers and tape measure — and photographs me in bikini for Before and After pictures. I'm within the normal weight range but he tells me bluntly that I need to lose 18lb of fat (not weight — some of that would be converted to muscle).

He instructs me to record what I eat. "Write down everything and don't diet," he orders. "I'm going to change your eat-

'He gives me an advice sheet: 'Eat before dining out. Then you won't be ravenously hungry'

ing habits forever." He hands me the first of many evangelical, motivational advice sheets: "Ask questions, questions and more questions of the waiters and waitresses and get what you want to put inside that most amazing machine — your body." Another sheet advises: "Eat before dining out. Then you won't be ravenously hungry."

Afterwards, an email arrives saying I can call the Institute of Physique Management for help "day or night". Gym membership is part of the contract. Bean suggests the Harbour Club, where nearly all his clients go. He instructs me to have weekly sessions with fitness instructor James Heron, trainer to Princess Diana's brother, Lord Althorp, and to attend weekly Pilates classes to lengthen my muscles and improve posture and flexibility. Bean fixes additional "core" (trunk muscle) workouts with Wendy Spence, marathon runner and trainer to Piers Morgan, who brings her Swiss ball to my house and skipping ropes to my local park.

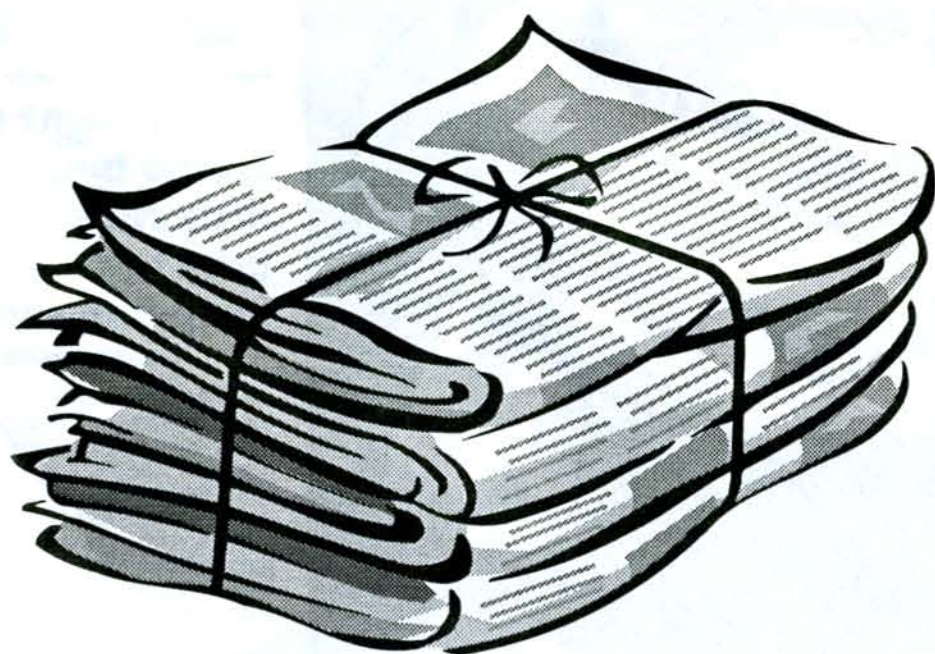
Bean explains that a muscular body burns the most calories. So he works on toning up muscles to increase metabolic efficiency. Cardio work is built into the programme to burn fat reserves. But unlike conventional trainers, his approach is to do weights first. "If you do weights after cardio," he explains, "you just burn your muscles."

The first time we go running, I manage 10 minutes before I collapse, gasping for breath. After the week's exercise, my muscles are ready for intensive care. In



