

Kangaroo, chocolate & cucumbers

THIS YEAR THE NEW DIET BOOKS GO FROM SENSIBLE TO EXTREME. HERE'S OUR PICK OF THE BIGGEST FOUR – AND WHETHER THEY REALLY WORK. BY Charmaine Yabsley

LOSING THE LAST 5 KILOS BY MICHELLE BRIDGES

The Biggest Loser's personal trainer knows all about weight loss. Her new diet and workout book is the next best thing to having Bridges in the kitchen with you. The daily eating plan counts the kilojoules for you (you're allowed about 3430 per day), and the suggested meals range from buckwheat pancakes for brekkie to kangaroo for dinner. Of course, there's no gain without pain: six days of exercise are outlined, ranging from cardio to yoga, with day seven a rest day (and you'll need it).

■ **Nutritionist's comment:** "There's no evidence that shows that eating less than 3430 kilojoules a day will help you lose more weight, so at least this keeps your daily intake above the limit," dietitian Amanda Clark says. "While eating such a greatly reduced kilojoule amount will help you lose weight, it's after the diet finishes that you need to ensure that your slowed-down metabolism doesn't [make you] pile the weight back on. There are no serving size suggestions, which can affect your portion control. On the plus side, the meals are fresh and healthy, and the exercise plan will help you burn the extra kilojoules. If you eat the snacks and up the intake to 5000 kilojoules, it's a reasonable diet for a short period of time."

■ **Details:** Penguin, \$29.95.

THE FAMILY CHEF BY JEWELS AND JILL ELMORE

Anything that promises us Jennifer Aniston's toned legs, tummy and arms is worth a peek. The Family Chef, devised by Aniston's personal chefs, sisters Jewels and Jill Elmore, dishes the dirt on what the Friends star eats (or in this case doesn't). It's not a diet book as such – there's a children's recipe section and one for men where carbs make an appearance – but the third section involves a lot of veg and protein. The recipes are fiddly and probably impossible for the average woman – white peach and ginger smoothie with coconut water, anyone? The low kilojoule count for some servings – about 627 kilojoules for celery soup or cucumber salad – may help you achieve rapid weight loss, but keeping it off, and sticking to the diet, may be another matter.

■ **What the nutritionist says:** "This is less about dieting and more about healthy eating. It's a good guide to get off the diet roundabout. In her foreword, Aniston says she used to live on protein bars and has now turned back to home-cooked food, albeit with her own chefs. There's no nutritional breakdown of meals, which would be useful for those eating for weight loss, but the ingredients are healthy and the focus is on cooking from scratch."

■ **Details:** Penguin, \$44.95.