

Aja Wells

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\$5,000 WINNER

**Walmart Customer
Newport News, VA**

Like a lot of people, 2020 affected me. My activity levels declined and I wasn't making the best choices. I've always been active, but I found myself focusing on what I saw in the news, or on things that made me feel very stagnant. And not only my physical health, but my mental health was declining. Bouts of depression seemed more frequent. I wanted to get back to myself and the things I love doing, like going to the gym, meal prepping, and yoga. Florice Nims, my soon-to-be mother-in-law, told me about the Thrive app, where I could complete 21-day Challenges to help me stay on track. I hadn't realized that making good choices was about more than just food — it's also about showing gratitude, spending intentional time with family, even parking farther away from an entrance! So I decided to start the Thrive Challenge. I realized I couldn't do this alone.

The first step I took was to establish my morning routine.

That's been a real game changer. How you start the day will really set the tone. So I start by showing a form of gratitude (a prayer or writing things out I'm grateful for), get dressed, and go to the gym. If I don't get out to the gym in the morning, I'll tell myself I'll go later in the day, but that seldom happens. So to make sure I get out of bed, I'll set my phone farther away from the bed. And I'll get out my gym clothes the night before. Starting my day by going to the gym helps me flow more easily into work. If I have any anxiety about the day, it helps relieve that as well.

Over the past seven years, I've gotten a lot better with food.

I've been vegan, vegetarian and pescatarian. But now I'm eating more consciously. I track my calories to stay on top of my goals. Jackfruit is a great meat substitute — I love jackfruit tacos, patties, and nachos. I'm going to try my hand at a jackfruit "pot roast" this fall. Changing my diet has made me more aware of what I put into my body.



I've lost eight pounds and I'm planning on losing 20-25 more — though I'm more focused on the journey than the weight. This past year, I've started to see changes not only in my body, but in my mental and spiritual health, too.

I've learned that gratitude isn't only about the big moments.

It can be something as little as waking up in the morning, which everybody does not have the pleasure of doing, or having dinner or watching movies with your family. Just small things like that are amazing to me. I've noticed in the past couple of weeks, I'll randomly stop working and just jot things down in my journal. Just taking five minutes to myself and writing the things down that make me happy kind of resets my mind to go back to work.

I've had issues in the past with staying consistent.

But since starting the Thrive Challenge, my consistency has surprised me. I'll grab the phone to read people's stories — it's like a community. The Thrive Challenge is unlike anything I've done before. It's not just about weight loss, but family, gratitude and financial wellness — it's about all the things that make life whole and happy.



THRIVE