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COVID was a stressful time. Because I work in a distribution center, we were short-staffed and were just trying to power through the days together as a team. We were working overtime on the regular with a six-man team. I was so drained on my one day off that I would just end up napping on the couch until it was time to go back to work.

One of the overnight associates, Joseph, told me that he and his wife had done the Thrive Challenge.

We were chatting after the evening meeting, and he said the Thrive Challenge was something that really helped him get his mind off of all the stress of the work. My coworker, Paul, and I decided to try it. We just thought, "You know what? We need to get out and do something outside of spending our entire day inside the building."

We started by setting a 6:00 a.m. alarm to get outside every morning.

We got a few of the associates to join us, and started meeting up at our town's local skate park. It's got a little pond in the middle of it with a track around it that's half a mile, so we started out going out there, watching the ducks and doing laps around the park until it was time for work. We started out walking and then moved to jogging. Breathing in the fresh air makes me feel completely recharged. Our coach Kirsten started joining us too, and she's much more fit than we are! When you work hard, you need that bit of comradery.

Our morning routines have become more like adventures.

We've started hiking now too, and my better half has joined. When I started the Thrive Challenge, my fiancé, Jolene, was pregnant. The doctor told her to stay active, so she started joining us. We would look for nice flat trails so that way it wasn't too stressful on her. Now our baby is two weeks and five days old! His name is Nivek. It's my name backwards, which is what everyone has called me at work for the last 10 years, so it's kind of an inside joke between everyone that knows us.



The biggest change in my diet was cutting out energy drinks.

I used to drink four a day at work alone. I started getting headaches at first, but now, I feel so much better without them. I also got a meat grinder from my brother and started getting chicken breasts so I could make chicken patties for myself and save on food. We have a calendar that shows all of the bills for the month so we can see what we have to save for. I generally stick to the rule that if it's not essential, it doesn't need to be bought.

The Thrive Challenge has given me a fresh start.

Everyone used to pick on me because whenever somebody would ask me how the day was, I always said, "It's a beautiful day." It's something my grandfather always said, and it's something I always say. Now, being able to go outside and be able to say, "It is a beautiful day. Look at what we saw before we went into work" -- it helps me realize that the day might be stressful, but it really is a beautiful day.



THRIVE