



# How I Lost Over 100 Pounds and Gained a New Perspective on a Plant-Based Diet

By Rob Bowsby  
November 30 2017

In November 2016, I was miserable, hopeless, depressed, and desperate. I was well over 300 pounds, ashamed of myself, and 100 percent uncomfortable all the time. I could barely get out of the car without wheezing, and people would flinch and give me dirty looks if they had to sit next to me on an airplane.

I went to the doctor twice in 2016 and my cholesterol ranged from 243 to 300, my blood pressure was 148/90, and my blood sugar was 116. My doctor prescribed all kinds of drugs, but I didn't want to keep taking them. I knew I could do better than a lifetime of medication that merely kept me miserably alive.

I'm raising my grandchildren at the moment. It's not all about me, so before I just let myself die, I decided to give it another shot. Previously, I had lost more than 100 pounds by counting calories and exercising like crazy, running five miles or more per day. I figured I could do it again. But I was in really, really bad shape, and at age 51 I just didn't have the energy to bounce back.

Feeling absolutely desperate, I went to the extreme of actually buying some vegetables! I know, right? I never hated vegetables, but I also never considered them a main food source. As a calorie counter, I discovered you could eat as many vegetables as you want without consuming many calories at all. I also realized that vegetables taste pretty darn good, along with fruit, legumes, and healthy grains.

I'm a person who overanalyzes everything, so I started to research whether what I was doing was healthy and came across the *Forks Over Knives* documentary. It changed my life from the first time I watched it, and I've seen it many times since. Sometimes I listen to it for motivation while I run.

Thanks to a plant-based diet, I started to shed pounds like they were going out of style. Soon, I was in good enough shape to exercise vigorously again. I lost an incredible 100 pounds in the first 20 weeks. Then I was involved in a car accident that injured my back. I wasn't able to exercise afterwards, yet I still lost another 20 pounds. Having started out well over 300 pounds, my

goal weight was 200 pounds. Today, I weigh 200, just 20 pounds away from my ultimate dream weight.

Due to the car accident, I was sent to get a CAT scan on my back, and a significant amount of plaque was discovered in the worst possible spot near my heart. My doctor's exact words were, "It's in the widowmaker position." The doctor wanted to treat everything with medicine due to my past high cholesterol levels. When I mentioned I had switched to a plant-based diet that could have helped or even reversed the condition, he looked at me like I was insane. But due to my incredible weight loss, he was willing to see what the numbers looked like after getting a biometric screening.

Well, it turns out my numbers were amazing. (The plaque is just dormant at this time.) My blood pressure was 112/75, total cholesterol 179, blood sugar 91. Still, it's been a process. For most of the first 20 weeks I ate 85 percent plant-based, but since the car accident, I have been eating 99 to 100 percent plant-based. I might not check every ingredient, and sometimes if I don't eat at home it's challenging. But I changed my diet, and it changed my life.

Here are the top 5 things I learned on my food and lifestyle journey:

**1. You can't outrun a cookie!** You can only exercise so much, and eventually life is going to show up and interrupt your routine. Studies show that people who use an exercise-only plan to lose weight fail; diet matters most for weight loss.

**2. Rethink your food choices.** You can't lose weight and keep it off simply by eating less of the same crap. For me, that meant no fast food, junk food, fried foods, sweets, pasta, or white bread.

**3. Watch what you eat, eat what you watch.** To stay on track, view every nutritional video on Netflix and YouTube, join Facebook groups, involve your friends, or join a community organization. Whatever it takes.

**4. Exercise your options.** Don't let one relapse ruin

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your journey. Some days you just won't feel like exercising, but try to do it anyway. If you can't run, try walking. If you can't walk, try swimming.

**5. Go ahead, eat a lot ... of low-calorie-density whole foods.** My favorite meal now is simply vegetables served over cauliflower rice (or tofu) with soy sauce and hot sauce. My favorite treat is frozen bananas whipped up in a food processor, which tastes a lot like ice cream.