

Andrew Reeves



\$5,000 WINNER **Walmart Supercenter #4597** **North Tonawanda, NY**

A few years ago, I gained a lot of weight and was getting used to indulging. I ended up getting up to 280 pounds and it really took a toll on me. I didn't have the energy to do anything outside of work, so I would just stay home and watch TV. I was spending less time with family and friends. I started feeling chest pains, and my doctor told me it was acid reflux. My stomach was so large that it was causing reflux when I ate and drank a lot. I ended up going on medication but I knew I still needed a lifestyle change.

My family and I went out for chicken wings one night, and that was a turning point for me.

We live in Buffalo so this is something we do. I ended up eating 30 chicken wings, and I got home and I just felt miserable. That's when it hit me, and I said, "I have to do something." I made the decision to start being more careful about my calories and it worked for a little bit and I lost some weight. But around June or July, I plateaued and had trouble losing more weight. That's when I had a conversation with my Store Manager, Brandi Taylor, who mentioned the Thrive Challenge could help me reach my goals. That day I downloaded the Thrive app, and decided to commit to it.

The first step I took was pausing for a minute before deciding to eat something.

I saw this Microstep in the app referring to pausing before you make a purchase, and for me it really helped with my eating decisions too. I started taking a few seconds to pause before I ate, and that allowed me to think, "Do I really want this, or would something else be better for me?" It encouraged me to reach for a Diet Pepsi instead of the regular Pepsi. I started making little decisions that were better for me here and there, and it really made a difference.

My wife, Cheryl, joined me — and it's been really helpful having her support.

We push each other when either of us is slacking off a bit. She does the majority of the cooking for us, so we've been able to crack down on certain things. She buys different kinds of bread now and different kinds of meals to make sure we're not overdoing it.



We even started saving money because we were cooking more at home and eating out less. Now, I pack my lunch the night before, and I'm saving the \$12 or \$13 I used to spend on lunch. I'm also making better decisions because I'm taking those few minutes to pause and think before I buy something.

My son and wife have noticed I am a lot more happy and outgoing now.

I used to go to work and struggle through the day, trying to make it through the eight or nine hours I was there. Now that I've gotten down to 220 pounds, I have so much more energy to get through my day and even spend time with my family after work. There's a Botanical Gardens nearby, and recently we went there and just hung out for the day. We also went to the Buffalo Zoo, which is right near our house. I'm also playing more with my son outside. He plays lacrosse so we've been throwing the ball around on nicer days. I never had the energy to do that in the past.

My goal now is to maintain where I'm at and not give up.

For me, it actually feels harder to maintain a certain weight than to lose it right away. I would like to get to 200 pounds eventually, but I don't want my body to feel like it's being starved or deprived. I have so much more energy and I'm so grateful that my acid reflux is gone. And even though the weight loss has been huge for me, the main change has been being able to pause during the day. Taking those few minutes to think has helped me achieve my goals, and I really feel like I can accomplish anything I set my mind to.



THRIVE