



A Plant-Based Diet Cut My LDL Cholesterol in Half

By John Brown
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Like many people, I struggled with my weight from a very early age. I tried nearly every diet you can think of. They all worked for a short time, but as soon as I got bored and went back to the way I normally ate, I always gained the weight back, with interest.

My road to genuine lifelong health began in the summer of 2019. For just the second time ever, I traveled internationally. I went to Ghana to do some advance scouting for a school-sponsored trip we were planning for May 2020.

As anyone who has ever had to use a seatbelt extender knows, international travel is not meant for significantly overweight people. To get to West Africa takes a day's worth of packed flights. I sat as still as I could for hours on end, not wanting to interfere with other people's comfort, cursing my own size.

Ghana itself presented another set of weight-related challenges. For example, the group I traveled with went hiking a few days into the trip. At one point there was a rickety metal ladder leading up to an amazing view. At nearly 340 pounds and nursing my latent fear of heights, I stayed on solid ground while the rest of the group got the view of a lifetime. I realized that there was no way I was going to be able to keep up with a dozen high school juniors as unhealthy as I was.

New Resolve

By the end of the trip I was pondering different diets. I thought back to a few years earlier: I'd gone [whole-food, plant-based](#) after watching *Forks Over Knives* and lost 40 pounds in less than two months. People at work were calling me "The Incredible Shrinking Man."

Unfortunately, I approached it as a temporary diet, and eventually went back to my "normal" eating habits and regained the weight. But I never forgot how amazing I felt eating WFPB, or how easy it was to switch.

When I came home from Ghana, I was determined to try WFPB again. And if I needed any more convincing, my annual physical showed that my total [cholesterol](#) had shot up above 350. I'd never seen a cholesterol number that high, and it really concerned me. Would I be around

to watch my kids grow up?

That was all the motivation it took for me to turn back to plant-based eating. I bought [The China Study](#), rewatched *Forks Over Knives*, and updated my library with several books and documentaries that had come out since my last dalliance with WFPB living. I gave up caffeine and started eating a ton of plants for dinner every day.

Healthy for the Long Haul

Did it work? The results speak for themselves! Since going plant-based in July 2019, I've lost more than 100 pounds. My cholesterol has dropped 130 points. Even more significantly, I've cut my LDL cholesterol number in half. It's amazing what our bodies can do when we just get out of the way and let them work.

As far as fitness goes, I am now able to run for half an hour without stopping, which would have been utterly inconceivable to me back in early 2019, when I broke out into drenching sweat just walking up hills. Exercise is just as much a part of my everyday life as breathing or drinking water.

My aim is to slim down to 165 pounds, which I haven't weighed since seventh grade! That is not a fitness goal that can be achieved in a short period of time, but that's on purpose. I'm focused on building sustainable habits to ensure I'm as healthy as I can be for the rest of my life. More than anything, I need to break the diet mentality that has gripped me over the past few decades. This is not a short-term fix or break between periods of eating highly processed junk. Whole food, plant-based eating is a way of life.

Ready to get started? Check out our [Plant-Based Primer](#) to learn more about adopting a whole-food, plant-based diet.