



THE QUESTION I KEEP GETTING IS...

WHAT DID YOU DO TO LOSE WEIGHT?

LET ME SHARE MY JOURNEY WITH YOU!

IN 2020, I COMMITTED MYSELF TO CHANGING MY EATING HABITS AND INCORPORATING MORE EXERCISE INTO MY DAILY LIFE IN AN EFFORT TO LOSE WEIGHT AND FEEL BETTER PHYSICALLY (AND) MENTALLY. AS A RESULT, I ENDED UP LOSING EXACTLY 50 LBS IN 12 MONTHS, BETWEEN JANUARY 1ST 2020 AND DECEMBER 31ST 2020!

MY BACK STORY:

I HAVE BEEN ON A CONSTANT MISSION TO LOSE WEIGHT, FOR WHAT I WOULD SAY IS ALL OF MY "ADULT" LIFE, PRETTY MUCH SINCE I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL, EVERY EFFORT I MADE WAS EITHER UNSUCCESSFUL OR UNSUSTAINABLE. I ALWAYS APPROACHED WEIGHT LOSS WITH A DIET MENTALITY, AND TRIED SO MANY (TOO MANY) DIFFERENT DIET TRENDS WITH LITTLE TO NO SUCCESS. ANY SUCCESS I DID HAVE, WAS ALWAYS SHORT LIVED, NOT TO MENTION, I WAS MISERABLE THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE JOURNEY. "SUFFERING THROUGH" WHATEVER THE DIET PLAN WAS, RESTRICTING MYSELF TO A POINT OF MISERY. MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, I WOULDN'T EVEN BE ABLE TO STICK TO THE DIET FOR MORE THAN A FEW DAYS TO A WEEK. I WOULD HAVE A CHEAT MEAL, THAT TURNED TO A CHEAT DAY, THAT INEVITABLY SPIRALED INTO ME QUITTING COMPLETELY, UNTIL I WAS FED UP ENOUGH WITH MYSELF TO START AGAIN, WITH THE NEXT DIET.

UNTIL 2014 THAT IS...

AS MY HUSBAND AND I WERE APPROACHING OUR 5 YEAR WEDDING ANNIVERSARY, WE DECIDED TO BOOK A TRIP TO CANCUN, MEXICO TO CELEBRATE OUR 5-YEAR MILESTONE, AND WITH JUST ABOUT 2 ½ MONTHS BEFORE TAKE OFF ✈️ THE WEIGHT-LOSS JOURNEY BEGAN AGAIN. BUT THIS TIME, SOMETHING WAS DIFFERENT...I WAS MOTIVATED...I HAD SOMETHING I WAS WORKING TOWARDS. I KNOW, I KNOW, EVERY TIME I WANTED TO LOSE WEIGHT TECHNICALLY I WAS WORKING TOWARDS SOMETHING, BUT THAT SOMETHING WASN'T TANGIBLE, IT WAS JUST AN IDEA, JUST SOMETHING I WANTED TO DO "FOR ME", BUT OTHER THAN IT BEING FOR "ME" THERE WAS NO OTHER REAL MOTIVATING FACTOR, UNTIL 2014 THAT IS...

NOW ALL OF A SUDDEN, I AM A COUPLE MONTHS AWAY FROM GOING OUT OF THE COUNTRY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE, TO CELEBRATE MY 5-YEAR WEDDING ANNIVERSARY AND I WANTED TO FEEL GOOD! BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY (*TO ME AT THE TIME*) WASN'T SO MUCH THE "FEELING GOOD" BUT I WANTED TO *LOOK GOOD* --IN MY OUTFITS, AND SWIMSUITS, ESPECIALLY THE SWIMSUITS! I WANTED TO FEEL CONFIDENT IN MYSELF AND TAKE ALLLLL THE PICTURES I COULD AND ACTUALLY LIKE HOW I LOOKED IN THEM! I WAS 25 YEARS OLD, OVERWEIGHT AND UNHAPPY WITH MY PHYSICAL APPEARANCE, YEARS OF FAILED ATTEMPTS AT WEIGHT-LOSS AND NOW HERE I AM WITH 2 ½ MONTHS TO LOSE WEIGHT FOR AN ANNIVERSARY TRIP. THAT ONE "TANGIBLE" THING, CANCUN, MEXICO LIT A FIRE UNDER MY SEDENTARY ASS, AND I FOUND MOTIVATION I HAD NEVER SEEN BEFORE! I WATCHED A FEW DOCUMENTARIES ON NETFLIX AND FOLLOWED A FEW PEOPLE ON SOCIAL MEDIA WHO WERE DOCUMENTING THEIR WEIGHT-LOSS JOURNEY FOR MOTIVATION AND IDEAS, AND DECIDED I WAS GOING TO DO A 2-DAY JUICE CLEANSE TO JUMP START MY WEIGHT-LOSS JOURNEY, AND THEN I WOULD CONTINUE EATING HEALTHY AND EXERCISING UNTIL IT WAS TIME TO TAKE OFF TO CANCUN!

I JUST KEPT THINKING ABOUT HOW AMAZING OF A VACATION I WAS GOING TO BE ON IN A FEW SHORT MONTHS, AND HOW BADLY I WANTED TO LOOK AND FEEL MY BEST AS I STEPPED FOOT INTO PARADISE. THAT THOUGHT ALONE KEPT ME MOTIVATED FOR OVER 8 WEEKS AND RESULTED IN A 20 LB LOSS! I WAS SO PROUD OF MYSELF! I HAD



NEVER LOST THAT MUCH WEIGHT BEFORE IN MY LIFE, LET ALONE IN UNDER 90 DAYS. I FELT SO GOOD PHYSICALLY, AND STARTED FEELING THE CHANGES HAPPEN IN MY BODY--CLOSE FITTING LOOSER, LESS BLOATING, MORE ENERGY. I WAS ON TOP OF THE WORLD. I DIDN'T NECESSARILY REACH MY IDEAL PHYSIQUE IN 8-WEEKS AND 20 LBS, I HAD SIGNIFICANTLY MORE WEIGHT TO LOSE THAN THAT, BUT I SAW CHANGES, CHANGES THAT I LIKED! SO I WENT TO CANCUN, AND I TOOK ALLLLL THE PICTURES, AND ENJOYED MYSELF AND ALL MY HARD WORK TO THE FULLEST!

SO MUCH SO THAT WHEN WE GOT BACK FROM VACATION, AND I STEPPED ON THE SCALE, I HAD GAINED 5 LBS IN THE 1-WEEK WE WERE GONE! "OH THAT'S JUST WATER WEIGHT, NO BIGGIE, I'M GOING TO GET BACK ON TRACK STARTING NEXT WEEK". NEXT WEEK BECOMES NEXT MONTH, AND NEXT MONTH BECOMES NEXT YEAR... I GAINED ALL 20 LBS BACK IN LESS THAN 4 MONTHS. HOW DID THIS HAPPEN? I STOPPED MAKING HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES, I CEASED EXERCISE, AND I HAD NOTHING ELSE MOTIVATING ME TO CARE TO GET BACK ON TRACK. I ACCOMPLISHED MY GOAL--LOSE WEIGHT FOR CANCUN. THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I DID, LOST WEIGHT, WENT TO CANCUN, LIVED MY BEST LIFE, DISREGARDING ALL OF THE "HEALTHY" HABITS I ESTABLISHED OVER THE PAST TWO-MONTHS, DID ZERO EXERCISE, ATE AND DRANK WAY TOO MUCH, AND CAME BACK 5 LBS HEAVIER, AND THEN LACKED THE MOTIVATION TO GET BACK ON TRACK ONCE VACATION WAS OVER, RESULTING IN A LOT OF MY HARD WORK GOING DOWN THE DRAIN.

