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\$5,000 WINNER
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My wife, Emily, and I were trying for a baby and we had eight miscarriages. The past few years were pretty devastating. It took five years for our son, Jude, to come along. He's three-years-old now and he's the best thing that's ever happened to us. But we spent forty thousand dollars on IVF (in-vitro fertilization) and it's been stressful. Food was a comfort and I was overeating. I found myself snacking and grazing. I'd have lots of chips and cereal was my go-to — Cocoa Pebbles or Chocolate Frosted Flakes. I didn't exercise and I'd get worn out playing with Jude. I had high cholesterol and it was hard to bend down and put my shoes on.

I'm 33 and my doctor said if I continued doing what I was doing, I would have diabetes.

We're trying for another baby, and I want to be healthy and keep up with Jude. I want to be there for my family, so I started the Thrive Challenge.

I began planning out my meals, eating more protein, and cutting carbs.

We do a lot of grilling now — I'm making chicken or skirt steak fajitas with peppers and onions. And I make great toasted veggies. I'm not eating as much, I have more portion control. For snacks, I'll have a handful of nuts like pistachios and almonds. Emily and I love cooking and Jude's big enough now to help, so we have a stool for him in the kitchen and we have family cooking sessions.

My brother has a home gym and I go over to his house to work out and lift weights.

I'm up to four days a week. I'm able to move around a lot better and I can put my shoes on easily now.

I've lost 37 pounds so far and feel amazing.

Right now, my goal is not about weight loss, it's about getting stronger. I'm really proud of myself because I tried working out six years ago and I've already surpassed what I was doing then.

We'll walk to our neighborhood park with Jude; he loves going down the slide.

Or we'll go to the water park. And we play with little Nerf guns. I'm ecstatic that I have the energy to keep up with him now — I just love that little guy.



I take time for myself in the morning; I'll sit on the couch and relax.

I'll think about what I want to accomplish in the day ahead. Emily and I both do night shifts, she's a nurse, and we're both sleeping better. She says, "I don't snore anymore which is great." I'm feeling proud of myself because I didn't think I'd be able to stick to this plan and I've been doing it for nine months.

I like the Thrive Microsteps because they help me to plan ahead.

I set out my workout clothes the night before I'm going to exercise. And at the end of the day, I look at what I've accomplished. I might think, "I could have done better," but I don't beat myself up. I'll tell myself, "Tomorrow's another day to get back on track."

Every Tuesday, we visit my parents.

We play with Jude and have family time. They have a pool and we'll swim — Jude loves the water. And he loves to chase their little dog, Knuckles. Or we'll play board games — one of our favorites is Ticket To Ride. Then we'll all cook a family meal. They're on the Keto diet so we'll have something like roasted chicken with cauliflower mashed potatoes and green beans.

We're starting the IVF process again, and we're focusing on staying calm.

It's pretty stressful, especially for Emily, so we take time to walk with Jude or just sit and breathe and relax. I'm optimistic about the future. Our dream would be to have three kids, I would love to have a little girl. But whatever happens, we couldn't be any happier.



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