

# John Hillier



**\$5,000 WINNER**  
**Sam's Club #4784,**  
**Las Cruces, NM**

Life before the Thrive Challenge was hard. I was eating anything and everything, and I weighed 325 pounds. I'd eat fast food and cook a lot of steak and burgers on the grill. Food was like a drug addiction to me because it always made me feel good. But I wasn't feeling well. I started to feel dizzy and I couldn't see properly. At work, reading the computer screen was difficult. I was scared, but I was in denial big-time. And for a long time, I didn't share what was going on with my wife, Michelle, and our four kids.

## **I finally went to the doctor and she said, "You're a full-blown diabetic."**

I was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. I'm 52, and it was time to make some changes. I already knew about Thrive and I downloaded the app.

## **The first thing I did was to cut out fast food.**

I started reading labels and looking carefully at ingredients. I make sure nothing I buy has added sugar or high fructose corn syrup.

## **My go-to meal in the morning is eggs with turkey sausage.**

I keep things simple for dinner. I'll throw chicken in the pan with cilantro and lime, and I'll have a salad and pinto beans. For snacks, I might have a mini Atkins chocolate cup or a protein bar.

## **I joined a gym.**

I ride the exercise bike and walk on the treadmill. And I've started using light weights. Michelle works out with me. We're bonding, and that's important for our relationship. There are beautiful trails by our house and you breathe in fresh air.

## **My kids are happy because I have more energy for them.**

We'll go for hikes together. The kids encourage me. They say, "Hey dad, let's go for a walk." And we use that time to catch up and talk. Isabella, our nine-year-old, likes to go shopping! And I like to spoil her. I'll buy the stuffed animals she loves, like Pillow Pets. Just the other night, Emma, who's 20, and I put our phones down and watched Spider-Man: No Way Home. I was awake and enjoying my time with her without falling asleep in front of the T.V.

## **At work, everything's changed.**

I have less pain and I can see again — I can read. It used to be a chore to walk upstairs to our office; I'd be out of breath when I got to the top of the stairs. Now it's easy. And I don't have to hold onto a ledge to bend over.



## **I get a lot of support from my team.**

The other day, I did a little test. I walked into the break room and there was a tray of cookies. I reached for one to see if anyone would notice, because they know I'm not eating sugar. And my co-worker, Britney, said, "No John! You can't have that, remember?" That's big because I know they won't let me cheat!

## **I always talk about the Thrive app.**

I'm a lead-by-example kind of guy, and now I'm getting healthy, other people are joining me. It's great because a lot of people at our club have diabetes and I want to do what I can to help them.

## **My sleep's improved.**

I used to only get four hours and I'd wake every hour through the night. Now I have a bedtime routine. I listen to a rain meditation on my phone, put my phone away, and I'm in bed by 10:30 p.m. I get seven hours of sleep and I wake up ready for the day.

## **I'm optimistic about the future and we're making plans.**

I've never been on a real vacation and we're putting money away to go to Disney World. I used to work there and it will be nice going back just to have fun. Also, I'm part Italian, and one day I would love to go to Sicily and see where my relatives came from. That's a life-long dream.

## **I've lost 35 pounds and I feel like a new man.**

I'm more engaged in life and my wife and kids are proud of me. I feel 100 percent better.



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