AFTER GAINING EVERY LAST POUND BACK OVER THE NEXT 4-MONTHS, I CONTINUED THE DIET CYCLE OVER THE NEXT 5-YEARS (2015-2019) OF LOSING AND GAINING THE SAME 5 LBS. TRYING THE NEXT "FAD" AND SUFFERING THROUGH IT UNTIL I INEVITABLY QUIT AGAIN, GAINED BACK WHATEVER I LOST, REMAINED COMPLACENT WITH MY CURRENT HEALTH AND WEIGHT, AND WOULD EVENTUALLY BECOME FED UP AGAIN WITH HOW I LOOKED AND FELT, AND WOULD START THE DIET-CYCLE ONCE MORE. IT WAS LIKE LIVING IN A HAMSTER WHEEL..JUST CONSTANTLY GOING IN CIRCLES AND NEVER MAKING IT TO YOUR DESTINATION. IT WAS DISHEARTENING. DEPRESSING EVEN.

HOW IT STARTED:

TOWARDS THE END OF 2019 I TOLD MYSELF I HAVE TO FIND SOMETHING THAT IS GOING TO WORK FOR ME, AND BE SUSTAINABLE. WHAT SMALL CHANGES CAN I MAKE IN MY DAILY LIFE THAT I CAN COMMIT TO FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE, THAT MAY HELP MOVE ME IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, TOWARDS ACCOMPLISHING MY LIFELONG GOAL OF LOSING WEIGHT, AND KEEPING IT OFF? I TOLD MYSELF, IT'S NOT A RACE, I DON'T HAVE TO LOSE EVERY POUND I WANT TO LOSE IN 3 MONTHS OR 6 MONTHS OR EVEN A YEAR. I TOLD MYSELF, HAD I LOST (AND KEPT OFF) 1-2 LBS PER MONTH OVER THE PAST 5-YEARS I WOULD HAVE LOST ALL THE WEIGHT I WANTED TO LOSE AND MORE, BUT INSTEAD I WAS WASTING MY TIME DOING THINGS I KNEW WOULDN'T BE SUSTAINABLE FOR ME LONG TERM, WHICH RESULTED IN UNSUSTAINABLE WEIGHT LOSS. I WAS APPROACHING IT AS A DIET AND NOT A LIFESTYLE CHANGE. I WAS ONLY THINKING ABOUT THE PHYSICAL ASPECT OF THE JOURNEY AND NOT THE MENTAL ONE. I DEFAULTED TO THE MORE DRASTIC DIET TECHNIQUES INSTEAD OF FOCUSING ON SLOW AND STEADY WEIGHT LOSS.

LET ME TELL YOU RIGHT NOW. THIS JOURNEY (WEIGHT-LOSS) IS SO MUCH MORE MENTAL THAN IT IS PHYSICAL, AND YOU HAVE TO PREPARE YOURSELF MENTALLY BEFORE STARTING YOUR JOURNEY OR ELSE YOU WILL NOT BE SUCCESSFUL LONG TERM.

I MADE MY MIND UP IN DECEMBER 2019, THAT I WAS NEVER GOING TO GO ON A DIET AGAIN. I DECIDED I WAS GOING TO SPEND THE NEXT YEAR, "TRIAL AND ERROR-ING" MY WAY THROUGH THIS JOURNEY AND FIND WHAT WORKS FOR ME, THAT I CAN NOT JUST DO BUT WHAT I WILL ENJOY DOING, **FOR...EVER**. TO START OFF MY LAST "DAY 1" OF A WEIGHT-LOSS JOURNEY AND MY FIRST DAY "DAY 1" OF A LIFESTYLE CHANGE, I DECIDED I WASN'T GOING TO WAIT UNTIL JANUARY 1ST TO START, I WAS GOING TO GET THE BALL ROLLING NOW, IN THIS VERY MOMENT, AND I DID JUST THAT, I MADE A COMMITMENT TO BEING MINDFUL OF WHAT I WAS EATING, AND COMMITTED TO START GOING TO THE GYM (A GYM MEMBERSHIP I HAD FOR AT LEAST 7-YEARS AT THIS POINT (2019) THAT I RARELY EVER USED, EXCEPT FOR THAT 8-WEEK



STINT IN 2014 PREPARING FOR CANCUN! SO I STARTED GOING TO THE GYM, AND THEN TOOK A LITTLE BREAK FOR THE WEEK OF THE HOLIDAYS (*CHRISTMAS TO NEW YEARS DAY*), AND JUMPED RIGHT BACK IN AT THE START OF JANUARY 2020.

A FEW WEEKS INTO JANUARY, MY HUSBAND AND I SIGNED UP FOR A PERSONAL TRAINER, AND I WENT TO ONE SESSION, AND NEVER WENT BACK! I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO DIE. LITERALLY WAS NAUSEOUS AND DIZZY AFTER THE SESSION AND I COULD NOT WRAP MY MIND AROUND GOING THROUGH THAT TORTURE AGAIN, SO I DIDN'T. IT DIDN'T MATTER HOW MANY PEOPLE TOLD ME IT WILL GET EASIER, THE MORE YOU DO IT THE STRONGER YOU WILL BECOME AND IT WON'T FEEL THIS WAY, I DIDN'T WANT TO HEAR ANY OF IT, I JUST KNOW HOW I FELT IN THAT MOMENT AND FOR THE NEXT 45 MINUTES AFTER THE SESSION PRAYING TO GOD I DIDN'T THROW UP DURING THE CAR RIDE HOME. NOPE NOPE NOPE, NO ONE COULD CONVINCE ME TO GO BACK. I TOLD MYSELF I WILL START SLOW AND WORKOUT ON MY OWN AND BUILD UP MY ENDURANCE AND ONCE I FEEL LIKE I CAN ENDURE THE HELL THAT THE TRAINER IS GOING TO TRY AND PUT ME THROUGH, THEN MAYBE I WILL CONSIDER GOING BACK. SO THAT'S WHAT I DID, I WORKED OUT HERE AND THERE ON MY OWN, MAINLY WALKING BUT WAS VERY INTENTIONAL ABOUT WHAT I ATE, AND BEGAN TRACKING MY FOOD. I LOST A FEW LBS HERE AND THERE OR MAINTAINED OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, AND THEN CAME MARCH 2020, AND COVID-19 HIT, WE WERE SENT HOME TO TELEWORK FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, GYMS CLOSED, THE WORLD AROUND US SHUT DOWN, AND HERE I WAS, IN THE HOUSE WITH NOTHING TO DO AND NOWHERE TO GO, AND I JUST KNEW "THIS IS GOING TO BE BAD". BETWEEN JANUARY 2020 AND MARCH 2020, I HAD LOST 20 LBS MAINLY BY WATCHING WHAT I WAS EATING AND ONLY EXERCISING HERE AND THERE (*MOST OF MY EXERCISED HAPPENED IN JANUARY, AND THEN I FELL OFF BUT WAS STILL WATCHING WHAT I WAS EATING*)/ I JUST KNEW, BEING STUCK IN THE HOUSE, I WAS GOING TO FALL BACK INTO OLD HABITS, AND GAIN ALL 20 LBS BACK LIKE I DID BEFORE. BUT I QUICKLY TOLD MYSELF, I CAN NOT LET THAT HAPPEN, I CAN NOT LET ALL MY HARD WORK BE FOR NOT, YET AGAIN. I KNEW I WOULD HAVE TO KEEP REMINDING MYSELF OF THIS DAILY TO STAY ON TRACK. THE FIRST WEEKS/MONTHS OF QUARANTINE WERE HARD, MENTALLY.

