

Crystal Gilbert

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I was feeling very run down. I basically worked, came home, and slept. I started going to a holistic doctor and she told me I had a chemical intolerance. So I decided to get rid of the cleaning products I was using with chemicals in them, but I was still not feeling great. I started examining my diet.

A couple of my associates at work had started the Thrive Challenge.

I had done a few challenges in the past, but when I heard about the Thrive Challenge, I knew I needed that accountability, not just a diet. So I decided to join them. I liked the idea of going into it together. I'm actually on my third Thrive Challenge now!

The first step I took was switching to home-cooked meals.

My husband and I had been dreaming of living in the country for a while. So we moved out to the country about two years ago, but we felt too busy to do any of the things we'd dreamed about. Finally, in June, we decided to plant a garden and really spend time on it. We also decided we weren't going to eat out as much and limit our fast food. We get our vegetables from our garden and our meat from another farmer.

Now I love to cook!

I even bring some of the food I make into work to share with my teammates. My favorite recipe is stuffed peppers. The sauces I make are from the tomatoes from the garden. The rice is from the store, but everything else is either from our garden or someone else's farm. I cut up squash, eggplant, onion, zucchini, and cut it all up into slices, and then add an olive oil mixture and seasonings. I put it in the oven and add cheese. It's really good!



We're saving money now that we're not eating out as often.

We've taken some of that money that we're saving and we're reinvesting it into the garden. This last month, we've been setting up a chicken coop and a duck pen. We plan to double our garden space next year, and we plan to have more chickens and ducks, too.

It's been two months now and I've lost 16 pounds.

My husband has been on this journey with me and he's lost 30 pounds. But the biggest change for me has been realizing that we're all busy, but we can still do the things we want to do. Ultimately, we would love to have a full-blown farm, but we're just taking baby steps. So we're starting with a few birds and a garden, and we're just going to expand a little bit each year, and see what we can handle.

I'm loving the energy I have compared to what I used to have.

I also love the changes we have made in our home to help with weight loss and our mental health. Now that we have actually slowed down and taken steps, it makes us more thankful for the things that we do have. Instead of just coming home from work and sitting in the house, we're going outside, spending time together, and we're very thankful for where we're at. We're happier, and we feel like we're just making better choices all around.



THRIVE