

THIS PAGE: AJAY WEARS LEIELA DRESS AND SAMANTHA WILLS BANGLE. OPPOSITE PAGE: SEAFOLLY BIKINI AND WRAP
WHERE TO BUY: LEIELA (03) 9326 1285 SAMANTHA WILLS SAMANTHAWILLS.COM.AU SEAFOLLY 1300 130 715

EPIC
KIDOM ENTERTAINMENT 100 Professional

Ajay gets 'marked up' just before her breast lift and tummy tuck surgery



Before

Ajay Rochester's SURGERY DIARY

After shedding 87kg, the TV star had one more body hurdle to overcome. Here she shares her surgery journey with *OK!*, and reveals the real Ajay to readers... NO airbrushing involved!

At her heaviest almost 10 years ago, Ajay tipped the scales at 150kg. Since then, she's lost more than half her body weight. Now, the 40-year-old TV host opens her diary to *OK!* as she undergoes a breast lift and tummy tuck to complete her body transformation.

DEC 1, 2008: THE DECISION

I am the first to admit that my boobs are not exactly where they were when they first appeared at the tender age of 13. When I take my bra off they roll out like long red carpets at an opening. And my stomach... well, let me just say this: when I run on the soccer field, that slapping sound is not the crowd clapping their hands at my Beckham brilliance. It is, in fact, a fold of skin that just has nowhere to go but up and down. Today, I ring Dr Benjamin Norris at Silkwood Medical in Sydney to get my bits fixed. This is not something I've just done on a whim. I've been doing my research on plastic surgery for years.

'TO HAVE MY BREASTS AROUND MY NAVEL IS DEPRESSING'

DEC 27: MEETING DR NORRIS

His office is in a gorgeous building overlooking the ocean - good boobs are big business or big boobs are good business... whatever, I don't care as long as I look hot when he's finished. Dr Norris fired a million questions about my health background and weight loss, and I silently high-fived myself when he questioned - 'with such an amazing weight loss result' - if there had been a gastric banding involved. No way baby, just sheer hard work and determination! I explained that it was crazy to have done all this hard work and to still have bits of my body let me down. To have my breasts hang down around my navel is depressing and makes me never ever want to get naked with anyone. And the loose skin around my tummy is like a bloody builder's tool belt. I could carry a drill, hammer and an entire spanner set in there! It's taken me a long time to get to this point - where the idea of having my nipples cut off and reattached and a huge chunk cut out of my gut is OK with me. But it's about what you want more. I want to wear nice backless dresses, have a flat tummy (the one I've done a million sit-ups to get) and great boobs. I want to get naked and not have bits of my body dragging along the floor. I don't want to rely on the missionary position 'cause that's the only way my loose bits disappear. He explained the risks, procedures and recovery time and said I was to not make a decision



'You look in the mirror and still expect to see the old you - it's amazing seeing the results of what my body looks like now,' Ajay says

ONLY IN OK!
EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW & PICTURES

After

today (even though I already had). I went away so excited, wishing I could get everything done now. I know I'm right to wait till I lose the last few kilos and I have to finish filming because I need a month to recover.

SEPT 27, 2009: THE FINAL KILOS

Well, this year didn't quite turn out the way I'd planned. I was supposed to be hosting *Celebrity Fit Club USA* but I didn't get my visa in time and so I lost the job. Bigger! Not to be deterred, I've been hiking Runyon Canyon in LA every day and am looking pretty good or as good as I can look keeping my clothes on. Think I am ready to get the cut and tuck.

NOV 14: 'SMALL BOOBS?'

Fly in from LA and go straight to Dr Norris. We take before pictures and talk about breast size. He thinks I could carry quite a large boob but I have been big for so much of my

life I really just want to be small. We look at pictures and I show him what I prefer. The last thing I remember him saying is, 'I just don't want you to wake up and wish you were bigger.'

NOV 16: SURGERY DAY

In the theatre, Dr Norris draws all over my body with a black marker. He had asked me to wear a sexy pair of knickers so he can hide the scar underneath. I proudly drop my robe and he looks at them and says, 'I told you to wear something small.' I thought my newly and proudly purchased Elle Macpherson intimates were small. If you saw the size of the underpants I have been wearing the last nine years, you would think these were miniscule. He explained that some women wore tiny G-strings in and I couldn't help but laugh at the world I have inhabited for so long... the Land of the Giant Underpants. I now >

look like one of those scientific diagrams of a side of beef. This is it. I say one last goodbye to my floppy boobs and saggy belly, and in the blink of an eye the anaesthetist does his thing. Seven hours later I wake up. I can't feel anything, but I'm very alert. I survived! It all went brilliantly, faster than they thought.

NOV 17: THE DAY AFTER

The first thing I do is look at my boobs. Oh my God, they are enormous! Bigger than Dolly Parton. Almost as big as Jordan. I remember Dr Norris saying, 'I don't want you to be disappointed' but this is insane. I'm a freak. I try to not panic and wonder if I'll ever get used to them. Thankfully he comes in then, sees the look on my face and tells me my breasts are extremely swollen and they will not be anywhere near that size. He says to remember that it's a big operation, I might get a bit teary today or tomorrow, but to just remember that in a week or two I will feel very different.

NOV 19: DAY THREE

When the nurse tells me today is the day I have to get up out of bed, I'm afraid. I can't see the scar on my tummy as it's bandaged up, but I've seen my boobs and the sight of stitches around my nipples makes me afraid of what it looks like 'down there'. Getting up out of the bed can really only be described... well, I don't think they can print the words I would use so let's just say, it bloody hurt. My stomach feels like a small piece of cellophane stretched over a salad bowl. My skin feels so tight I can't sit straight. I walk all hunched over and everyone assures me I'll stretch out but it takes time.

