

Fitness Inspired Transformations

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In February 2008, I stood up in a friend's wedding. Although it was an honor, I was self conscious about my weight and how I looked in my dress. A few weeks later, HPC Credit Union signed up for the BAC Corporate Challenge. A coworker pushed me to make a decision. I was in.

I was in pretty poor shape. My upper and lower back hurt so much that everyday tasks like washing dishes, or climbing stairs with laundry were difficult. I had intense heel pain as a result of fallen arch, and I was on medication for high blood pressure — all the result of being overweight.

When I met with Kelly Bowlin for my evaluation, I was nervous. Kelly listened to my concerns and started me out slowly. I did light cardio and learned to stretch. I hated the elliptical in the beginning. I could only do five minutes. Luckily, I loved the stretching and I couldn't wait to go back.

Of course there were obstacles. The Corporate Challenge food plan had a rule that I didn't like: "No eating after dinner." I always snacked at night, but I gave it up by telling myself it was a bad habit.



Tomorrow is a new day. Believe in yourself.

My other obstacle was fitting workouts in my schedule. I didn't make it a choice. I simply planned my day accordingly. Although it is difficult to get up at 5 a.m., I found that it works.

As the weeks waned, and my clothes got bigger, I was convinced that this was the best thing I could have done for myself. I was shocked by my results. I won the six-week challenge by losing 26 pounds and 26 inches. I have since brought my total to 40 pounds. I am off blood pressure medication and my back rarely hurts.

My best reward came as a volunteer for Long Rapids Township. I put on my firefighter gear and it was all too big. I had to buckle my pants to the tightest notch and my jacket hangs off me. Even my boots fit differently. Recently at a structure fire, I was able to fight the fire for five hours without my back hurting or trying to catch my breath. This is an empowering feeling.

Now I get to the club three to four times a week and my routine is intense and rewarding. I use free weights, do chin ups and tricep dips, hovers, sit ups, several sets on the elliptical and treadmill. I finish with stretching exercises to feel complete. I even enjoy Sculpt/PiYo class.

The secret is to believe that it *can happen to you*. Focus on how you feel more than what the scale says. Periodically, try on old clothes. It will feel like Christmas when they fit again. Small victories are important—make it through the day without snacking. When you fall off, get right back on the next day. Tomorrow is indeed another day and you can do it if you believe in yourself.

