

Miya Cottrell

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\$5,000 WINNER
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Since I was little, I've struggled with my weight. I'm 26 now and my partner, Race, and I were eating a lot of fast food. I have PCOS, (polycystic ovary syndrome) and losing weight has always been hard. I'd start to try to eat healthily, but consistency was not happening. If I messed up, I felt like I might as well give up for the rest of the day. I struggled with mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. My turning point, when I knew I had to do something different, came when I saw a picture of myself. I looked so unhealthy and miserable. And I weighed 330 pounds.

A year ago, Kathryn Carpitcher inspired me to download the Thrive app.

I grew up with her, she's a Thrive Grand Champ, and she's overcome so much with Thrive. She always has a smile on her face and a contagious laugh.

I buckled down and began with movement.

I started stretching in the morning. And I became more aware of moving my body throughout the day. I'll move my arms in a circular motion and I'll run in place while I'm on a phone call. Every day I go for a walk around the neighborhood or to the park with my five dogs. We walk for at least 15 minutes or sometimes we just play fetch. Just from doing that I noticed I had more energy, my muscles don't ache all the time, and my headaches started going away.

Gardening makes me happy — it's a great way to relax and spend time outdoors.

I've planted bell peppers, tomatoes, jalapeños, okra, watermelon, cucumbers, and squash. It's amazing eating fresh food that I've grown myself. I've been having fun doing a lot of canning. I've also made my own salsa, pickled okra and jellies.

I used to think I didn't have time to cook, but I've learned that it's all about making time.

It's about priorities. I'm making simple meals like chicken cooked in the airfryer with rice and veggies, like green beans. I've learned to control my portions and I'm not overeating.



We're saving money by not eating out.

I'm more accountable and I'm watching what I'm spending. I've paid off some debts, which is a big relief.

Race helps me cook and we're communicating more.

We really listen to each other and talk about our concerns and our feelings. He's also changed the way he eats and he's supporting me; we're on this journey together.

Since I work from home, it's challenging to stay connected to other people.

So I make a point of keeping in touch with everyone, even if it's a simple "Good morning" or "Have a good day" text. I talk to my family and friends on the phone — like my sister in South Carolina. We like to talk about our gardens. I'm also spending time with my aunt Annette, helping her with her garden. And then we'll play a board game, like Wahoo. I also hang out with friends; we'll watch T.V. shows — we like Guy's Grocery Games or we'll walk by the lake.

The Thrive Challenge has given me a confidence I didn't have before.

I've lost 73 pounds and I feel great. I've created better habits for the first time. I need to lose another 80 pounds, and it's a struggle, but doing it little by little with Microsteps has made a huge difference. I know I can do it. I'm in much less pain, my face is slimmer, my skin is clear, and I have more energy. I've proved to myself that I can really make changes and accomplish things.



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