



## As a Young Dad I Lost 160 Pounds by Eating More—Lots More!

By Anthony Masiello  
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In October of 2005, I felt the pain that got me started on this journey. I came home from work and looked through the stack of mail on the counter. I found a letter from an insurance company about a life insurance policy I had applied for. I was a little anxious because I'd had issues getting insurance in the past. I opened the letter, and there it was: Denied. No mention of going into another risk category or getting follow-up medical assessment—just denied. This company would not sell me a 20-year-term life insurance policy, and I took it as a death sentence.

As I stood there, 33 years old, on medication for high blood pressure, weighing 360-plus pounds, with a 54-inch waist, I felt depressed and hopeless. Looking back, there were lots of good things in my life. I was happily married with an 18-month-old son and a second child on the way. We did lots of fun things like snowboarding, biking, skateboarding, and spending time with friends. At the same time, there were difficulties. It was painful for me to sit in armchairs, I overflowed the seat on airplanes, and I had to buy heavy-duty everything—from ladders to oversized kitchen and dining room chairs.

That December, I set a New Year's resolution to lose 50 pounds in 2006. I immediately gave up sweets and soda, and resolved to figure out how to just eat less. For the next few months I avoided sweets and soda and kept myself hungry, but I didn't lose a single pound. It was depressing. I still had time though, so I kept searching for something that would work.

In March of 2006, while browsing Amazon for weight-loss books, I came across Dr. Joel Fuhrman's book *Eat to Live*. I read the description, and it made a lot of sense to me. I read the reviews, and it sounded like it worked for a lot of people. I ordered the book, started reading it, and changed my diet immediately.

I focused on eating more, lots more. More fruits, vegetables, beans, whole grains, nuts, and seeds—and less of everything else. I let the good stuff crowd out the bad stuff I used to eat. It was a good plan for me. There were no feelings of failure, and I woke up every day on a

mission to eat more healthy plant foods than I had the day before. By the time my second son was born, just two months after starting, I was down 30 pounds! That was all the motivation I needed to keep pushing forward.

I continued eating more vegetables and fruit and cutting out everything else, including oil, breads, sauces, sweeteners, and even pizza. I ate huge salads, and tons of greens. I made big batches of bean chili with mushrooms and kale, and soups with broccoli and roasted red peppers. I ate everything over steamed spinach, kale, or broccoli, usually with a side of some other vegetable. I snacked on fresh fruit, raw carrots, or celery. I seriously ate more vegetables and fruit than I thought was possible. And it was working!

After those first two months of big weight loss, as my new diet became my new normal, I continued to lose almost exactly 8 pounds a month. I saw my doctor every two weeks so she could help me track my changes and ramp down my blood pressure medication. My doctor was very impressed with my weight loss and how my other ailments were clearing up.

After losing 90 pounds, I decided to start exercising for the first time in my life. I had so much energy, I needed to do something with it, so I started running! Actually, I started by walking. Then I would run for 30 seconds or until I lost my breath, and I'd go back to walking. I did that for 30 minutes every day, trying to run a little longer each time. I progressed quickly, until I could run a minute, then a quarter-mile, then a half-mile nonstop. Eventually, I could run a full mile. I would warm up, run a mile, take a walk break, and then run another! The runs got longer and the walk breaks got shorter until I could run for miles without stopping.

As the calendar flipped to 2007, I continued extending my running distances and eating more whole, plant-based foods, and almost nothing else. I lost about 8 pounds a month, every single month, until September 2007, when my weight loss stopped just as suddenly as it began.

At that point, I weighed 197 pounds and had dropped a

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total of 160 pounds! My blood pressure, triglycerides, and cholesterol levels were all ideal without medication, and I no longer got migraine headaches. My waist size had gone from 54 to a size 36! Oh, and I re-applied for that life insurance policy and got it—in the preferred category!

It's been 10 years now since I lost the weight, and I'm as steady now as I was then. I run and play with my kids the way they want me to, and I have the confidence of knowing that I'm truly healthy on the inside and will continue to be an active, healthy part of their lives for many, many years to come.