



Where Are They Now? Updates from Some of Our All-Time Favorite Success Stories

By Lisa Esile, MS
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Aaron Calder: From Severe Liver Disease to Weight Training and Fitter Than Ever

There's nothing more inspiring and energizing for us than hearing how a whole-food, plant-based lifestyle has improved readers' health and well-being. Over the years, we've been deeply moved by stories of people reversing debilitating and sometimes life-threatening diseases. We've witnessed many do a U-turn on multiple generations' worth of poor eating habits, establishing a healthier way forward for their families. We've seen some who set out to improve their health in one area unexpectedly improve in other areas, as well—sometimes beyond their wildest dreams.

This week marks the 14th anniversary of Forks Over Knives. To celebrate, we caught up with a few of our favorite success stories from over the years. We hope you enjoy their updates as much as we have!

Editor's note: If you've improved your health after going whole-food, plant-based and would like to share your story—or if we've published your success story in the past and you'd like to let us know how it's going today—please do so [here](#)!

Almost 10 years ago, [Aaron Calder](#) reversed severe liver disease and a host of other health complications on a whole-food, plant-based diet. Today, Calder says he'll never go back, "My overall health and especially my liver disease have continued to improve. I joined the gym back in 2021, and I work out two hours a day, every day—something specialists said would never be possible. I have built a lot of muscle and have never felt better. I have learned plants do indeed have protein, and my physique and strength show it." Calder says that, over the years, many people have reached out to him about their own struggles with addiction and liver disease. "I have passed on my knowledge of what has helped me, and those people who have gone plant-based have seen their health improve, too."

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Pamela Footman: ‘I Lost 100 Pounds in a Year on a Plant-Based Diet—and Kept It Off, at 60!’

When we last saw [Pamela Footman](#) in 2022, she had just gone plant-based a year earlier and had already shed excess weight that she’d been carrying for decades. Today, Footman is more enthused than ever about the WFPB lifestyle and continues to enjoy her passions, such as swimming. “My doctors are absolutely amazed that I’m not taking medication to control high blood pressure, diabetes, or high cholesterol,” Footman says. Footman, who was 60 when she started on this journey, says, “It’s never too late for anyone to turn their life around and improve their health.”

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Amy Horn: From Overweight With Type 2 Diabetes to Ultramarathons

After going whole-food, plant-based six years ago, [Amy Horn](#) beat the disease that had plagued her family for generations: Type 2 diabetes. Her husband, Rod, was motivated to join her in the WFPB lifestyle after he suffered a widowmaker heart attack. Today, Amy and Rod remain plant-strong. Since we originally published her success story in 2021, Amy has run three ultramarathons and several 50K trail races, and writes, “My diabetes and autoimmune condition continue to be diet-controlled—no meds!” The couple continues sharing their story with others, inspiring several friends to cut back on dairy. Horn notes, “This whole food plant-based lifestyle works. I’ve even found great options in some airports.”

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Anthony Masiello: Young Dad Loses 160 Pounds and Passes Healthy Lifestyle on to the Kids

When he was just 33 years old, Anthony Masiello was denied a 20-year-term life insurance policy due to having high blood pressure and being morbidly obese. Wanting to be around to see his children grow up, [Masiello](#) adopted a WFPB diet and transformed his life. Nineteen years later, his dedication to the lifestyle remains strong. He turned his personal transformation into a [professional mission](#), founding Love.Life Telehealth, a platform that connects patients with lifestyle medicine doctors. “I look at the activities I did with my wife and kids as they were growing

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up—running, skiing, snowboarding, hiking, biking, skateboarding, jumping rope, and finding delicious healthy food in all our travels—and I couldn’t imagine living a better life,” Masiello says. “I sure am grateful that I was able to pass on my healthy lifestyle to my children, and we will never know what that might have looked like if I did not make these changes for myself first.”

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Tim Kaufman: From Sick, Disabled, and on Multiple Meds to Thriving on a Plant-Based Diet

When [Tim Kaufman](#) discovered Forks Over Knives 13 years ago, he was over 400 pounds, addicted to painkillers, nearly immobile, and taking more than 20 prescription medications a day. Fast-forward to today, Kaufman is a competitive endurance athlete, completely medication-free, and thriving alongside his wife, Heather. “Together, we’ve lost nearly 300 pounds—and gained a life we never thought possible.” writes Kaufman. Kaufman shares his biggest lessons: “The key to making this way of eating sustainable long-term is building a life I absolutely love. ... Without an optimal diet, I can’t live life to its fullest. I used to think it was all about the food—and that a better life was just a bonus. But now I see it differently. My focus is on living fully, with my diet as the foundation, along with gratitude, community, fitness, joy, mental clarity, and spiritual growth. I stay on this path not because I have to but because I genuinely love the life it’s given me—one filled with energy, purpose, and joy.”

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Dave Wegener: ‘I Dropped 100 Pounds in One Year by Ditching Animal Products, Processed Foods’

In 2021, we shared the story of [Dave Wegener](#), who had dropped 140 pounds since transitioning to a WFPB diet five years earlier. Today, Dave and his wife, Leah, remain committed to the plant-based lifestyle and say they will be for the rest of their lives. Since we published his story, Wegener says he’s been enjoying travel in comfort and with confidence, crossing off a bucket-list dream: Journey 1,300 miles, only by foot and train, from Centralia, Washington, to the house where he grew up in Northglenn, Colorado. The Wegeners’ home remains a plant-based safe haven. While Wegener has kept off most of the weight, he gained back [some of] the pounds when schools opened up after the pandemic. “I still feel great,” he writes. “People who haven’t seen me in years notice the change, and my medical/physiological issues are still reversed.” Wegener says, “I’ve begun what I call my ‘Phase II.’ Phase II is mindfully applying everything I know and have learned to lose those stubborn, remaining pounds slowly and steadily with the plant-strong, starch-based, minimally processed—plants (MPP) lifestyle—changes I intend to follow until I die.”

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Brittany Jaroudi: From High Blood Pressure and High Cholesterol at 25 to Thriving in Her 30s

Struggling with high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and obesity at only 25 years old, [Brittany Jaroudi](#) turned her life around when she adopted a WFPB diet. Since 2019, Jaroudi has grown a YouTube channel dedicated

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to sharing the plant-based lifestyle, and just [gave birth to her first child](#). Given Jaroudi's history of hypertension, health care workers pegged her as high-risk and initially expected to only let her pregnancy go to 37 weeks—but she ended up having a smooth, full-term pregnancy. “I felt like every time I showed up at the doctor, I was proving to them, ‘Look what this lifestyle can do,’” she says.

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Evon Dennis: Conquering Addiction to Processed Foods on a Plant-Based Diet

After years of struggling with refined-food addiction and compulsive overeating, [Evon Dennis](#) experienced significant improvements to her mental and physical health by going salt, oil, flour, alcohol, sugar (SOFAS) free and eating a diet of nothing but whole plant foods. In addition to weight loss, improved moods, and mental clarity, Dennis says there was one other major benefit: “The most pleasant surprise of all was that I no longer felt driven by addiction to junk foods.” Since we first shared her story in 2021, Dennis has remained chiefly on this diet, with one period of relapse. To stay on track, Dennis says that she focuses on fostering a peaceful life, prioritizing rest and ease—and staying clear on her “why.”

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