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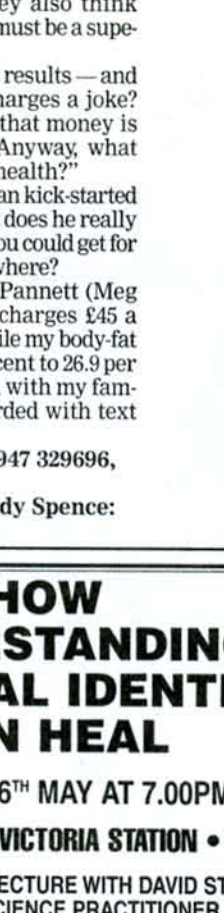
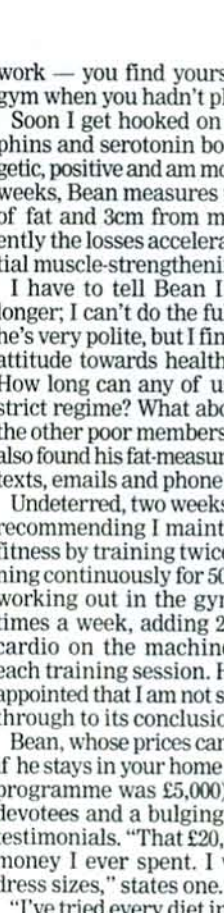
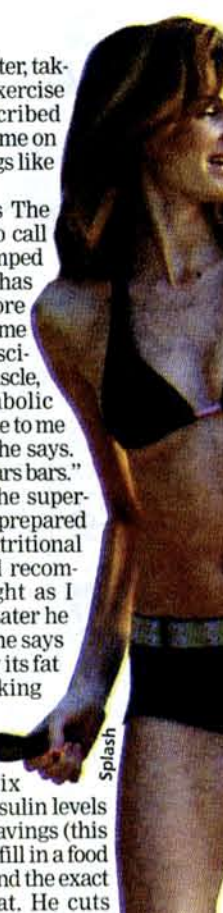
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The merciless Mr Bean



clients' fat intake to 5g per meal and suggests 1,500 calories a day. He then gives a personal dietary assessment form — one of mine says: "Eleven per cent of your calories came from saturated fat which is slightly above the 10 per cent target."

It's not fun and Bean does not seem to have a natural sense of humour, but I do find my diet changing (even though it was pretty healthy before). Soon I am cutting down

on fat and oil, eating more protein and, instead of bread, I am devouring whole-grain rice, pulses and leafy vegetables.

Even when he's not there in person, he is busy invading my space. On one occasion, I am talking to Goldie Hawn at a private dinner hosted by mobile phones billionaire Sunil Mittal when Tim's text arrives: "What are you eating?"

Another time he texts me while I am eating sushi with a friend. To the question: "What are your exercise plans today?" I am tempted to say "Lifting chopsticks". But bullying by text does

work — you find yourself visiting the gym when you hadn't planned to go. Soon I get hooked on exercise endorphins and serotonin boosts. I feel energetic, positive and am more toned. In four weeks, Bean measures that I've lost 6lb of fat and 3cm from my waist. Apparently the losses accelerate after this initial muscle-strengthening period.

I have to tell Bean I can take it no longer; I can't do the full 12 weeks. Yes, he's very polite, but I find his dictatorial attitude towards health too punishing. How long can any of us last on such a strict regime? What about the effect on the other poor members of the family? I also found his fat-measuring callipers, his texts, emails and phone calls invasive.

Undeterred, two weeks later, he emails recommending I maintain my outdoor fitness by training twice weekly — running continuously for 50 minutes — and working out in the gym three or four times a week, adding 20-30 minutes of cardio on the machine at the end of each training session. He is clearly disappointed that I am not seeing the course through to its conclusion.

Bean, whose prices can go up to £30,000 if he stays in your home for a month (my programme was £5,000) boasts endless devotees and a bulging file of glowing testimonials. "That £20,000 was the best money I ever spent. I went down two dress sizes," states one.

"I've tried every diet in the world. This

is the first thing that has worked for me," adds Vassil Chamberlain, Tatler's senior editor. "I never exercised before," concurs the board member of a major City institution who has spent over £20,000 with Tim and has lost 30lb. "Tim provides discipline, focus and fear."

But the programme also has its detractors. "It's insanity to think, 'If I've had 1,500 calories today I've done well.' It's obsessive," says financial analyst Matthew King, who lost three stone but regained three-and-a-half stone the following year. "I'm a food addict. I needed fundamentally to change my behavioural patterns and the way I perceive myself."

VINCE Philgence, the Harbour Club's health and fitness manager (a job Bean used to have), says: "Essentially this is a weight-management programme. It's better to take a more holistic and varied approach to people's training and health needs but people look for a quick fix. They also think because it's very dear, his must be a superior product."

Certainly Bean achieves results — and quickly. Yet aren't his charges a joke? "For most of my clients, that money is nothing," he counters. "Anyway, what price do you put on your health?" I am grateful that Tim Bean kick-started me back into exercise. But does he really offer anything more than you could get for a fraction of the cost elsewhere?

I now train with Holly Pannett (Meg Mathews's trainer) who charges £45 a session. I'm 9lb lighter while my body-fat ratio is down from 33 per cent to 26.9 per cent. And I can eat a meal with my family without being bombarded with text messages.

● Tim Bean: mobile, 07947 329696, www.iopm.co.uk. Fitness consultant Wendy Spence: 07803 084 265.

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Bean babes: (from left) Jemima Khan, Leonie Frieda and Caroline, here working with Wendy Spence, a trainer recommended by Tim