

## My Story

My name is Courtney and I am a young Haligonian who is on a pursuit to become the best version of myself. For me, this does not mean perfection. The ingredient required for me to self-actualize is happiness, derived from combination of self-worth and purpose. This journey entails being comfortable and satisfied with myself as a whole, both physically and mentally.

Throughout the years, I've struggled to maintain a healthy weight. I have an underactive thyroid and low metabolism, and so I have dealt with the pangs of low energy levels and weight gain. I've tried numerous health diets but found it difficult to commit to them as I struggled to find a routine that worked well for me.

My motivation to change came with the realization that I needed to find a diet and exercise plan that suited my lifestyle – something that didn't feel like such a shift in the wrong direction. I was tired of always being slightly overweight, and it did a number on my self-esteem. I lacked self-confidence, which would advertently cause higher stress levels. One way to exude that stress energy was to exercise. Like most people, I hated to work out. I've heard before that it only takes 21 days for a routine to become a habit, and so I gave it a shot. In the beginning I had to push myself to get the workout done but after three weeks, things became easier and I eventually began to enjoy the workouts. Nothing beats the rush of endorphins you get sweating it out with exercise, and how accomplished it can make you feel.



Having decided to use my lunch breaks productively, I complete a 45 minute workout routine. You might think that working out on your lunch breaks would exhaust all your energy for the rest of the day, but it does the complete opposite! I was so much more energized after a mid-day workout that I could fly through my afternoon duties. No longer was I a sufferer of the 3:00pm slump. Being refreshed and recharged was instilling a greater work ethic in me and in turn, lowered my stress levels.

I like to run and since my main goal is weight loss, my workout involves a lot of cardio. I've learned from the trainers at Purdy's Wharf Fitness Center that strength training is a crucial part of achieving my fitness goals and that I would need to incorporate it into my routine. The trainer developed a weight training routine for me to follow, including various reps and intervals for me to do on each machine. This would ensure that I was exercising my legs, arms, core muscles, etc. I would tack on the weight training to my daily 30 minute run two to three times a week (every other day). I also learned from the trainers at PWFC that it's good to switch it up a bit, so I manipulate my pace and inclines on the treadmill, occasionally row or ride the bike, and there are days that I decide to get my sweat on outside the gym and go golfing or kayaking.

For my daily nutrition, I got into the habit of packing a healthy lunch (and snacks that keeps me going throughout the work day. Not to mention, I have been saving money since I don't feel tempted to buy my lunch. My meals include lean meats and lots of greens, and snacks vary from a handful of raw almonds to low fat cheese and apple slices. I've also upped the amount of water I drink daily. I was more of a coffee and tea drinker before but now I find myself craving water, especially before, during and after a workout.

I participated in the 10 week challenge with Purdy's Wharf Fitness Center and was ecstatic with my results. Although there were some slips in my diet, I was consistent with my workouts throughout the 10 weeks. I believe remaining active is the reason for the amount of inches I had trimmed off, compared to actual amount of weight I have lost. In the 10 weeks, I had lost 9 pounds and plenty of inches. The challenge was the push I needed to kick-start my new healthy lifestyle in gear. I'm down another 4 pounds since the challenge wrapped up, and I am now concentrating on shaping my body as I reach closer to my goal weight. Although this is a great start, I feel like it is just the beginning to my journey of becoming a better version of myself.

My accomplishments have positively changed me where I find myself less stressed, more energized, more confident, and best of all, happy with myself and my success thus far. I want my mental health, mood and body to grow stronger, and I believe I can accomplish that by setting new and exciting goals for myself. I want to better my body and increase my knowledge about fitness by reading up on health initiatives and trying new workouts like the yoga and pilates classes offered at PWFC.

One of my favorite quotes is "Be thankful for each new challenge, because it will build your strength and character." Today I am thankful for how far I have come, as I look forward to where this grand pursuit will lead me to.