THERE WERE DAYS I DIDN'T FEEL LIKE DOING ANYTHING AT ALL, DAYS I JUST WANTED TO LAY AROUND AND BINGE WATCH NETFLIX/HULU AND EAT ALL THE SNACKS I COULD FIND. IN ALL TRANSPARENCY, THERE WERE DAYS I DID JUST THAT, AND THAT'S OKAY! BECAUSE WHAT I DIDN'T DO WAS QUIT. IN THE PAST, A FEW DAYS "OFF:" BINGE WATCHING TV, ORDERING CARRYOUT AND EATING CHIPS AND OREOS WOULD HAVE BEEN A "BAD DAY/WEEK" OR A "CHEAT DAY" AND I WOULD HAVE BEAT MYSELF UP ABOUT IT, THOUGH I RUINED ALL MY PROGRESS, BECAME DISCOURAGED AND LIKELY GAVE UP. BUT NOT THIS TIME, NOT IN 2020. WHY, YOU ASK? BECAUSE YOU CAN'T HAVE A BAD DAY OR CHEAT DAY WHEN YOU AREN'T ON A DIET... WHAT AM I CHEATING ON? REMEMBER 2020 WASN'T A DIET PLAN, IT WAS A LIFESTYLE CHANGE. I NEVER GAVE UP THE CARRYOUT, OR THE CHIPS OR OREO'S... I WAS NEVER RESTRICTED FROM EATING THE THINGS I LIKED AND ENJOYED. I WAS MINDFUL ABOUT WHAT I ATE AND WHEN I ATE IT, AND HOW MUCH OF IT I CONSUMED, BUT I NEVER TOLD MYSELF "YOU CAN'T HAVE THAT". I NEVER EQUATED ANY FOOD OR DRINK WITH BEING "BAD" OR "NOT ALLOWED" SO WHEN I HAD A NETFLIX AND SNACK KIND OF DAY, IT WASN'T A "BAD DAY" OR A "CHEAT DAY" IT WAS A SELF CARE DAY. A DAY THAT I TOOK A STEP BACK FROM BEING SUPER FOCUSED ON MY WEIGHT-LOSS JOURNEY AND JUST ENJOYED THE DAY COMPLETELY. STILL BEING MINDFUL NOT TO OVERINDULGE TO A FAULT, BUT ALSO NOT TRACKING EVERY SINGLE CALORIE I CONSUMED, BECAUSE SOMETIMES YOU JUST NEED A BREAK.

I CONTINUED TO MAINLY FOCUS MY EFFORTS TOWARDS MY EATING HABITS, AND TRACKING MY FOOD FOR THE NEXT 4-5 MONTHS, WITH MINIMAL EXERCISE. IN MAY/JUNE I DECIDED TO ORDER SOME EXERCISE EQUIPMENT FOR THE HOUSE, AND ONCE THAT ARRIVED I WOULD SPEND A FEW DAYS A WEEK EITHER WORKING OUT ON THE BIKE, OR ROWER. I ALSO INCORPORATED SOME WORKOUT VIDEOS FROM YOUTUBE OR PRIME INTO MY DAY HERE AND THERE TO SWITCH THINGS UP, BUT AGAIN, EXERCISE WAS FEW AND FAR BETWEEN, WHILE MY EATING REMAINED CONSTANT. ALTHOUGH I MAY NOT HAVE BEEN GETTING IN A TRUE WORKOUT, I WAS INTENTIONAL ABOUT WALKING AND MOVING MORE, SO I WAS EXPENDING SOME ADDITIONAL ENERGY IN THAT WAY. BETWEEN MARCH 2020 AND AUGUST 2020, I LOST ANOTHER 10 LBS OR SO. WHICH I WAS BEYOND PLEASED WITH BECAUSE I HAD NEVER ONCE FELT DEPRIVED AND WAS ALSO NOT CONSISTENTLY WORKING OUT. SO HERE IT IS AUGUST 2020, AND OVER



THE PAST 8-MONTHS, I DROPPED A TOTAL OF 30 LBS. I EXCEEDED MY RECORD WEIGHT-LOSS OF 20LBS FROM 2014, AND WAS FEELING AMAZING, AND MORE MOTIVATED THAN EVER TO KEEP GOING STRONG.

MID-AUGUST I DECIDED I NEEDED TO KICK IT UP A NOTCH. I WANTED TO LOSE ANOTHER 10-20 LBS BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR, SO NOW THAT I HAD FINALLY FELT LIKE I FIGURED OUT WHAT WORKED FOR ME EATING WISE, NOW IT WAS TIME TO PUT ADDITIONAL FOCUS TO EXERCISE. I STARTED WALKING RELIGIOUSLY, MULTIPLE TIMES A WEEK, AND ALSO INCORPORATED MORE BIKE AND ROWER WORKOUTS INTO MY WEEK. A FRIEND OF MINE POSTED ABOUT A WALKING CHALLENGE FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER, AND I DECIDED TO JOIN. THE GOAL WAS TO WALK 50 MILES DURING THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER. I WAS IN A CHALLENGE WITH THREE OTHERS, AND THE FIRST HALF OF THE MONTH I SLACKED FROM THE 1ST TO THE 16TH I WENT ON A TOTAL OF FOUR (4) WALKS FOR ABOUT 6-MILES TOTAL. WHEN I WENT TO CHECK THE LEADERBOARD I REALIZED I WAS IN LAST PLACE, AND ALL OF A SUDDEN, THAT SAME MOTIVATED FEELING THAT CAME OVER ME BACK IN 2014 PREPARING FOR CANCUN, CAME OVER ME AGAIN. I COULD NOT COME IN DEAD LAST ON THIS CHALLENGE! I AM A COMPETITIVE PERSON BY NATURE, AND THE THOUGHT OF BEING LISTED AS LAST PLACE DID NOT SIT WELL WITH MY SPIRIT 😡 FROM THAT MOMENT ON, I DEDICATED MYSELF TO WALKING EVERY DAY UNTIL THE LAST DAY OF THE MONTH TO GET OUT OF LAST PLACE. I KNEW IT WASN'T LIKELY FOR ME TO HIT THE CHALLENGE GOAL OF 50 MILES AT THIS POINT, BUT I REFUSED TO COME IN LAST PLACE. SO I DID JUST THAT, EVERY DAY FROM SEPTEMBER 18TH - 30TH I WALKED, AND WHEN THERE WERE DAYS I MISSED I WALKED MORE ON THE OTHER DAYS TO MAKE UP FOR IT. BY THE END OF THE MONTH I WAS WALKING OVER 3 MILES SOME DAYS, AND YOU KNOW WHAT... I ENDED THAT CHALLENGE WITH JUST OVER 30 MILES LOGGED, AND I CAME IN 1ST PLACE!

