

Yolanda Gutierrez

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Before the Thrive Challenge, I wasn't doing anything good for my health or my body. I was gaining weight, feeling really tired, and there were many times when I felt like my legs couldn't hold up because of the painful cramps I was having. It ended up leading me to the doctor, and that's when I knew I had to make a change. I have a 14-year-old daughter who loves volleyball and has lots of energy, and I didn't have the energy to spend time with her. I wanted to see her grow up and spend quality time with her, and that was my push to get started.

My first step was making time to exercise.

I had always gotten tired quickly because I wasn't in good shape, so it was tough for me to get into an exercise routine. I had read about the Thrive Challenge in a magazine in the break room at work, and a co-worker, Lilliana Santiago, had told me about it too. I liked the idea of starting small. I started with ten minutes of walking, and I slowly increased that to 30 minutes, and then 50.

I started planning my workouts around my shifts.

For example, if I had an afternoon shift one day, I would exercise on my elliptical at home in the morning instead of outside, so I wouldn't get too tired from the sun before work. Now exercise is part of my daily routine, and I always make the time, whether it's in the morning or evening, depending on work. I've lost ten pounds so far, and I want to stay consistent.

I've been inviting my daughter to come to the walking track with me at night.

She rides her bike while I walk! She loves sitting in front of her computer, so getting out and exercising has been good for both of us. And when she wants to practice volleyball, I try to practice with her, even though I don't really know how to play. One of my favorite parts of making these changes has been spending more time with my daughter. Life is very fragile and spending time with the people that matter helps us make memories and stay together.



My daughter turns 15 next year and her dream is to go to Japan one day.

I even bought her an English-Japanese dictionary and a Spanish-Japanese dictionary because she loves it so much. I know it's a very expensive trip but I would love to be able to save up enough for her to go. We've been eating out less and cooking more at home, which is helping us save up and eat healthier. We bought an air fryer so our recipes have less fat, and we've been making little changes in the kitchen like swapping regular rice for cauliflower rice.

I feel so much more grateful now.

I work with the public, and sometimes it is difficult to deal with certain people, but I have realized that even if someone has a bad attitude, treating them with respect can change their attitude and make them more friendly. Taking time for gratitude has made me more optimistic, and I'm so grateful for everything I have achieved and all the people around me.

My lifestyle has changed, and I'm more at peace now.

I started out by exercising more and changing what I ate, but I've been able to make other changes with a purpose, and it has led me to so many other changes. I put my cell phone away before bed now and turn off the TV to make sure I get eight hours of sleep, and I also make time for meditation and prayer, which has made me stronger spiritually. I am continuing to reach my goals, feel good about myself, and improve my quality of life.



THRIVE