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I've gained a lot of weight as I've gotten older. I teach math at a technical college as well as doing my job at Walmart, and I was tired all the time. I couldn't do the activities I used to love, like karate. I consumed a lot of Mountain Dew, donuts, and muffins. Whenever we went out to Olive Garden for a birthday dinner, I'd eat too much — they have never ending pasta and breadsticks. I'd consume seven bowls of soup, plus the meal I ordered. I got my money's worth, but it wasn't good for me. I was on medication for high blood pressure and had to start using a CPAP machine for sleep apnea. When I went to the doctor, he told me I was gaining five to ten pounds a year, which was not a good track to be on.

Two years ago my father, who was unhealthy, got COVID and passed away.

That was a big wake-up call. I'm 52, my wife, Ruth, and I have two grown kids and I didn't want to end up like that. At my dad's funeral, I realized that my brothers and I have the same DNA — with huge guts!

I started the Thrive Challenge and stopped drinking soda.

Now, I'm drinking water and taking sandwiches to work for lunch. For dinner, we'll buy rotisserie chicken, keep it in a Tupperware, and use it for several meals with tacos, salad, or brown rice as well as broccoli. I'm not overeating anymore and I've lost 43 pounds.

I began jogging in my lunch break and bought a step counter.

At first, I couldn't jog to the car without getting out of breath. But I gradually increased my stamina and now I can go for 57 minutes straight. I'm not a track athlete, but it's not about the speed, it's about the endurance. My co-workers see me going around the parking lot and are inspired to start themselves.

not in the water with me, I do my karate exercises.

Karate is my passion and I've gone back after 15 years.

I used to be a yellow belt, and I had to start over. But this year, I've progressed through four belts. I've now achieved the rank of green belt with a black stripe and I'm heading towards the blue belt. I am the oldest and most advanced student in the class! I also help out doing some teaching. I feel great because I'm making progress and supporting students, and I love teaching.



The other day, I was watching a YouTube video featuring a gentleman in his 80s doing karate and I would like to think that decades from now, I will be doing that!

After work, my wife and I get in our pool and swim.

Instead of always being wiped out, I have lots of energy. When Ruth's not in the water with me, I do my karate exercises.

Because I have more endurance, I'm enjoying life more.

I get up for work at 2:35 in the morning for work and in the past, I'd become a pumpkin by 5:30 in the evening, but now I've got the energy for family time. On the weekend, we play games or watch a movie together. Plus, I'm sleeping better.

For me, this journey is about pushing forward, to do more and feel better.

My doctor is happy with my progress. He said if I continue with these improvements, he'll cut my medications in half. And then eventually, I hope to be off prescription meds entirely.

Ruth and I spend our time off giving back.

We volunteer for Operation Christmas Child run by the charity, Samaritan's Purse. We help churches send supplies to children in need around the world. We love to go shopping and find great deals on children's clothes, toys, and school supplies for the packages. Not many people would go to eight different stores over two days looking for Matchbox cars on sale! But we're grateful to have the opportunity and energy to help.

We love listening to Christian music.

My favorite hymn is "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." It includes the phrase, "Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow." That sums up everything for me.



THRIVE