IT WAS SUCH AN ACCOMPLISHMENT, COMING FROM BEING DEAD LAST AND COMMITTING TO SOMETHING, SEEING IT THROUGH AND ENDING UP IN FIRST PLACE AFTER ALL MY HARD WORK, A REAL LIFE EXAMPLE OF SEEING YOUR HARD WORK PAY OFF! AT THAT MOMENT, I KNEW I NEEDED A GOAL, SOMETHING TO WORK TOWARDS. IN 2014 THE GOAL WAS "LOSE WEIGHT FOR A TRIP TO CANCUN" AND THIS TIME IT WAS "WALK 50 MILES IN SEPTEMBER TO WIN A COMPETITION" BOTH INSTANCES, I FELT A LEVEL OF MOTIVATION THAT I HAD RARELY EVER FELT OTHERWISE. SO I KNEW I NEEDED ANOTHER GOAL/CHALLENGE FOR OCTOBER, AND DECIDED MY GOAL WAS GOING TO BE TO CLOSE ALL OF MY RINGS ON MY APPLE WATCH, AND THAT'S WHAT I DID. EVERY DAY FOR 31 DAYS I CLOSED MY ACTIVITY, EXERCISE AND STAND RING, THAT PAIRED WITH TRACKING MY FOOD AND STAYING WITHIN MY ALLOTTED CALORIES, I LOST 10.4 LBS IN OCTOBER! I HAD TO TAKE IT SLOWER IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER FOR PERSONAL REASONS, BUT CONTINUED EXERCISING AS MUCH AS I COULD (MAINLY WALKING) AND STILL BEING CONSISTENT WITH MY EATING AND TRACKING MY FOOD. I LOST ANOTHER 7.2 LBS BETWEEN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2020.

HOW ITS GOING:

JANUARY 1, 2021, I WEIGHED IN, AND I WAS A TOTAL OF 50 LBS DOWN FROM JANUARY 1, 2020! I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT. 50 LBS LOST. WHAT AN ACCOMPLISHMENT. I WAS SO PROUD OF MYSELF (STILL AM). BUT I WASN'T FINISHED, I STILL HAD MORE WEIGHT TO LOSE, AND I COULD FINALLY SEE MY BODY'S POTENTIAL, SO COULDN'T WAIT TO DROP THE REST OF THE EXCESS WEIGHT AND FOCUS MORE ON TONING AND STRENGTHENING MY BODY. SO HERE WE ARE FEBRUARY 1, 2021, ONE MONTH INTO THE NEW YEAR AND I'M ANOTHER 4.2 LBS DOWN. 4.2 LBS CLOSER TO MY GOAL WEIGHT, AND READY TO CRUSH FEBRUARY'S GOALS!

THANKS FOR READING ABOUT MY JOURNEY THUS FAR, TO KEEP UP WITH ME AND MY JOURNEY TO LIVING A HEALTHIER SUSTAINABLE, MORE ACTIVE LIFESTYLE (AND OF COURSE DROPPING THESE LBS!), FOLLOW ME ON INSTAGRAM @MORALOFTHESTORY ____ (3 UNDERScores)

AND ALWAYS REMEMBER... #PROGRESSNOTPERFECTION ✨



NOW FOR THE GOOD STUFF!

CHECK OUT A SUMMARY OF SOME OF THE THINGS THAT I BELIEVE PLAYED A PART IN MY SUCCESSFUL WEIGHT-LOSS DURING 2020 AND ONGOING, AS WELL AS SOME HELPFUL TIPS I HAVE TO SHARE WITH OTHERS ON THIS JOURNEY, OR THOSE WHO ARE THINKING ABOUT STARTING THEIR JOURNEY!

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**ONE SHOULD NOT COMPARE THEIR PROGRESS TO OTHERS. EVERYONE'S BODY IS DIFFERENT AND SO IS THEIR WEIGHT-LOSS JOURNEY. THIS E-FILE WAS CREATED TO SHARE WHAT HAS WORKED FOR ME PERSONALLY, IN HOPES THAT IT CAN HELP SOMEONE ELSE ON THEIR JOURNEY, BUT IN NO WAY DOES THIS E-FILE GUARANTEE WEIGHT LOSS, OR ANY OTHER CLAIMS, WRITTEN OR IMPLIED.*



THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION I KEEP GETTING...

WHAT DID YOU DO TO LOSE WEIGHT?

Prior to starting this journey, I mentally prepared myself, and devised an action plan. I knew this time had to be different, to be successful, so I had to change my mindset on how I approached things.

I always heard or read “weight loss is **80% Diet** (*calories in*) and **20% Exercise** (*calories out*)” pointing out that what you consume is so much more important than exercise (*don’t get me wrong exercise is very important, and as you lose weight it becomes even more necessary, but for now let’s focus on the bigger picture which is your diet*).

Basically, if you are working out every day, but you are still not changing your eating habits, you will see little to no change. But if you make a significant change to your eating habits, even with little to no exercise, you can see results, and for some it may be significant weight loss, with limited exercise. Everyones body, metabolism, etc. is different, so I am only speaking from my personal experience, but I can attest that I lost weight with better eating habits, and little to no exercise in the first months of my journey.

So my first focus was, get my eating right, I knew I was going to need to exercise, but this was not step 1 on my plan to a healthier lifestyle, figuring out how I was going to improve my eating habits was.

So I thought about all the “not so great” eating habits I have become accustomed to over the years, and made a list and then countered the list with what I could do to improve on that “not so great” habit.

Example List

| Current Eating Habits | Improved Eating Habits (Goal) |
|--|---|
| Skipping meals and snacking in lieu of eating a complete meal | Aim to eat 2-3 meals a day, and on days when I can’t sit down and eat a meal, opt for a meal replacement shake or smoothie, that has nutritional value |
| Eating a lot of fast food and processed food | Aim to cook more at home, and eat out less |
| Drinking a lot of juice and soda, and rarely | Replace juice/soda with zero calorie/diet |



| | |
|---|--|
| ever drinking water | options to avoid the empty calories, and incorporate more water daily, slowly working my way up to at least 64oz a day |
| Eating/snacking late at night (after 10pm) on a regular basis | Try intermittent fasting, and aim to not eat/snack within 3-hours of going to bed. |

After creating my list, I decided I would try incorporating 1-2 changes at a time, to see what worked for me, and to also ensure I did not become overwhelmed or restrictive in my meal plan.

I will say, some things worked very well for me and I was able to incorporate them into my daily life, as a true lifestyle change, while other things took some real effort and getting used to, and I had to approach it slowly taking “baby steps” to be able to successfully incorporate it into my lifestyle. Then there were those things that were just a complete and EPIC fail, I couldn’t do it, couldn’t do it consistently, was miserable doing it, it was restrictive, etc. so after a lot of trying, some things on my list just didn’t serve my journey of creating **sustainable non-restrictive lifestyle changes**, so they got crossed off, in place of other things that better served my journey.

A weight loss journey is all about trial and error, figure out what works for you--stick to the things that do, and don’t stress over the things that don’t!

Creating healthy sustainable changes will prove to reap success overtime, it’s not a race, there is no time limit. Remember that! Your only competition is yourself, today’s you is trying to be better than yesterday’s you, and that should be your only focus. How can I make ME better, how can I make ME more healthy, how can I make ME more active. No one elses journey compares to yours, so don’t create some fictitious timeline for yourself that will end up having you discouraged, and doubting your progress. Take it **ONE DAY AT A TIME. #BabySteps #ProgressNotPerfection.**

After creating my list and determining my first set of goals towards improving my eating habits, I knew the next step for me was to make sure I knew exactly what I was putting into my body and when.

I used trackers such as **myfitnesspal** and/or **loseit** app to track all my food and water intake. I like both for different reasons, so I suggest testing them out to see which works best for you. Currently I am using myfitnesspal, and used that for the majority of my journey, overall I think it is my preferred tracking app of the two, at the moment.



One nice thing about the tracking apps--you can enter all your stats (such as sex, age, height, weight) as well as your goals (gain, lose, maintain weight) and the rate in which you wish to do so (ranging from 0.5lbs per week to 2lbs per week, for weightloss), as well as your estimated activity level (sedentary, somewhat active, active, very active, etc.). After entering all the information, the app will tell you what your allotted calorie consumption is daily.

