

# **Success is Contagious**

## **A little bit of background...**

The majority of health issues in my family are completely lifestyle based and in high school I fluctuated between about 150 and 185 pounds (at 5'4" that was far from ideal). Until about two years ago I was completely unaccountable for my health and blamed it on my genes. In my early twenties I was lucky enough to travel and live outside of Canada for about four years. It was an incredibly awesome experience but health & wellness was completely pushed to the back burner.



Upon returning to Canada in 2011 I was hired at Stewart McKelvey and for the first year was a typical office worker. I didn't exercise and considered anything low-cal to be healthy.

## **During the journey...**

In the beginning, I struggled to find good information. I joined a gym but it wasn't a good fit for me and I didn't feel motivated to go so I paid for a membership that I didn't use. Eating well was hard – I lived with a roommate and we had to share cupboards, space and time in the kitchen. If I came home from work and saw her eating a bag of chips, I wanted a bag of chips.

My first real breakthrough was discovering my health plan covered seeing a registered dietitian. One of the activities was keeping a food journal (nothing crazy but it made me accountable for what was going in my mouth). EYE OPENER! I really believe that's what kickstarted my motivation.

On the advice of some coworkers I switched gyms and joined PWFC. Over the course of past year, I've adjusted my exercise and eating habits. In particular, the Results Program with Tammy and Laurie was an absolute game changer. The knowledge I gained from the nutrition sessions with Laurie is unbelievable – will power doesn't even come into the equation much anymore. I know the basics of what my body needs to feel good. She helped make reading labels something I want to do vs. something I feel obligated to do. I can pick up a product, read the label and that's what decides if it goes in the cart or back on the shelf.

In the beginning I never thought it would be possible to look forward to group fitness sessions – now I'm disappointed that I didn't sign up for Tammy's bootcamp! The instructors at PWFC are fantastic and the support I've received since becoming a member is beyond anything I ever expected. Totally cheesy I know, but there's a quote that really helped put it in perspective for me. Something along the lines of "if you were given a car at 16 years old and were told it had to last a lifetime, you'd put the premium fuel in it. Do that with your body." I'm sure I totally garbled that but the point is in there somewhere ☺

### **Final result & going forward...**

I feel awesome. I like making good decisions and helping myself feel even better. I'm conscious of calories but weight is not a controlling factor. I feel good at 140lbs and love that I can see some tone in my arms/shoulders. My pants fit really nice and I don't hit that wall at 3:00pm.

Going forward I'm definitely facing some challenges – I'm going to be spending the summer studying in Quebec and living with a host family. I've been buying and making my own food for years so this makes me a little nervous but I also think it's a great opportunity to focus on the tips I learned from Laurie (make good choices, "healthy plate", avoid mindless eating, get that protein & fibre, remember the general rule of <5% or >15%).

I saved my most recent fitness assessment from the end of the Results Program and am using that as motivation to work out even though I won't have the group classes to go to. At the end of the summer I'll do the fitness benchmarks again and see where I'm at! Going forward, I'm going to continue striving to improve and not strive for perfection – as long as I continue to change for the better it's all good ☺

The end!

If you got through this – well done you! haha

Thanks for reading and I'd also like to say a HUGE thank you for everything over the past year or so. You have definitely helped me change for the better and I really believe the habits I've created are here to stay ☺

Julie