NOV 20: DAY FOUR

Every time I force myself to get out of bed I remind myself what it was like to be over 100kg and wanting to be 60. I used to say, 'The only way out is through' and it's the same here. I walk 10 metres and feel like I've run a marathon. But every day I get a little further and on day five when I make it all the way up the hallway to the coffee shop I buy a chocolate and an ice-cream and I eat them both hoping that what I had cut off I don't ever put back on. The ice-cream won't help, I know! But everyone gets ice-cream in hospital! Finally get a chance to see my tummy scar and it's with mixed feelings. I look a little like Frankenbride. I'm cut from side to side and have a fake belly button with stitches poking out. My whole body is so swollen I look like the Michelin

man, and even though my doctor warned me, I'm in shock. I have a cry, just as he predicted.

'MY SKIN FEELS SO TIGHT I CAN'T SIT STRAIGHT'

DEC 8: BEING A SLOTH

Week three and Dr Norris is happy with my progress, my boobs are now not so swollen and he tells me I can go for short walks. Short walks? I am flat pressed getting to the toilet without needing a break, I still can't stand upright and walking to the kitchen to make my son Kai macaroni cheese is about all I can manage for now, but I vow to push myself a little further. Maybe I am just being lazy? But Dr Norris explains that all of my energy is going to healing my body and my normal fitness will return. Well, can it hurry up please? I am not used to being a sloth.

DEC 17: HOLLYWOOD LIES

Stitches out. Swelling still going down. It's week four. Have to wear a sports bra day and night for six weeks and I'm well and truly over it. I have elastic bandages for my boobs and my tummy that are like girdles and they too have to be on 24/7. Hollywood stars have a lot to answer for! You too, Dr 90210! You make this surgery look like a quick walk through the park. Make no mistake, this is a big decision, and one that women not only have to understand fully but be prepared for. Maybe the TV shows don't want you to know the pain of recovery. Would you still go through with it? I know I would because the pain I lived with during my years of obesity is worth a few more weeks of pain to be rid of it forever.



'When I got into these jeans I did the Toyota jump of joy!'



Ajay in her bigger years with son Kai, now 10

THIS PAGE: AJAY WEARS HER OWN TOP NYDJ JEANS © CHARLIE BROWN, WITTNER HEELS AND SAMANTHA WILLS BANGLADESH; OPPOSITE PAGE: FRENCH CONNECTION BANDAGE DRESS, WITTNER HEELS AND HER OWN BANGLADESH; WHERE TO BUY: CHARLIE BROWN (02) 9360 9001 FRENCH CONNECTION FRENCHCONNECTION.COM.AU SAMANTHA WILLS SAMANTHAWILLS.COM.AU WITTNER WITTNER.COM.AU

'This is surreal, I've got all these emotions going at once. This is the first time I've seen myself dressed up with my new body!'



LIFE AFTER LOSER

'I'm loving LA. I'm finding a whole lot of opportunities – working on a TV pilot, which I shoot in February. The getting on Oprah thing? Well, everyone wants to be on Oprah, but I've always wanted it passionately. Now I have a deadline! I'm writing again. I've got a book coming out later this year. I'm so grateful for *Loser*. It was a blessing, but now I'm excited about new possibilities.'

DEC 29: BIKINI SHOPPING

Sports bra off – yay. Girdle off – double yay. Stretchy bra bandage off – triple yay! My boobs are now their normal size and they look hot. Best of all they sit upright without a bra. My tummy is not swollen any more and the scar is tiny and will get smaller over time. Plus, it's well hidden under sexy knickers. Bring on the G-strings! I am using Bio Oil like it is going out of style, as well as any other magic scar vanishing creams I can get my hands on. I make my way into the first bikini shop I can find and try on a string bikini, which I have never been able to wear before without my bits hanging out the side like a melted candle. Oh my God! I am normal – not only am I normal but I'm kinda hot. If I was a bloke, I reckon I'd look twice...

JAN 8, 2010: THE NEW ME

Staying with my cousin, little Miss Fitness Freak, and she's been dragging me out on walks – every day I walk longer and faster. I only have occasional pain. I do get hot or itchy skin while the nerves are repairing, but that will go. Can't wait to go for a run. I tried yesterday but my tummy hurt. My boobs are looking good and the scar on my tummy is fading every day. I'm now so glad I have had this done.

JAN 13: OK! SHOOT

Have to admit, I'm fairly nervous. This is the first time in two months I've bothered to dress up in something other than tracky daks. I've been so focused on recovering, and I guess frustrated that I didn't recover faster, that this really is the first time I have actually 'seen' my body the way it really is. The phrase of the day was 'Oh... my... God'. This is the first time in who knows how many years I've not worn my big nanna underpants to hide the belly rolls. The funny thing is I packed them 'just in case'. I see jeans they want me to wear and say, 'They are too small, they will never fit me.' The stylist replies, 'Let's just try'... and they fit! I even wear a strapless bikini top without my boobs looking like two tennis balls hanging in sports socks. Wow! I feel like Cinderella, like I went to sleep all those weeks ago and today I woke up as that woman I set out to become nine years ago. At the depth of my obesity was a life of pain I was running from by eating myself to death. My body still carried the reminder of that pain and to have 'that' person taken away from me forever was like a death and a birth. Today I start my new life as the person I set out to be – a healed, healthy woman who loves and respects herself. Now, I must go... I have a date with a bonfire and some really big underwear!

OK!

For more from Ajay, go to chasingoprah.com

TEXT BY AJAY ROCHESTER PHOTOGRAPHS BY DUNCAN ROBINSON @ DLM HAIR AND MAKE-UP BY DI DUSTING @ DLM STYLING BY YELENA FAIRFAX