

Reuben Furry

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\$5,000 WINNER
Walmart Supercenter #1765
Somerset, PA

Earlier this year, I was stressed, foggy, and fatigued. I felt run down. I was eating junk food like pizza, chicken wings and ice cream. And I wasn't exercising. I'd have a pot of coffee in the morning, and energy drinks at work. There'd be highs and lows all day, and I'd crash in the evening. I suffered from stomach and gut problems. I had acid reflux and heartburn, and I had a dependence on the medication Prilosec. I'm 41, and my wife, Athena, and I have a nine-year-old son, Zebedee, but I didn't have the energy to play with him. Athena has Lupus and she's disabled, and she's homeschooling our son.

I was inspired to start the Thrive Challenge by two co-workers.

Jimmy Miller and Hunter Golle were both winners, and were going great. I started by reading stories from Walmart associates across the country which were so motivating.

Cutting out caffeine was my first step, and then I changed the way I was eating.

I used Microsteps like food prepping and taking my lunch into work. I stayed away from microwave meals and I'm following a gluten free diet. We keep the refrigerator stocked with fruit and vegetables.

I have a culinary background; I used to be a chef, so I do the cooking.

We love my smoked or pan-fried salmon with Greek seasoning, asparagus, and rice. I was excited to try all the recipes on the Thrive app by Tess Bredesen, like her deviled eggs, which are really tasty. I love her ginger and lemon tea which reduces bloating and calms your stomach. I've also been taking magnesium and vitamin D. My stomach is much better, and I feel like my brain is working better too. I said goodbye to Prilosec, and instead, I've been relying on probiotics for better digestion.

I got moving — I try to walk 10,000 steps a day.

It isn't always a breeze, but taking Microsteps helps. I also do gentle low-impact exercises with weights, and I do sit-ups and push-ups. While I'm exercising, I'll listen to financial podcasts or watch YouTube videos to learn about the stock market. My small, but consistent efforts have had a big impact on my energy.

Zeb and I go for bike rides and play together.

We love going to the playground; he says "You be the monster," and I have to chase him! When I get home from work, we like to jump in our pool together. Recently, we took Zeb to Philadelphia as a big surprise to see NF, the rapper, and we had an amazing time.



Athena, Zeb, and I go hiking at Laurel Hill State Park.

We hike the pump trail back to a beautiful waterfall and along the sand line at the lake. We went on a great family camping trip this summer. We were boondocking with no electricity or water, and every meal was cooked over a fire.

My favorite Microstep is connecting with friends and family.

I take time to reach out to Scott, my buddy, who's in the military, and is currently deployed abroad. I also call Joe, a long-time friend.

My night routine has transformed into a comforting ritual.

It all starts with a warm cup of water with slippery elm bark and a little pumpkin seed oil to help me relax. Then I have a spritz of calming magnesium spray to ease my muscles. But the real magic happens when I journal before bed. It's like releasing the day's worries. And I'll jot down the next day's top five priorities. That's my secret weapon for a worry-free night. It's about creating a calm, nurturing space for my mind to rest and rejuvenate.

I volunteer for our First Lego League with my son and five other kids.

It is Lego robotics with teamwork, and it's all about teaching the kids core values like teamwork, problem-solving, inclusiveness, and literally having fun. We emphasize cooperation, respect, and sportsmanship.

There's a world of difference in how I feel — it's a complete 360.

I am no longer bloated after eating and my stomach doesn't hurt. I have better mental clarity — I'm more focused. I am less anxious and completely medication free. I feel like a better dad and a better manager at work. I'm encouraging all my team to get started. I tell them how easy it is and how The Thrive Challenge has been a game changer for me.



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