The accuracy of the information entered in the app is imperative to receive accurate outputs. I personally opted to list my activity level as sedentary, despite if I really was considered to be "Somewhat Active" because I knew if I listed that I do not do much activity, any activity I actually expended above what classifies as "sedentary" was just extra calories burned for me. Instead of risking saying I was more active than I actually was, which would cause my allotted calories to be higher, and I ran the risk of over eating based on false data.

RECOMMENDATION Select the lowest activity level, to prevent over estimating your calories burned.

As stated above, the app allows you to select what you are trying to accomplish and the speed in which you are trying to accomplish it. I decided I wanted to aim to lose 1-2 lbs per week, so I entered my data, and then selected 2lbs a week first, to determine what my calorie allotment would be, then I changed it to 1lb, and then again to maintenance.

This gave me a clear picture of:

Maintenance: *how many calories I could eat AND NOT GAIN WEIGHT*

Lose 1lb per week: *how many calories I could eat and lose 1 lb per week*

Lose 2lb per week: *how many calories I could eat and lose 2 lbs per week*

All three of these numbers were so important to my weight loss success, and to my overall journey of creating sustainable non-restrictive eating habits.

On days when I had plan's or wanted to go out to eat/treat myself, I would focus on not eating more than my MAINTENANCE calorie allotment.

All other times, I would stick between the 1-2 lb loss, calorie allotment. On really good days I would eat the lesser calories (2lb loss) and any other time, I would aim to not eat more than the 1lb per week loss, calorie allotment.

Advice: Know your numbers, and create a plan for yourself to stick within the range. Sticking to once calorie allotment can feel restrictive, so giving yourself a range that aligns with your goals is very helpful in creating sustainable changes.



****IMPORTANT REMINDER**** Going over your calorie allotment one day will not cause you to gain fat, even going over for a couple days will not cause you to gain fat, 3,500 calories = 1lb, so if you consume more than 3,500 calories, and do not offset it with burning calories, then you will gain weight.

But remember, our bodies naturally burn calories (*at rest, and during regular daily activities*) so determining your BMR is also important (Basal Metabolic Rate) which tells you how many calories your body naturally burns (*which differs from the maintenance calorie allotment, as it does not take into account your weight goals, it only estimates the amount of calories your body burns naturally*).

All data outputs are estimates based on data you input, so nothing will be a perfect representation, or perfectly accurate, but it gives a good baseline for you to work off of.

[Here's](#) a link to calculate BMR, if you are interested. The site provides an example chart, based on a 25 year old, female who is 5'5 and 160 lbs.

BMR Calculator

The *Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR) Calculator* estimates your basal metabolic rate—the amount of energy expended while at rest in a neutrally temperate environment, and in a post-absorptive state (meaning that the digestive system is inactive, which requires about 12 hours of fasting).

US Units **Metric Units** Other Units

Age ages 15 - 80

Gender ☐ male ☒ female

Height feet inches

Weight pounds

[+ Settings](#)

Calculate **Clear**

Result

BMR = 1,472 Calories/day

Daily calorie needs based on activity level

| Activity Level | Calorie |
|---|---------|
| Sedentary: little or no exercise | 1,766 |
| Exercise 1-3 times/week | 2,023 |
| Exercise 4-5 times/week | 2,156 |
| Daily exercise or intense exercise 3-4 times/week | 2,281 |
| Intense exercise 6-7 times/week | 2,539 |
| Very intense exercise daily, or physical job | 2,796 |

Exercise: 15-30 minutes of elevated heart rate activity.
Intense exercise: 45-120 minutes of elevated heart rate activity.
Very intense exercise: 2+ hours of elevated heart rate activity.

**Image and information courtesy of calculator.net/bmr-calculator*

Her BMR is 1,472, and based on a sedentary activity level, the BMR calculator identifies 1,766 calories are her calorie needs based on her activity level.

In comparison, MyFitnessPal app, using the same data calculated the BMR as:

BMR Calculator

Your estimated BMR is: **1,472** calories/day*

*BMR based on the Mifflin - St. Jeor equations. Please remember that even the best BMR calculators provide only a best guess and should be used as a guide only.

**Image and information courtesy of myfitnesspal.com*



And the calorie allotment is 1,840 per day, which is 74 calories more than what calculator.net reflected. So very comparable data.

Your Suggested Fitness And Nutrition Goals

Congratulations! Your personalized diet and fitness profile is now complete. Based on your answers, here are your suggested nutrition and fitness goals.

| Nutritional Goals | Target |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Net Calories Consumed* / Day | 1,840 Calories / Day |
| Carbs / Day | 230.0 g |
| Fat / Day | 61.0 g |
| Protein / Day | 92.0 g |

*Net calories consumed = total calories consumed - exercise calories burned. So the more you exercise, the more you can eat!

**Image and information courtesy of myfitnesspal.com*

All of that to say--if you know you have things planned, that may cause you to not be able to adhere to your daily calorie allotment, no worries! Focus on your overall weekly calories consumed, and make adjustments throughout the week to ensure you net your total weekly allotted calories, even though there are days you will go over your daily allotment.

Example: If you are allotted 1,400 calories per day, that is a weekly allotment of 9,800 calories. Lets say, you know you are going out of town for the weekend, and will not stick to your 1,400 calories, let's say you plan to eat 2,200 calories on Saturday and Sunday (*in an effort to enjoy yourself and not feel deprived*), that's a total of 4,400 calories for 2 of 7 days in the week, leaving you with 5,400 calories for the other 5 days, which is 1,080 calories per day,

****It is not recommended to consume less than 1,200 calories per day to ensure proper nutrition, and healthy weight loss (everydayhealth.com),*** so that means you are short 120 calories per day x 5 days, for a total of 600 calories for the week. You can either decrease your calories over the weekend to make up this 600 to allow you to eat at least 1,200 calories on the other 5 of 7 days (*this could be only eating 1,900 calories instead of 2,200 calories on Saturday and Sunday*) or you can incorporate exercise that will help you burn the additional calories, so you can eat 1,200 calories per day m-f and then eat the 2,200 calories on Saturday and Sunday.

It is all about balance and working within your numbers! Find ways to make your weightloss journey work for your life, you shouldn't have to make your life work for your weightloss journey!



****Remember**, the goal is sustainable, non-restrictive lifestyle changes, by making healthier choices, and being more active, and finding your balance, so you can still enjoy life, the foods you love, and lose weight--all at the same time.

Also remember--not eating enough calories can cause you to hold on to fat, preventing you from losing weight.

Again, it is a balancing act, and your success will come through trial and error, with time. Be patient, and do not get discouraged.

Summary of what I did to Lose Weight (Diet 80%):

- ★ I tracked all the foods I ate, and beverages I consumed, to ensure I knew how many calories I was consuming, and to ensure I was sticking to my calorie allotment daily/weekly.
- ★ I try to weight/measure all my food (this is tedious, but well worth the time commitment)

****RECOMMENDATION**** I recommend weighing your food over measuring it... you would be surprised how easy it is to over pack a measuring cup, and end up underestimating your calorie consumption significantly. The SCALE will not lie. The weight is the weight.

****If you have been tracking your food and sticking to you plan, and you are not losing, or you are gaining, start weighing your food/portions, this could be the cause--you could be underestimating your calorie consumption due to inaccurate measurements of your food!**

- ★ I determined my "Maintenance" calories via the myfitnesspal app, and I made every effort to **NOT** exceed this number on a regular basis, without making adjustments throughout the week to offset.
- ★ **I determined my BMR-** I aim to eat between my BMR calorie calculation and my maintenance calorie calculation (range) when I know I am having a day of rest (no exercise, no increased activity level) to help ensure I do not overeat on the days I will not be doing much activity wise, to offset it.

Again, giving myself this *range* to avoid feeling restricted, and enabling me to still enjoy my meals.

