

Aliyah Tiller



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At school I was the tallest and biggest in my class and I was often down on myself. My friends were skinnier than me and I felt insecure wearing shorts and crop tops. Now I'm 22 and I'm at college, majoring in Africana Studies, which I love, learning about my history and heritage. But I was finding it hard to make good food choices because I'm always on the go. I'm working part-time on campus at a support center for students. I'd eat fast food like burgers and fries, and I'd drink soda or sweet tea.

I was inspired to take the Thrive Challenge by my mom, Alisa Tiller.

She was a winner and it changed her life, so I just had to try it out for myself. As well as losing weight, I wanted to practice self-care and empower myself.

I stopped eating out.

I have almonds and cashews for snacks during the day and I'm eating salads or mixed fruit bowls with strawberries and grapes. I was low in iron so I started eating spinach. I live at home and we're all eating healthy food now, like baked chicken with roasted veggies. I try out different recipes I find on TikTok.

I make time to exercise.

I have a daily routine and walk on the treadmill in our garage. We have a gym on campus which is free for students, so I go on days I'm not busy. On Saturday mornings, my mom and I walk around Chollas Lake near our house. I've lost 10 pounds and have a lot more energy.

My mom's my best friend — we're really close and we motivate each other.

She uplifts me when I'm down, and when she's down I uplift her. We work out together, we cook together, we laugh together, and we empower each other.

We're dancing together.

I get my musical inspiration from both my parents. I actually have a vinyl collection and a record player. We love listening to Curtis Mayfield, Al Green, and Earth Wind & Fire. I'm an old soul I guess you could say! My mom and I make TikTok videos. She always wants to learn new dances and I'm always teaching her. Whatever's trending, we'll try it. My mom's hilarious — it takes a while to teach her, but I'm very patient!



I have a huge, huge family and I love them all dearly.

I am forever grateful and honored that they're so supportive of me. They inspire me and they're proud of me because I'm still in school and I'm working to get my BA, so I can get my masters. I want a career that involves helping people.

I'm encouraging my younger cousins, who look up to me.

I have to set a good example for them and they make me proud. My cousin, Kamden, is a high school senior and was feeling down on herself about what to do when she graduates. She loves to sing so I encouraged her to find a major at college that will incorporate music and singing. I told her not to give up.

One of the biggest things I've learned is time management.

I've found a way to focus on school, work and then come home and eat, exercise, spend time with my family and get a good night's sleep.

I'm learning how to practice self-love.

I'm big on empowering quotes and affirmations I see on Instagram. I'm always looking for people who have the same skin color as me and who are uplifting and positive. I follow The Female Academic Network and prettygirlsstrongerwomen. And I love the YouTuber, Breeny Lee, who is a transformational coach. I'm doing breathing exercises and meditating. It helps me collect my thoughts and calm down, because my life is so busy.

I've gained confidence.

I look in the mirror every single day and tell myself: "I'm smart, I'm beautiful, I'm bright. I can do anything."



THRIVE