

# Luis Garcia

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**\$5,000 WINNER**  
**Walmart Supercenter #1698**  
**Hooksett, NH**

My job as a store manager is great, but I didn't have a good work-life balance. I'm 41, and my wife, Nicole, and I have two daughters, 15-year-old Audriana and 13-year-old Brenna. Brenna was born with a congenital heart defect. She's healthy now, but she was in and out of the hospital for the first few years of her life, which was very stressful. I was eating a lot of fast food — we'd have pizza three times a week. And I'd drink pop. I was too heavy; I weighed 176 pounds, which is a lot because I'm five foot two.

## **I was drinking too much alcohol.**

I'd have hard liquor, mostly rum and diet coke. I didn't think I had a problem until my doctor said, "Your liver's like a 65-year-old man's, you need to stop drinking." I was on medication for type 2 diabetes, and she also put me on high cholesterol medicine. When my daughter, Audriana said, "Why do you drink so much dad?" It was embarrassing — I felt ashamed. I lost my dad at six and my stepdad at 18. I want to be there for my kids and be part of their lives. And I said, "Enough."

## **I learned about the Thrive challenge from my friend, Adam Rizzo.**

We've known each other since middle school and he really encouraged me to start. I began by pulling out the treadmill that was sitting in the basement collecting dust. I started walking for 30 minutes early in the morning, listening to electronic music before everyone else woke up. I gradually started jogging, and now I'm jogging five days a week. It feels great, and I've introduced kettlebells to my workout.

## **Because I was exercising, I didn't feel like drinking as much alcohol.**

I was making such progress during the day, it motivated me, and I gradually cut down how many drinks I had at night. Now I've cut out alcohol completely. It took about a month, and that was the hardest time. But I started to feel much better. I'd had stomach problems, and they went away. And the weight started to come off.

## **Instead of alcohol, I drink water.**

I also stopped drinking Diet Coke. I started drinking coffee, which I never used to do. I'm getting really good at making cappuccinos and we're experimenting with different flavored coffees. If I'm with people who are drinking, that's fine because I don't crave it anymore. I know alcohol will make me feel bad.



## **I'm eating in a different way.**

I have a routine now. For breakfast I'll have a protein shake and an apple. I never liked apples, but now they taste good to me. For lunch I might have an egg wrap and half an avocado. Nicole is very supportive and we're food prepping. We'll marinate shrimp and chicken thighs and grill them, so there's enough for a few days. And I'm making cauliflower rice. If we go out to dinner I'll have steak and broccoli. Because I'm not drinking margaritas, I'm saving \$50 on the restaurant bill.

## **My insides feel lighter and I don't feel bloated.**

I feel 20 years younger and I've lost 35 pounds. I just saw my doctor and my A1C is down. My goal is to get off all my medications.

## **We're connecting as a family.**

The kids are cheering me on. I can dance and run with Audriana without getting out of breath. Both our girls are in dance teams and they compete. I spend Sundays watching them in competitions. I saw Audriana do her first solo jazz performance; I was so proud.

## **We went on vacation to Cape Canaveral in Florida.**

It's amazing! You can see rocket launches from the beach. We went for bike rides, and I went running with Audriana.

## **At work I have much more energy.**

I have 300 associates looking to me to set an example, and I think I'm doing a pretty good job. I'm engaging with people and finding out what's going on in their lives. I'm talking about fitness and nutrition and encouraging them to download the Thrive app.

## **Thrive keeps me honest.**

I'm thinking more positively and I know now that I can accomplish so much. And what's most important, I know I'm a better dad for my girls — I'm going to be there for them.



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