- ★ Increased my water intake gradually to get to a min of 64oz a day



- ★ Limit my consumption of juice/soda, either swapping it out for a zero calorie/diet juice/soda, or juicing my own fresh fruits and vegetables (*the healthier option, but also the more expensive and time consuming option*), only drinking them with one meal a day (in moderation) making it fit into my calorie goals for the day
- ★ Use meal replacement smoothies/shakes as needed/wanted
- ★ I incorporated more fiber and protein into my diet, to help me stay/feel fuller longer
- ★ I ate more green vegetables, and when I did not get in a good amount of green vegetables, I took a “greens” supplement. The greens supplement also worked well to help curb cravings.
- ★ I found different recipes/meal ideas and tried them, and those that I liked I incorporated into my daily life. I have found meal ideas from many diets such as Keto, 21DayMealPlan, GreenSmoothieCleanse, etc. and although I am not doing any of those diet plans, incorporating health meals from different plans that I can work into my daily calorie goals, has been so beneficial to my success. Finding foods I enjoy that are healthier and more nutritious for my body makes me want to eat them, and I don't think of it as “i am eating healthy” instead, I am just eating foods I enjoy, that happen to be healthy for me!
You don't have to follow a specific meal plan/diet to enjoy the foods dedicated to that plan/diet
- ★ I made changes to certain things I ate/drank that replaced a higher calorie version, or higher carb or “less clean” version with a better option. An example of this is eating brown rice pasta, instead of regular pasta, or brown rice instead of white rice, mixing my rice with cauliflower rice, which significantly decreases the calorie and carb content, but doesn't completely remove the flavors, and consistency of the food you enjoy. Swapping out regular milk for a nut milk alternative, etc.

Again, I still eat and drink the things I like, and have always eaten/drank, but I am more mindful of my consumption of those foods/beverages that are not as nutritious, or have a high calorie content. I incorporate them into my meals as they will fit in my allotted calories, and on days where they won't, I make adjustments. Making my shake with unsweetened cashew milk (25 cals/8oz) instead of 2% white milk (130 cals/8oz) gives me 105 calories back, which could be a couple oreo's for dessert. There are trade offs, so when I am having a low activity day, and I don't want to eat more than *lets say* 1,200 calories for example, it's totally worth it to me to swap out regular milk for a nut milk, and save 100 calories, so I can enjoy a couple cookies. **#Balance**

Find what trade offs are worth it to you, and incorporate those items, and adjust your meal plan accordingly/as needed, to ensure you are hitting your calorie numbers.



At the end of the day weight loss is all about a calorie deficit, burn more calories than you consume, so that was my sole focus, track my calorie intake, and my calories burned, to stay within my numbers, to ensure weight loss occurred, and it worked.

Yes, I could have eaten a day's worth of calories in cake, but making healthier food choices benefits your body in so many more ways than just "losing weight". Improved nutrition will not only promote weight loss, but can improve the clarity of your skin, your hair, your energy levels, your sleep, and your overall mood (as well as many other things)--again all things I have witnessed first hand during my journey. Will this be the case for everyone, no, but it may help some of these things improve, and there is a long list of other benefits as well. Do your research, and then go through trial and error to see what works best for you and your body. Regardless of the many different benefits that can be seen from a healthier diet, nourishing your body with the right foods, should be all the reason to start making small but impactful changes to your food choices.

- ★ I started incorporating supplements into my day to day, such as collagen, protein, pre-workout, recovery essential amino acids, multivitamins, etc. Some supplements I would take regularly (*for instance, protein powder, and collagen, daily or a few days per week, multivitamin daily*) and others I would take as needed (*for instance, pre-workout or post workout recovery*)

I am not a licensed medical provider, and in no way am I telling anyone to take supplements, or what supplements to take, I am only sharing my experience, and what I did throughout my journey. Always do your own research before you begin taking new supplements, and it is highly recommend and encouraged that you also speak with your primary care physician/healthcare provider before starting a supplement regime

- ★ I tried to remember to drink water before eating a meal, to help feel fuller sooner, to prevent overeating.
- ★ Was mindful of my sodium intake, as I noticed when I ate foods with a high sodium content, I would be easily bloated, and would retain water for days, which was not only an uncomfortable feeling, but it also didn't help the scale go in the right direction

BLOAT/WATER RETENTION is REAL!!! If you are doing everything right, and you still feel bloated/puffy, or the scale is not budging, check your sodium intake, and reduce it, and drink more water.

A weekend of eating and drinking whatever I want that was carb heavy and sodium heavy foods, caused the scale to go up 4lbs in 2 days, obviously this wasn't 4 lbs of fat gained in two 2-days, it was water retention and bloat due to "less than clean" eating. One day back on track, and the 4-lbs was gone!



This is a reminder to not let the scale be the end all be all either, there are so many reasons our weight can fluctuate, so don't get tied to the number, get tied to improving your habits overall and being cognizant of what you put in your body and when!

- ★ Intermittent Fasting--I do it when I can but I honestly do my own more relaxed version of it--I generally try not to eat solid foods until later in the day (after 12pm) but I will have liquids such as coffee, tea, green smoothies, protein shakes, and then I aim to eat my meals between 12pm-8pm. The EPIC fail was realizing I am such a night owl, that when I stay up until 1am-2am, not eating after 8pm is extremely difficult--so I TRY not to eat at least 3-hours before bed (*again, not consistent with this at all, but when I have really good days, I do it and i'm successful, and when I don't it's no biggie*) *It's much easier for me to go until the afternoon/early evening without eating solids, than it is for me to do it at night. This is something I am still working on, and am going through the motions of trial and error to see if I can find a timeframe that works better for me and allows me to consistently not eat within 3-hours of bedtime. One thing I am working on as part of this, is trying to get on a better sleep schedule, which may help with the late night hunger!*
- ★ **SLEEP!** Sleep is so important, on a weightloss journey, Getting enough sleep will help you in the long run. I try to get 7-8 hours a night, again this is one of the area's of my journey I have not mastered, I still struggle with going to sleep at a decent hour, which would allow for 7-8 hours of rest. Trial and error, until I find the answer, but I am working on it, and can say those days I do get a full night's rest, I always feel better, and more energized which helps me tackle the day!

Summary of what I did to Lose Weight (Exercise 20%):

- ★ I calculated my OHRR (Optimal Heart Rate Range) and aimed to hit within that range during all cardiovascular workouts. OHRR is 50-70% of your maximum heart rate, and staying within that range when exercising, helps you achieve the associated cardiovascular benefits! You can learn more about OHRR, and how to calculate yours online, you can google it, or you can use the site I used when calculating mine, [here](#). I have also inserted a quick explanation on how to calculate it yourself, since it is a very easy equation:

*"You can **calculate your maximum heart rate** by subtracting **your age** from 220. For example, if **you're** 45 years old, subtract 45 from 220 to get a **maximum heart rate** of 175. This is **the average maximum** number of times **your heart** should **beat** per minute during exercise" (mayoclinic.org)*



*Your OHRR is 50-70% of your maximum heart rate, so based on this example, a 45 year olds maximum heart rate is 175bpm, therefore their Optimal Heart Rate Range would be between **87.5bpm (50%)** and **122.5bpm (70%)**. Keeping their heart rate in this range during exercise will produce the most cardiovascular benefits.*

- ★ I use an activity tracker (Apple Watch) to help me measure my activity levels and calories burned
- ★ I set a goal for myself to close all of my apple watch rings, this ensures I am getting in exercise daily (note: I do not close my rings every day, but I aim to).
- ★ I ensure I incorporate 1-2 REST DAYS per week, this could be a full on rest day where you don't do any activity/exercise, or it could be an "active" rest day where you do something like going for a walk. I tend to try to have one FULL REST DAY and one ACTIVE REST DAY, and then the other 5-days I get in at least a 30 minute workout, which again, could just be a walk/jog.

