

Fitness Inspired Transformations



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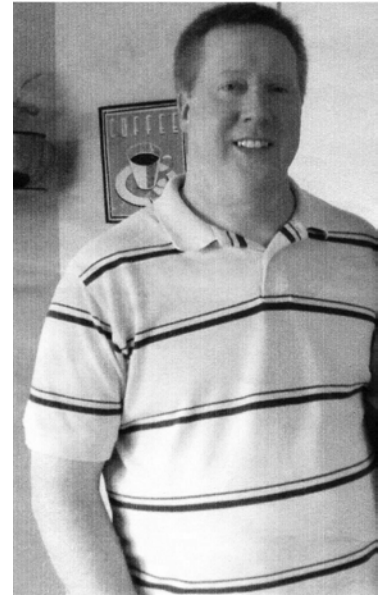
I am over forty, overtired and over stressed.

Flashback to New Years 2007, I am over forty, overtired, and over stressed. I overeat, so I am overweight. I can't walk up a flight of stairs without exertion. I have high blood pressure. I have required two increases in dose and the addition of a diuretic. I might need more to maintain control. I might be developing insulin resistance. My fasting sugar is on the borderline. I had debilitating back spasms because of the strain of carrying around a spare tire. I snore at night. I might have sleep apnea. I am tired when I wake up and can't wait for the first chance to nap. I look in the mirror and see a bloated reflection. How did I get to this point?

At the beginning of my transformation, I kept my expectations realistic. It was the accumulation of poor habits and sedentary living over years that brought me to this point. I understand it takes 21 days to establish a new habit. Why wait. If I don't change, I may not get a second chance.

I work in a lab, therefore belong to a sub-culture of obsessive-compulsives. We don't do anything without a procedure or documentation. If it's not written down, it never happened. I recorded every weight lifted, every minute of cardio performed in my journal. This externalized the process for me, made it tangible, gave it validation, and provided a benchmark.

The digital readings on the cardio machines fueled my success. My body and mind began equating the time and effort it took to burn the amount of calories in that morning doughnut, afternoon candy bar, and second helping of evening pasta. This helped me stop eating out of a need for fulfillment, and to focus on what my body actually needed.



I had a significant personal event about a year ago that disrupted my life. I was depressed, and it was too much work to exercise. It was a chore to get through the day. Luckily, I had long passed the 21-day habit mark, so it was difficult to discard my routine. Exercise became the only constant in my life, and I took refuge in its stability. Exercise proved to be tremendous stress relief.

I have lost 40 pounds and reduced my body fat from 24 to 14 percent. I have dropped from a size 40 to 34 pants. I gained inches of muscle in my chest and arms. My blood pressure is under control. My blood lipid chemistries are in a desirable range. I sleep well at night and no longer need naps, and have energy to spare. I feel 20 years younger than I did in January 2007 when I felt 20 years older. This is the fittest I have been in my entire life.

To continue my journey, I might train for a running race. I eat more lean protein, fruit and vegetables. I still have wickedly decadent food indulges, but I reserve for special occasions. I focus on the quality of my food and beverage experiences versus the quantity.

My advice is to take small steps and resist overwhelming yourself. Just showing up is 90 percent of your success. Enjoy the process and the end result takes care of itself.