

SUCCESS STORY: ALISHA M.

Remember You Are Worth It!

Ever since high school I have had a little extra fluff, however in the first four years of my career I gained a lot. I honestly can't tell you how much because I was in denial for so long, but it had to be around 40 pounds. I kept telling myself that my pants shrunk in the dryer, the doctor's scale weighs heavier, and I would cut the clothing sizes off my clothes or go to the stores where sizes ran bigger.

It wasn't until I saw pictures of myself in Spain that I realized how bad it had gotten. I was ashamed of my photos and didn't even want to share them. After that I found out about PEHP Waist Aweigh and enrolled in October 2012. I also signed up for Weight Watchers. My plan was to hit my goal in one year, which did not happen.

Since 7th grade I have had some pain problems and in August 2013 I started to have a flare up. I also quit losing weight and was very tired all the time. My doctor wanted to do a test for possible rheumatoid arthritis and while doing the physical she found a lump on my thyroid. After the biopsy I learned the lump was a tumor and needed to be removed. My blood work came back positive for the rheumatoid factor and currently



BEFORE

we are trying to figure out if it is RA or something else. In September 2013 I had two-thirds of my thyroid removed.

Both these conditions have gotten in my way and I could have easily given up, but I just knew I had to keep on going. Early on in my journey I wrote myself a letter and in it I wrote, "Remember you are worth it." I have this saying hung up on my computer at work and any time I have struggles I remind myself of this.



AFTER

Tips on what made this doable for me:

- » Have fun and try new things. After getting Weight Watchers down, I signed up for a gym membership. I tried a spin class and absolutely hated it, but I also tried weight lifting and cardio barre and loved it.
- » Find support. I could not have done this without my support systems.
- » Celebrate ALL your successes. You are not always going to be

down pounds on the scale but that doesn't mean you won't have other successes like going down a clothing size, a friend saying you're an inspiration, or being able to do a real push-up.

- » Set smaller goals and reward yourself for them. If I would have looked at the big goal all the time I would have been overwhelmed, but 5 pounds seemed a lot more doable.
- » Don't be so harsh on yourself. It is great to make goals but you might not always get there. When you don't, just keep on going and you will get there.
- » Write down what you eat. I was shocked to see how much I was forgetting. Also, be honest. If you hide in the pantry to snack, you are only getting in your own way.
- » Remember that it is OK to indulge once in a while. If I told myself I couldn't have ice cream ever again I wouldn't have stuck with it.

It took me a lot longer to get to my goal than expected and the barriers I have faced have been difficult but I couldn't be happier with all I have gained – confidence, strength, and health. I also realize that this is a lifetime process; it's not a diet, it has to be a lifestyle change.

– Alisha M.