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\$5,000 WINNER

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During the pandemic, I was eating late and bingeing on Netflix, and working out had become a thing of the past. I was beginning to feel less like myself, and I didn't have any energy for my husband or my 13- and 15-year-old sons. I have hypertension and elevated cholesterol, so I have been on blood pressure medication for the past three years and I started taking medication for my cholesterol this year. I also have a family history of kidney disease and diabetes, and none of this is good for the lifestyle that I had fallen into.

When my coworker, Arvis Abban, told me about the Thrive Challenge, it felt like the perfect time to take control.

I asked her to give me a tutorial of the Thrive app, and I picked my first change: to get more active. I wanted to lose weight and gain better control of my blood sugar and my cholesterol, and I knew the lifestyle I was living would not help me achieve that goal.

Instead of taking naps, I started taking a walk, going to the gym, or even playing with my sons on their VR.

It's helping us spend more time together. We cook on the grill, play card games, and I even run with my son, Josiah. Plus, Jaydon and I cook dinner together! I also assigned myself designated "T.V. time" instead of binge-watching, so I am usually doing some type of activity while watching a show, like strengthening my core, stretching, or using dumbbells to work my arms. One evening I was watching T.V. while alternating between jumping jacks and crunches when Jaydon said, "Mom, I'm really proud of you." That is when I knew that I had no choice but to remain all in.

Instead of trying to decide what to pick up for lunch, I take meals that I prepare at home.

I love ground chicken mixed with just about any fresh vegetable, and I discovered a salt-free everything bagel seasoning to replace salt. It gives food the flavor that I need, and I feel less tired and not stuffed afterwards.



Now, instead of spending my lunch break wondering what to eat, I spend half the time eating my packed lunch and the other half walking on a trail near our building!

My work family is keeping me motivated.

My colleagues and I take walks during our lunch breaks to encourage each other and celebrate our wins. Our facility was recently challenged to vaccinate Veterans with the COVID-19 vaccine, and we overcame all challenges presented before us to vaccinate over 3000 vets in a small amount of time.

I have become more vocal with expressing my gratitude for things as I experience them.

I feel more positive and hopeful now. I have lost weight, and my goal is to be able to come off of my medications. I'd also love to start running again. When I was in the best shape as an adult, I ran a half marathon, and I hope to get myself to a place where I can run another one. I have become more accountable, closer to my family, and more in control over my life and my well-being.



THRIVE