I Went from Obese to Being in the Best Shape of My Life

By Alishea Basson
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I've been overweight for as long as I can remember. I'd come to accept that being overweight was just my lot in life.

After the birth of my four children, my weight skyrocketed and started to dramatically affect my quality of life. At 30, I suffered from knee pain, sleep apnea, seizures, and an overall feeling of tiredness. My hair started falling out, and I assumed this was all hereditary since my mother suffered through the same exact things.

I went to the doctor for my yearly physical in July 2017 and I was told I was obese at 265 pounds and needed to lose weight. When my blood work came back I found out I had high blood pressure and was on the cusp of having high cholesterol. My doctor recommended I go on medication, but that didn't sit well with me. After being given a very vague guide to healthy eating by my doctor, I went home feeling hopeless.

The Turning Point
My eating habits stayed the same. One Saturday night I sat down to dinner and ate eight pieces of chicken and eight biscuits and somehow found room for dessert. I went to bed that night feeling horrible.

The next morning, I woke up thinking there had to be more to life than this feeling of defeat. I decided I'd educate myself on nutrition and start exercising more. Through the power of social media, I stumbled across *Forks Over Knives*. After reading all my friends' posts about how watching the film affected them, I was swayed into watching it. I was scared straight by the film and decided I'd go full-on whole-food, plant-based.

A Gradual Approach
After a lifetime of poor eating habits, I knew if this was going to work I'd have to go slow. I began my transition in August and set a date for when I'd be all in: January 1, 2018. Each month leading up to that date, I slowly cut out meat, dairy, and processed foods and replaced them with a variety of colorful vegetables and fruits. The transition was the most natural thing I've ever done in my life.

By March of 2018, I'd lost 85 pounds, my energy was through the roof, and my hair stopped shedding like crazy.

Family and friends have asked me what my secret is, and I'm all too happy to share it. I spend my days now making things like lentil stews for my friends in the hope that my story will help them change their lives. Just a year ago I never would have seen myself where I am now. My goals seem more easily attainable these days: I'm training for my first 5k in October and I'm eyeing a full marathon next year. This lifestyle gave me life and it's now my mission to share it with everyone who crosses my path.