***It is important to note, for the first ~8 months of my journey, primarily all of my workouts/exercise was walking. I did a few other things, like the rower, bike, or some video workouts here and there, but in the beginning stages of my journey, exercise was limited, but I did mainly walk, and once I got more consistent with my exercise, it still primarily involved walking, until later in my journey when I started incorporating more HIIT workouts, and some strength and core training. Even today, my default exercise is walking, although I have built up more endurance now, so I try to do a walk/run or walk/jog when I can, and I tend to work longer/farther distances now as well.*

When I first started out in early 2020, I was only walking about $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ of a mile, and I have since worked my way up to being able to easily and enjoyably walk 5 miles or more, and I try to at least walk 2-3 miles, when I walk as my workout now. Again this is after over a year of incorporating exercise into my daily life, and it took alot to get to where I am today, so start slow, and give yourself small goals. Instead of trying to walk for "X" miles, just WALK, say you are going to walk for 15 minutes, and then 20, then 30, and eventually, say you will walk until you don't feel like you can anymore, before you know it that $\frac{1}{4}$ mile will turn into 1 mile, and then 2, and then 3... remember, small sustainable changes, set realistic goals for yourself, and never go from 0 to 100, especially with exercise, if you go too hard too fast you will definitely risk injury, which can slow down your overall progress, so please remember it is not a race or competition, take it one step at a time, one day at a time **#babysteps your only competition is your yesterday self.**

- ★ *Regardless of what I did, exercise wise, I just tried to be mindful to **GET UP AND MOVE**, which is why my Apple Watch has been such a huge piece to my weightloss puzzle,*



their fitness infrastructure and closing rings, really helps motivate me to GET UP and CLOSE THOSE RINGS, which ensures I am getting in my daily exercise!

****RECOMMENDATION**** *If you do nothing else, aim to get in at least 10k steps per day! This in itself with no other exercise can show weight loss success when paired with improved/healthier eating habits and maintaining a calorie deficit--I have seen this first hand in myself during my weight loss journey!*

There are so many fitness trackers out there, such as fitbit, garmin, etc. so find a fitness tracker you like, and invest in it. It doesn't have to be an Apple Watch, it can be anything that will help you track your activity, but I will say my preference has been the Apple Watch, and I have owned both a fitbit, and garmin in the past. I find Apple's platform to be more motivating for ME than others were.

- ★ *Switch it up! I tried to make sure I switched up my workouts so I wouldn't get bored with them, even when walking, I would walk different routes to see different scenery, or sometimes I would go to the track instead of walking in my neighborhood. When the weather is nice, I would go on hikes, or bike riding.*

****RECOMMENDATION**** *Find activities that you enjoy doing, and do those as your exercise (i.e. swimming, tennis, basketball, football, etc.). If you are doing something you enjoy, it won't feel like exercise, and you won't dread having to do it!*

- ★ **Determine what motivates you!** *I have a competitive spirit, so competing with others, as well as myself is a huge motivator for me. I joined different workout/exercise challenges throughout my journey which helped motivate me to hit my goals, and at times even exceed them (significantly) because I was motivated not to come in last place in the challenge, or I was motivated to come in 1st place! Creating challenges for yourself--I challenged myself to close all of my apple watch rings for the month of October, and every day I got up and got my workout in, my steps, in my stand goal, etc. so I could prove to myself that I could close all my rings for an entire month straight. It was such an awesome feeling to accomplish what I set out to.*
 - *Seeing other's (friends, or people I follow on social media, or my friends/family I share Apple Watch activity with), getting their workout in, closing their rings, hitting goals, helped keep me motivated, and more often than not would give me the push I needed to get off the couch and complete my workout.*



- ★ *I incorporated supplements as needed, such as pre-workout and post workout recovery, on days where I did not have a lot of energy the pre-workout helped alot to get me going, and have a very good workout. When I worked out hard, and expected pain/soreness to follow, I would take the post workout recovery as needed--this really helped limit muscle tightness, pain and discomfort post workout. Especially after leg day!*

I am not a licensed medical provider, and in no way am I telling anyone to take supplements, or what supplements to take, I am only sharing my experience, and what I did throughout my journey. Always do your own research before you begin taking new supplements, and it is highly recommend and encouraged that you also speak with your primary care physician/healthcare provider before starting a supplement regime

****RECOMMENDATION** SURROUND YOURSELF WITH OTHERS ON A SIMILAR JOURNEY/MISSION!**

- ★ I followed so many people across social media platforms, that were on a weightloss journey, successfully completed their journey of weight loss and are now in maintenance mode, those who provide health meal inspiration, those who provide workout/fitness inspiration etc. My timeline/feed is full of all the things **I NEED TO SEE** to help keep me motivated, and be successful. If fast food was always popping up on my feed, best believe I would likely be tempted to go out and get some, but surrounding myself with **ALL THE THINGS THAT SERVE ME AND MY JOURNEY**, helps keep me on track!
- ★ If you have friends/family/co-workers who are on a similar journey, create an accountability group, or find an accountability partner. Check in with each other and help motivate one another and keep eachother on track. A few of my friends were on a similar mission, and we checked in with each other informally, provided encouragement, and motivation, and it was so helpful. When I had "down" days, I could always count on my circle to give me some level of motivation or encouragement to help me push through. More often than not, they probably weren't even aware they were doing it. Sometime something as simple as seeing one of my friends complete their workout, would be the motivation I needed to get up and do mine.
- ★ If you don't have it, make it. If you don't have an accountability partner, or group, make your own! Accountability partners are not for everyone and that is okay, but if you know that it may be an asset to have during your journey, don't hesitate to create your own version of an accountability platform. Something as simple as an Instagram page to document your journey, can be helpful. Even if you don't want to share it with anyone, and it is just for you, it is something you can look back to daily, weekly, or anytime down the line to remember your efforts, your goals, your successes and failures, and it can help motivate you to keep going. **So again, find your motivation, and your inspiration, and surround yourself with it!**



My Final Thoughts:

Throughout my journey, I have learned, this is such a mental game. It is much more mental than it is physical. Before starting such a journey, I feel it is important to mentally prepare yourself for all it entails, and create a plan for yourself that you can continue to revise, and improve upon throughout your journey. Giving yourself a starting point, will help set you up for success in the long run. I also believe, trial and error are the journey, try new things, see what works, stick to the things that do, and go back to the drawing board on the things that don't.

For so many years, I gave myself time constraints on when I needed to lose "X" lbs, and I have found (for me) that is not necessary. Yes, it is good to have goals, and give yourself a timeline, but in doing so, remember it is not a race, and there is no finish line, because it is not a "diet" it is a lifestyle change, so no matter if it takes 6 months or 24 months+ to reach your ultimate goals, as long as you remain consistent, and give it your all, you will get there in due time.

Enjoy the process, and be kind to yourself. You always hear, "you didn't gain all the excess weight overnight, so you won't lose it overnight" and that is a very accurate statement. Small changes over time turn into big changes.

Don't discount your progress, celebrate it! A loss is a loss, and maintaining is not gaining, which is the goal when on a weightloss journey... and even when you do gain, don't get discouraged, there are so many reasons why that can happen, just use that as motivation to go harder.

Pictures and measurements are so important for tracking your progress. The scale is not the only tool. There can be two people that both weigh in at the same exact weight, same height, same age and sex, and their body composition can be completely different. If you are doing more strength and core workouts, you could be building muscle which may not reflect as a loss on the scale, but those measurements and pictures will show how your body is changing even when the scale doesn't.

