

# J.D. Mauricio



**\$5,000 WINNER**  
**Distribution Center #9153**  
**Waco, TX**

When I was young, I had the honor of serving in the army for 10 years, with deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. I was extremely active and could eat whatever I wanted. However, all that changed when I married my wife, Jennifer, and we started having kids. I was eating a lot of junk food, and a few months ago I weighed 275 pounds. I'm 42, and I want to be a great husband and the best father I can be for our four young sons: Jefferson, who's nine; eight-year-old Josiah; three-year-old Jace; and Jedidiah, who just turned one. I thought the Thrive Challenge could be the catalyst for making my life better.

## **I started with food, making small changes with Microsteps.**

When I was tired, my solution used to be to have a sugary drink and an unhealthy snack. Now, instead of reaching for a candy bar, I opt for fruit and nuts. And instead of soda, I drink water. I have sandwiches with whole grain bread instead of the white bread I ate growing up.

## **Most of our meals are home cooked.**

A real crowd pleaser is our turkey meatballs made with onions, carrot, and spinach — even the baby loves them. We use brown rice pasta instead of regular pasta, and we make a marinara sauce with fresh basil from our garden, and zucchini. I've lost 10 pounds so far, and it's all through sustainable Microsteps.

## **I use my smartwatch to track my activity.**

At the end of 2022, I tore my Achilles tendon and had surgery to repair it. That was a huge setback, and I was scared about injuring myself again. But having active boys has encouraged me to move past those fears. We're going for bike rides around town, which they love. I also go to the gym. At home I do calisthenics and kettlebell exercises, and I've reintroduced jump roping into my routine, which I had to stop because of my injury.

## **Slowing down and breathing is helping me relax.**

It's one of my favorite new habits I've learned from Thrive. I really enjoy box breathing. I find myself practicing my breathing exercises throughout the day, which helps me slow things down a bit.

## **The older boys have joined an adventure program called Trail Life.**

They learn about outdoor skills, as well as good values and service. I volunteer for all their activities, and in October we went on a camping trip to Dinosaur Valley State Park. The boys love hiking and climbing rocks on these trips, so it's important for me to get back in shape.



## **Jennifer and I have to be intentional about making time to connect.**

So while we prepare for the next day in the kitchen, we talk about whatever is on our minds. She'll be making the boys' lunches, and I'll fold the laundry or put away the dishes. Thrive has helped me with communication. I used to be reserved about what was causing me stress. Now, I'm more open and I share my thoughts with my wife. We encourage one another so we don't feel so isolated.

## **To relax, I've picked up a new hobby — I'm learning leatherwork.**

I've enjoyed being able to make keychains, pen cases, and notebook covers. I was never a crafty person growing up, so this has been a nice challenge.

## **My sleep has improved.**

Before starting the Challenge I was in graduate school and working full-time. In the evening I wanted to be with my family. So I'd wait until everyone was in bed before I'd do my schoolwork. I was under the illusion that I could sacrifice my sleep without any negative impact. Through Thrive, I've learned how important it is to get enough sleep. So I do little things in the evenings to wind down, like taking a nice hot shower. And I set up a cutoff for technology and screen time before going to sleep.

## **Being over 40 with little boys has made me realize that I want to keep up with them.**

I don't want to be a dad who sits on the sidelines. I want my boys to grow up to be men who will one day lead, provide for their families, and protect those around them. And I'm determined to show them what that looks like. The Thrive Challenge is helping me move forward in the right direction.



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