

Christina Fangrow

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\$5,000 WINNER
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I work in the vision department so I sit most of the day, and I started realizing a few months back that I was becoming addicted to sitting. I know it's not good for your circulation and it's not good for your body, and I have a bad ankle, so it wasn't helping. I had become a couch potato and it was making me tired. I knew I had to change something.

I adopted three dogs from a local shelter who had been abused in the past.

I'm a huge dog lover and I wanted to go above and beyond to make sure my three fur babies knew they were loved and in a safe place. I was so focused on being there for them and monitoring their diets and keeping them active, that I realized I should be doing the same for myself. I remember feeling like, "Who rescued who?" I felt like I had so much love for them that I had to start having the same love for myself. I just said to myself one day, "Okay, I've got to take better care of myself too."

I work with two ladies, Carla and Jennifer, and they have done the Thrive Challenge.

I remember seeing Carla walking around the store during her lunch hour. And that's what got me to start walking the inside outer perimeter of the store. I knew I needed to get up and move, and it really made me feel better. It was hard at first and I remember feeling some shame the first time I started walking around and felt so tired. I was like, "Oh my god, I'm only getting halfway through the store and I'm huffing and puffing." But I kept going and started getting better. And by the time I'm done, I feel good about getting back to my shift and sitting down again.

Once I was walking more, my next step was cutting down on my soda intake.

I started swapping out my soda for Gatorade when I had a craving, and now I feel more refreshed and not on a sugar high all the time. I was just telling Jennifer how much better I feel without it. In fact, I recently picked up a soda and the first thing I could taste was the sickening sweetness of the syrup. I didn't even like the taste anymore!



I'm going on a plane to California in October, and my main fear was being too big for the airplane seat.

Any plus size person can understand how uncomfortable it is to sit in a chair. A lot of the time the arm of the chair digs into your leg and it can be really painful. And recently, I've been finding that when I sit in a chair, there's less digging into my leg. I recently went to the optometrist for an appointment and when I sat down, I was like "Oh my god, there's no pain." And there's no embarrassment or shame in standing back up. So now I'm excited to get on that plane and I'm even more motivated to get some more weight off. It's really about those small steps.

I feel like I'm finally getting my confidence and my spunk back.

Even my sister has told me, "Chris, I can see you're walking so much better." I feel like I'm starting to walk with a lot more confidence too, and I love that. I am slowly getting a little bit more of a range of motion in my ankle again. And Carla and Jennifer and myself motivate each other too. We'll sit there and say "Go Carla go!" Or, "How many laps have you done?" Or, "You're looking really good." I even have more energy to play with my dogs. I like to eat breakfast outside, so when I'm out there I can now throw a ball for my dogs and spend time outside, which is a win-win. I've really learned that you have to treat yourself with the same love you give to others — including your pets! Love really does help with change.



THRIVE