

# Matthew Whitehead

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**\$5,000 WINNER**

**Supercenter #2654**

**Tompkinsville, KY**

I've been overweight since I was 10 years old. And last year I was feeling terrible. I'd be up till four in the morning mindlessly watching YouTube videos. A normal day began with me waking up an hour before my shift. I'd have a Dr. Pepper, fast food or nothing for lunch, and a whole frozen pizza or buffalo wings for dinner. I weighed 300 pounds and never exercised. I'm only 26 and my ankles hurt. I had no self confidence whatsoever.

**One night in July, 2020, my chest felt really tight and I thought I was in trouble.**

It turned out not to be anything, but it scared me. Two co-workers, Robin and Sheila, recommended the Thrive Challenge. Sheila had lost weight and got off blood pressure medication. I thought: "If she can make a change at her age — she's a lot older than me — I can definitely make some changes."

**I took a week off and went to stay with friends.**

I live with my parents, but I find it's easier to begin something new outside my normal environment. My friends encouraged me, we went for long walks and didn't eat fast food.

**I started making small changes to my eating habits.**

When I got back, I gradually cut out Dr. Pepper and fast food. I'd say: "This week I'm going to have less." It took me a month. I also started eating off a smaller plate. I'm sort of programmed to finish my plate, so that helped. I stopped eating late at night, which also helped improve my sleep. Between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m., I don't eat anything. And I now drink a bottle of water before a meal. I usually realize I'm not as hungry as I believe I am. I've lost significant weight in the last 15 months and I feel more alive than I ever have before.



**I started taking short walks every morning.**

Now I'm up to 40 minutes and I'm transitioning to jogging. Every evening, I'll have an epsom salts bath to relax. I leave my workout clothes, headphones, and a bottle of water ready for the next day. I'm journaling every day, writing down three things I'm grateful about, like friends, and I'll write down affirmations, like: "I'm smart, I'm disciplined." I do guided meditations, which make me less anxious. And I block YouTube after 9 p.m., so I don't overindulge, and I'm sleeping well. I like the better choices on the Thrive app because they're not intimidating.

**At work, I really love helping customers who are looking for computers.**

I like explaining all the technical jargon and helping people choose the right computer for what they need. I've become more positive. My team lead, Renea, used to call me Eeyore because of my negative attitude. She's noticed how my outlook has changed. I'm smiling and I'm more confident. I'm finishing my degree in cybersecurity and my goal is to get an IT position. That's what I want to do with the rest of my working life.



THRIVE