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For a long time I struggled with my weight. When I was younger, I was very athletic. I played soccer and baseball, I was on the high school golf team, and I won a college football scholarship. I majored in sports administration and worked for the NFL for 10 years. I transitioned careers, and it was very stressful. I wasn't taking care of myself. I was eating fast food and I gained a lot of weight.

My wife, Savannah, and I were trying to start a family, and she had four miscarriages.

That was a lot to go through, especially for my wife. We're blessed to have two daughters now: four-year-old Hayden, and Ryleigh, who's two. But I'm 45, and I knew I had to take a serious look at my health. I wanted to take control of my future and be there for our daughters. So a year ago I downloaded the Thrive app.

I started with intermittent fasting.

I have my first meal, a smoothie, in the middle of the day. We cut out processed food. That meant no more frozen pizza! We're meal prepping and we've cut down on eating out. We're trying new food from different cultures, like tahini. I'm adventurous from a taste standpoint and the recipes on the Thrive app have been helpful. We'll have minestrone with vegetables, seafood stir fries, and curried lentil and coconut soup. The girls eat a lot of fruit. I enjoy cooking and I'm experimenting with making healthy ice cream using real fruit.

I'm competitive, so I challenged myself to wake up at 4 a.m. and get moving.

I do a 30-minute cardio workout. I do it faithfully. I'll listen to smooth jazz and hip hop, like Tom Misch or Jay-Z. And I walk on my lunch break at work.

We go for family walks every Sunday.

We put the kids in the double stroller and enjoy the fresh air. I've got Hayden started in soccer class and we'll kick around a soccer ball in the backyard. I take them both to swim class. We also got a family gym membership. We can be working out while the kids are in daycare where they have different fun activities.

I'm engaging with the kids.

We'll draw on the chalkboard and we'll paint together. I'm just being present and enjoying our time together, instead of looking forward or backward.



Savannah and I take a moment to decompress every day.

We both have demanding jobs — she's an academic counselor with the University of Arkansas. And we're intentional about our time together. We'll talk about our beautiful girls and we'll discuss our finances. We're finding ways to work through our problems. Every now and then we go out for a drink. Sometimes we go fishing at Beaver Lake. We sit on the banks of the water, relax, and enjoy the moment.

At work, I have more energy and mental clarity.

I'm focusing on allyship, which is important, and touches me being African American. Being a minority in the room, you need to know people will advocate for you. I've traveled around the world — I know that culturally everyone is different with different perspectives, but we all need to listen to each other. At work, that's what I do. I'm a person who is open to everyone, to all cultures.

I love baking and I've started a small business on the side.

It's called The Delta Blues Cookie Company. We use all organic ingredients — nothing processed. I'm saving money and investing in the business. And yes, I do have cookies in the house. I absolutely might have one on the weekend!

I'm a big fan of self-help books and Thrive is right in line with my interests.

Top of the list of my favorite books is Think and Grow Rich by Napoleon Hill. It talks about mastering your emotions and surrounding yourself with positivity. I like Thrive's money management Microsteps. We're worrying less about finances and planning for the future.

Thrive has helped me make big lifestyle changes.

I've lost 35 pounds and I'm almost at my wedding weight. But what's most important, Thrive has helped me be more present with my kids. It's terrific and I feel awesome.



THRIVE