

Justen Forbes



\$5,000 WINNER
Distribution Center #7055
Gas City, IN

I wasn't feeling good about myself. I was eating fast food, candy bars and chips. I'm 28 and I weighed 225 pounds, and it affected me emotionally because I felt like I wasn't good enough. And I found it really hard to lose weight. A co-worker, Ashley Gonzales, kept telling me about the Thrive Challenge and how it had helped her. She kept saying, "You should do this." And finally six months ago I got started.

I started cooking instead of eating out.

I'm doing Thrive Microsteps, like food prepping. Once a week, I shop for groceries; I'll make chicken with veggies, rice, and beans. I'm also eating fruit, like bananas, grapes, and strawberries, which are my absolute favorite. I'm taking healthy lunches into work and snacks like Greek yogurt, celery, peanut butter, and high fiber bars. I've lost 28 pounds and I feel much better about myself. If I eat fast food now, it makes me feel sick!

Routines really help me accomplish what I want to achieve.

Every morning, I plan ahead and decide what I want to do that day, like going to the gym. I focus on a different muscle group each day and I'll do some cardio on the bike or on the stair stepper.

I began running half a mile a day, and pushed myself a little further each time.

Now I'm up to three miles, which feels great. I realize how far I've come. I'm also going for four mile bike rides. I live in a rural area in the middle of farmland; it's so peaceful and relaxing being out in nature on my own. I also do stretching throughout the day and I try to get in extra steps. I say to everyone: start moving. The only bad workout is the one that does not happen.

I live with my parents and my sister, Mckenna, and they're so proud of me.

They really support me. And I'm giving them tips on eating well and exercising. My mom has diabetes and my dad has high blood pressure, and they're changing their habits as well. My dad started biking and he's also lost weight.

I have more energy to be active with my family.

The Connection Microsteps help me bond with everyone. I have two sisters, two brothers, and three young nieces. We'll go to fairs together and have family cookouts. Last week we had a birthday party for my mom at my sister's house. We grilled steaks, relaxed, and caught up. I played with my nieces in the yard. I'm always chasing them around and we splashed in the blow-up pool.



Every night I put my phone away — I just take it out of the equation.

Staying off electronics is a Microstep that's really helping me. I used to be playing on my phone every night, and when you do that, before you know it, it's midnight! Now I make sure I go to bed at a decent time every night. I do some deep breathing — inhaling and exhaling — I get to sleep faster and get a good night's sleep.

In the morning, I'm ready to start the day.

I'm productive at work and I get things done at work quickly and efficiently. I really love Walmart and I'd like to become a manager, so I'm doing my best to learn as much as I can. I'm thinking about doing a degree in supply chain and logistics through Walmart.

I'm saving money.

I take \$100 out of each paycheck and put it in a fire safe lockbox. I don't touch it, and it gives me peace of mind knowing that if an emergency popped up, I'd have the money I needed. Also, I'm saving for a down payment for a house.

I've gained a lot of confidence.

I constantly think positive thoughts while I'm looking in the mirror or when I'm completing a workout. I repeat phrases like: "You can do this — ain't nothing but a thing that's easy," and "Keep going, don't stop now." Affirmations help me accomplish whatever I am working on.

People are always complimenting me on how I look.

And it makes me feel good knowing that people notice. Thrive is helping me change my life. I'm proud of myself. I'm more motivated and I make better decisions.



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