

Michael Padalino

.....
\$5,000 WINNER
Walmart Supercenter #2434
Iron Mountain, MI

I suffer from type 2 diabetes and sleep apnea, and I needed surgery after tearing my rotator cuff back in 2020. After that, COVID hit and I was putting on weight from being home all day. My sugars went up, and I ended up having an episode where I slipped into an 18-hour coma. I got up to 334 pounds during that time.

I remember having a conversation with a friend of mine that opened my eyes.

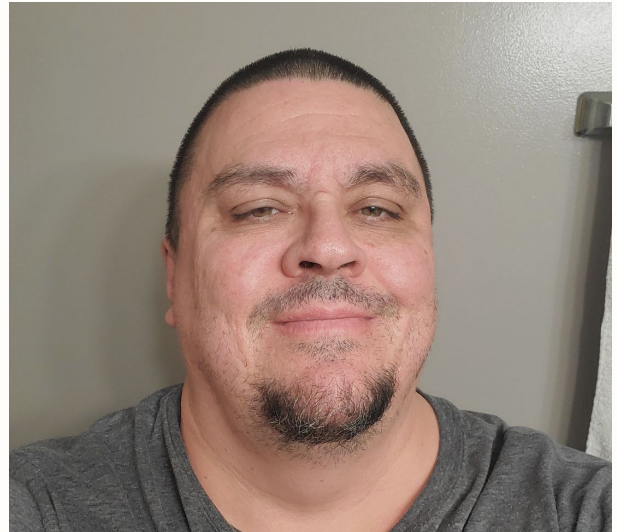
We were talking about how my weight had gone up and down so many times. I had gone through a lot of losses, with losing both of my parents, and I had gained and lost weight a bunch of times. I remember the conversation was right around New Year's, and I finally said to myself, "I've been through a lot, but this is the year I'm going to get healthy again. I'm going to get back in shape." I had known about Thrive from work, and I just thought, "This is my opportunity."

I decided to start finding substitutes for all the junk food I was eating.

My first change was cutting back on junk food. Instead of eating potato chips, I would get veggie straws. Instead of eating regular burgers, I went and bought veggie burgers. I discovered at the store they have things like cauliflower rice, cauliflower tater tots, and they even have cauliflower pizza. I was able to start losing weight while still having what I was craving.

I started posting what I was eating and doing on social media.

I started a TikTok and an Instagram account because I liked the idea of inspiring other people by the changes I was making. I started doing meal prep every week, and I put my meals in microwavable containers and would post a picture of them. People started commenting, "Oh my God, that looks so delicious," and they'd ask me how I do it. More people started reading what I was posting, and it got to a point where I'd take a day or two off from posting and people would write to me asking, "What's going on? Are you alright?"



My goal is to be able to take my brother on a vacation.

Now that my energy is up, I'm spending more time with my younger brother, Neil, who has special needs and is also epileptic. I try to get him to leave the house, so we'll go out for a walk together or go out for a meal. I started following the Microsteps about reaching out every day, so I try to keep in touch with people on a daily basis. I'll call him up just to see how he's doing, and we hang out and have fun together.

I'm proud to say I am on my sixth or seventh Thrive Challenge.

The other day, I met up with a friend to go for a walk and I put shorts on and I thought that I was wearing a size 46. So I thought, "Well, these are pretty good." I wore them, and towards later in the day, they started feeling a little bit more loose. I went home and I went in and used the restroom, and as I'm in there, I looked down at my pants and I looked at the tag, and I noticed they were a size 44. I was really happy about that. It is always those little moments that remind you you're on the right track.

Today, I am doing the best I can and I try to help people out wherever I can.

I still have to conquer my diabetes and my sleep apnea, but I've lost weight and I feel so much better, and I like sharing that journey with others on my platforms. Being able to motivate others makes life even better. Whether I'm here until I'm 70 or I'm here another month, I believe that as long as I have breath to breathe, I'm going to fight. And as long as I'm fighting, I want to use that to inspire others.



THRIVE