Save all the pictures you take that you want to delete, these are the photos you are going to want to look back on months from now to compare your progress. Don't delete them, you won't regret it when it comes time to compare your progress!

Find out your happy balance for weighing yourself. For some, that means daily, for others it means weekly, for some it means monthly, or even longer than that. For me, weighing in weekly has worked well, but I also track my weight a few times a week at times, to see the fluctuations, and compare that to my food journal, and



exercise journal (tracking in my apps). Based on that data sometimes I will switch things up to see if I see improvement. Use the scale as a tool, but don't let it control your journey, or your happiness and sanity.

Never give up, and never let a day off prevent you from getting right back to the goal the next day. A few days "off" of your regime will not undo all of your progress! Take a day when you need it, with every intention to get back to it the next, and then DO JUST THAT.

Do not get discouraged by slow weight loss or maintenance weeks, or if/when you hit a stall and the scale won't move. Use these situations as motivation to go harder, switch up your meal plan, your exercise routine, or both, and keep pushing until you see the results you are aiming for! No matter how long it takes. It's all about #progress, and again, it isn't a race, or a finish line, so just take it one day at a time.

Find ways to celebrate your accomplishments, and to "treat yourself" that are not food/drink related. It's nice to treat yourself to a slice of cake, or a dinner date when you hit a milestone on your journey, but instead of going for the food find other things that you can do to celebrate your accomplishment, like getting your nails done, or buying a new outfit, or even taking a trip/vacation!

If you are on a weightloss journey, it is possible you haven't had a good or healthy relationship with food. Prior to, and during your journey, work on building a healthier relationship with food, and know when to seek out additional help and guidance, there are many resources available, use them when you need them. It will only help you get closer to your goal! If you can find the root of your weight gain, you can work backwards from there to help find long lasting solutions, and habits to overcome whatever it is that played a part in the excess weight gain. Sometimes this means talking to a professional, to help you uncover these things, and that is okay! Self-love and self-awareness are a huge part of this journey as well, again so much more mental than physical. Learn yourself, love yourself, and take whatever steps are needed to help you better yourself and your health.

It is never too late to lose weight. It is never too late to live a healthier lifestyle. It is never too late to live a more active lifestyle. You just need to want it bad enough to start, and once you start you need to want it bad enough to keep going. FIND YOUR WHY, FIND YOUR MOTIVATION, FIND YOUR INSPIRATION, and then focus on those things, day in and day out, until you reach your goals. Then, set new goals, and reach those! We can do anything we put our minds to, we just have to want it bad enough!

I hope my journey can inspire at least one person, and I hope that the information, tips and recommendations outlined above, will aid someone in some way, shape, or form during their journey, everything I outlined here, helped me in some way, and I believe it can help someone else too!



*Thanks for reading, if you have any questions for me, please do not hesitate to reach out! I can be contacted via my website (www.hellovania.com), via email (hi@hellovania.com) or via Instagram (@moralofthestory___) *note there's 3 underscores at the end of my IG name*

*Please find an accompanying “**Weight-Loss Tips & Recommendations**” document that I drafted (which is a summary of what is discussed above) on the last page of this file.*

=====

Are you interested in me creating a document that outlines some of the products I used during my journey that I found to be beneficial for me? If so, shoot me a message (using one of the platforms above) and let me know!

WEIGHT LOSS TIPS & RECOMMENDATIONS

PREVENT OVEREATING

LIMIT CONSUMPTION OF EMPTY CALORIES

DRINK LOT'S OF WATER!

-I aim to drink a minimum of 64oz per day, and a maximum of half my body weight in oz.

Minimize your consumption of juices & soda's that are high in calories and sugar/carb content

Replace high calorie/sugar/carb beverages with freshly juiced fruits and vegetables as often as possible

Swap out regular soda for flavored carbonated water, or a zero calorie/zero sugar diet soda instead

Drink homemade smoothies (made with fresh/frozen fruits and vegetables) as a meal replacement. You can add fiber, collagen and protein supplements to your smoothies for the added nutrients/benefits)

Drink protein shakes as a meal/snack replacement

Increase your protein and fiber intake to stay/feel fuller longer

CURB CRAVINGS & REDUCE BLOATING

Start each day with a cup of freshly brewed green tea (hot or cold) with no additives *except* for fresh squeezed lemon juice (optional).

Drink a cup of water before each meal (min. 8oz) this can make you feel fuller sooner, and as a result you will eat less (consume fewer calories).

Drink 2oz of a warm water, Apple Cider Vinegar (ACV) and lemon juice mix before each meal *or* when you are having cravings, this may help curb your cravings and may curb your appetite overall, resulting in the consumption of fewer calories.

Take a "Greens" supplement, when taken once daily it could help reduce bloat, or take as needed when cravings arise to curb them.

"Smooth Move" herbal tea can help regulate bowel movements, which can help with bloat. Drink a cup at night before bed (as needed).

Intermittent Fasting & Aim to stop eating solid foods at least 3-hours before bedtime

Limit Sodium Intake
Limit Eating Out/Fast Food & Processed Foods
(you can not control the amount of sodium and sugar in these foods. It is best to make your food at home as often as possible to be in control of what ingredients are being used

EATING & CALORIE CONSUMPTION

Calculate your BMR (Basil Metabolic Rate)

which tells you how many calories your body naturally burns (at rest/regular daily activity)

**This Is your baseline for maintaining your weight, DO NOT consume more calories than your BMR*

Download a tracking app, such as **myfitnesspal** or **loseit** and determine your daily calorie consumption budget based on your weight/activity level/weightloss goals

Set your "Activity Level" as "Sedentary or Low" in your tracking app

**I recommend doing this because we do not always know what our activity level is, and/or it may not be consistent day to day. Setting it at this level will help prevent gross overstatements in your calorie allotment*

Track all foods you consume daily, and log them in your app -be sure to stay within your allotted calories

Weigh*/Measure all of your food prior to consumption

***I recommend weighing your food over measuring whenever possible, you would be surprised at how many calories are over consumed due to the inaccuracy of food measuring*

Portion Control

Stay within your calorie allotment **BUT** also eat the foods you love. A restrictive "diet" will not be sustainable long term. Make this a **lifestyle change.**

To lose weight you need to be in a calorie deficit.
3,500 calories = 1 lb
BUT you also need to eat enough calories to lose weight.
It's a balancing act.
It is recommended that women eat no less than 1,200 calories/daily for healthy weightloss

EXERCISING & CALORIES BURNED

Calculate your OHRR (Optimal Heart Rate Range)

Aim to hit within that range during all cardiovascular workouts, to achieve the cardiovascular benefits of exercising

Invest in a fitness tracker such as AppleWatch or FitBit to track daily calories burned/activity levels

Aim to exercise for atleast 30 minutes a day, or 60 minutes 3x per week.

REST DAY(S)

Incorporate 1-2 rest days per week. I recommend 1-active rest day and 1 full rest day
***on your full rest day be extra mindful of your eating and ensure you do not go over your allotted calories*

WALK-WALK-WALK

If you don't feel like doing anything else, just get up and WALK! Walking is a great way to be active, burn calories and requires no equipment. The first 8 months of my journey 85% of my exercise was just walking!

Do workouts that don't **feel** like workouts... make it fun by doing something you enjoy. Play Basketball, Tennis, Football. Go on a Hike, Go Swimming, etc.

Have an Accountability Partner or Group of Friends working towards similar goals. Keep each other motivated and hold each other accountable
===== Participate in Challenges/Bets that will help motivate you to exercise/get active AND test your limits!