

Ray Villa

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A few years ago I was working out, running, and eating well. But then COVID hit, the gyms shut down, and I stopped exercising. I was eating fast food and drinking a lot of coke. I work hard as an overnight stocker doing heavy lifting, but it's not the same as cardio. I gained weight and it felt depressing. I'm 42 and my self-esteem went down. It started to wear on me — I became more anti-social. A co-worker, Michelle Tisnado, told me how the Thrive Challenge was helping her lose weight. She is a really sweet lady. She was so enthusiastic and inspired me to start.

I cut out soda, and instead I drink mainly water and a little seltzer.

I haven't had soda for over two months which is a very big deal for me. Instead of pizza and hamburgers, I make turkey or cheese sandwiches to take to work. I buy caesar salads to eat at home. I have a George Foreman grill, and I'll cook chicken with cajun seasoning. I microwave frozen packets of veggies like broccoli and corn. It's so easy and tastes really good.

I've lost 12 pounds, I'm working out again and I have more energy.

I'm doing sit-ups and push-ups, resistance training with rubber bands, and stretching. My next step is getting back to running on the treadmill at the gym.

Now that I'm not going out to eat and drinking sodas, I'm saving about \$140 a month.

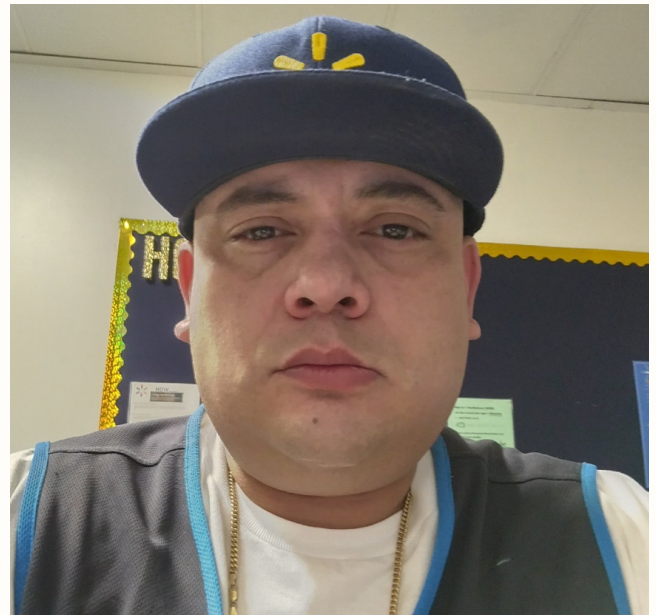
It feels good to watch my money grow. I have an electric bike, but I'm saving for a car. I haven't had one for three years. Driving will make everything more convenient.

Listening to meditations on the Thrive app helps me center myself.

I'm also doing the breathing exercises in the Reset tab on my breaks at work. When I'm stressed or frustrated, they give me a chance to refocus and stay positive.

I'm connecting with my family and friends.

My sister, Monica, lives close to me and she has three boys who come over all the time when she's at work. Sobias is five, Ronnie is seven and Juney is 17. We just have fun together. We'll go outside and pitch a baseball to each other or play catch with a football.



It's amazing to have the energy to play with my nephews again. We also go to the movies. We went to see Black Adam with The Rock. They all enjoy superhero movies. The boys love me and they're always excited to see me now because I take them places and play with them. And I love them, we have a great time together.

My friends, Sammy and Pete, are an amazing support.

We've been close since we were kids and we like watching sporting events together. We go to see the Dodgers, the Lakers, and the Chargers. It's amazing having that friendship and support system. My friends love the same things I do, it's mostly all about sports.

My goal is to become a team lead and maybe a coach one day.

And I'd love to travel — I've never been out of Southern California. I want to go to New York with a friend. I'd like to go over the Brooklyn Bridge and see the Statue of Liberty.

The Thrive Challenge is helping me feel happier and better about myself.

I've changed my life by putting my health at the forefront once again.



THRIVE