

SUCCESS STORY: LAURIE O.

Finding exercise, healthy food is key to lasting weight loss

I started getting serious about weight loss after I changed jobs in January 2012. I made efforts to reduce my intake of unhealthy foods and tried to exercise more.

TOTAL LOST

Duration:

13 months

Weight: 54 lbs

I had hit an all-time high of 190 pounds. I didn't quite realize how bad that was until I saw a picture of myself.

Except for about six of my 41 years of life, I had never been overweight. Seeing the picture took me out of a state of denial that I had a problem.

I lost about 20 pounds on my own through eating better and swimming, then I hit a plateau. I saw the doctor and she said that I was at risk of sleep apnea and needed go from 170 pounds down to 136 pounds. Being at risk of sleep apnea really scared me and I signed up for PEHP Waist Aweigh so I could get help paying for a personal trainer.

Getting the personal trainer is one of the best things that I have ever done. I have learned so much from Monica that I don't have time I write all that I have learned. I learned how to walk into the gym and know what to do with weights and cardio. Because she makes it fun by mixing things up, I



have come to love lifting weights. I love the feeling of accomplishment when I can lift heavier and heavier weights and last longer doing cardio.

She suggested that I decrease my calories per day. Initially, I felt like that would be impossible. But, I increased my intake of fruits and vegetables. It took a lot of effort to find new foods that had fruits,



vegetables, protein, and fiber that I liked.

The biggest piece of advice I can give is that unless you find exercise and healthy food that you truly enjoy, it will never result in lasting weight loss.

Before weights, I took swimming lessons to get back into swimming

and that turned into something that I love to do. I had started swimming when I was four and it didn't take too much to re-learn the strokes.

Once a week, I allow myself a "cheat" meal. It is usually a burger and fries, but it varies. There have been some weeks in which, due to holidays or parties, I have cheated more than once. I have had weeks where I have gained a pound or two or stayed the same, but I managed to get down to 136 pounds.

I love how I feel in my clothes now and now I don't mind having my picture taken. I love exercising. I figure if I keep up my routine of healthy foods and exercise, that it will be easy to maintain a healthy weight.

I weigh myself every day but I don't ever stress out because the scale will vary. It simply keeps me focused on my goal of overall healthy eating choices.

I am very grateful to Jody and PEHP Waist Aweigh for helping me through this journey. It has been very difficult but very fun at the same time. I am also grateful for the friends that have listened to me and supported me the whole time.

— Laurie O.

Stories are personal and PEHP does not endorse or recommend any programs mentioned. Seek your Doctor's advice when beginning a weight loss or exercise program.