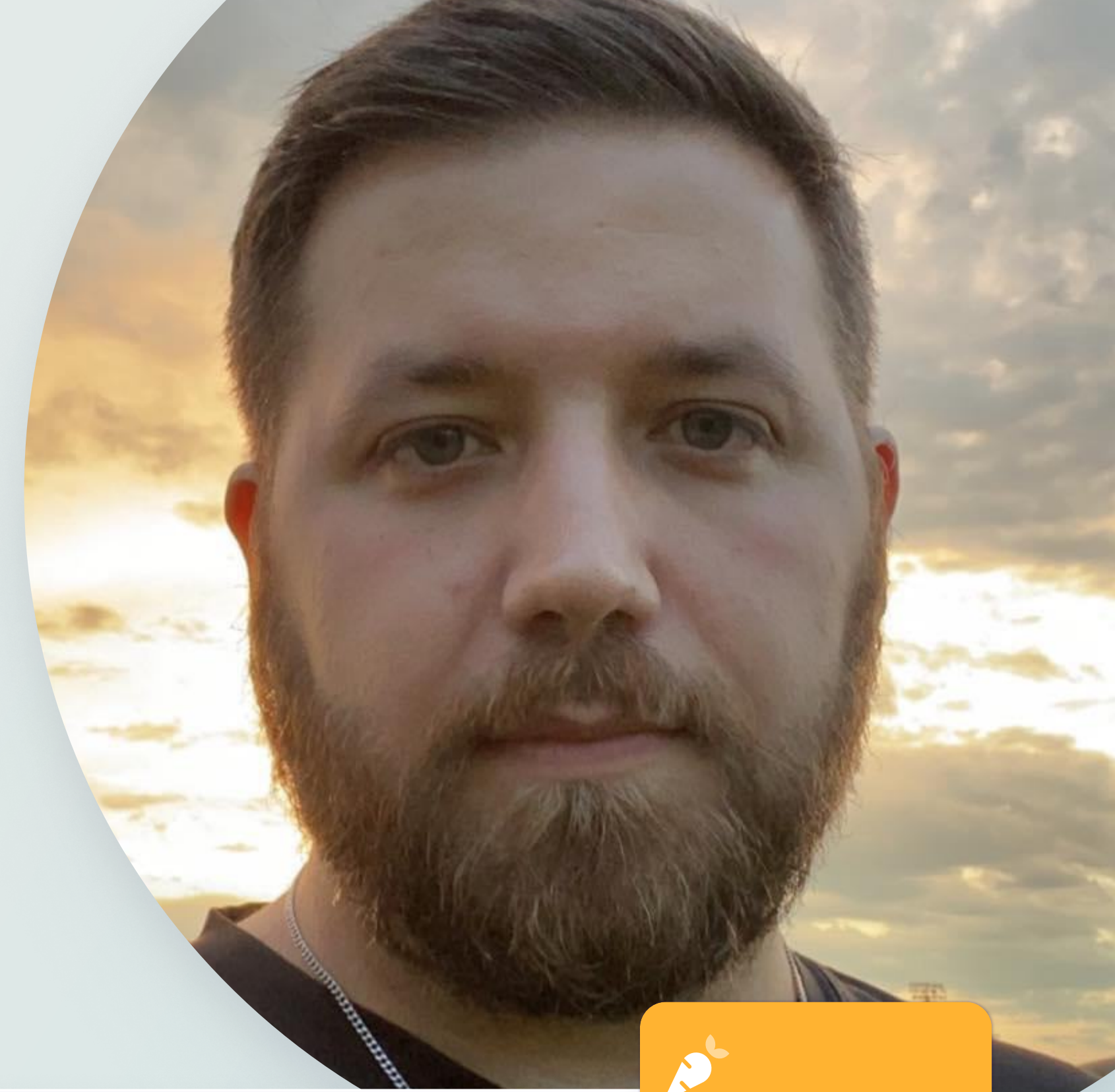


**\$5,000 WINNER**

# Mark Chernisky

**Neighborhood Market #4585  
Owasso, OK**  
Food**Microstep**

I keep it simple and make nutritious meals with protein and veggies.

**Outcome**

“I’ve lost 22 pounds and I’m making great progress.”

I’ve been struggling with obesity for my whole life. I had open heart surgery when I was three days old, and my heart condition meant that I couldn’t do sports, even though I wanted to. Food became a comfort, and as an adult, diets never seemed to work. I was eating a lot of processed junk food and I weighed 435 pounds. I was stressed and my feet hurt. I’m a single father and I downloaded the Thrive app because I wanted to get healthy for my 13-year-old son, Sean.

To get started, I took Microsteps like food prepping. I keep it simple and make nutritious meals with protein and veggies. One of our favorite dinners is chicken with broccoli and rice. I do the cooking, but Sean is learning about good nutrition, and he helps with dishes, so it is a team effort.

I hadn’t been in a gym in three years because I was so worried about what people would think of me. My doctor said it was OK, so I made the first step of just getting myself there, which was an achievement. The first week was tough, but I was determined, and I didn’t give up. After a few weeks, I realized I was enjoying exercising — it’s now become my hobby. Sean often joins me. We enjoy working out and challenging each other. We’re doing cardio and strength training. It’s a great way to spend father son time together.

Throughout the day I go for short walks, and I take a walk after dinner. I increased my speed as my stamina improved and now I can walk a mile in 20 minutes. I’m also doing yoga, which feels good. To lower my stress, I’ve been finding a variety of Microsteps helpful, like breathing exercises.

There are highs and lows along the way as I continue my journey, but I know that the small changes I’m making add up. I’m 36, and this is the best I have felt in years. I’ve lost 22 pounds this year, my feet don’t hurt, and I feel more confident. The best thing is that I’m a good role model for Sean, showing him the importance of nutrition and physical activity. My goal: along with my career at Walmart, I’d love to become a personal trainer and help others living with obesity.