

2018 Courage Award Finalist

CHRISTEN HARBIN

BEFORE



AFTER



My fitness journey began in a hospital bed in August of 2016. I checked into Urgent Care after feeling run down from a stomach bug I caught from my 1 year old daughter.

Granted, since having my daughter in 2015, I had not been taking great care of myself. After an awful pregnancy, a 60lb weight gain ballooning up to 235lbs, and a 2 month premature baby girl, I found myself suffering from the stress of regular NICU visits and severe postpartum depression.

When I arrived in the Urgent Care that day, they did some routine tests and discovered that my resting heart rate was 160. I was immediately sent me to the Emergency Room. After a plethora of body scans, blood tests, EKG's, and medications, it was determined that I was severely dehydrated and generally unhealthy. I was so taken aback by the fact that I was in the hospital simply from dehydration. I clearly was not making myself a priority and had let a minute task such as drinking enough water completely knock me out. After a few months of follow up medical visits and some soul searching I decided that I was going to take my life back.

In January 2017, I decided that not only was I going to regain my health but that I was going to beat my best self. As a former athlete, that was a hefty task but I was up to the challenge. In fact, the challenge gave me a new purpose and sense of excitement.

I committed to following a Ketogenic Diet and started going to a new gym, X3 Sports. I really needed something challenging to feel motivated, so I began

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learning how to lift weights. I found an online keto training coach and spent 6 days a week following their training and nutrition protocol, learning from YouTube videos and asking questions to the trainers at my gym as I progressed. Five months later, I was down 50lbs! Lifting weights became my new passion but losing weight was no longer my goal. My new goal was to become a bodybuilder and compete in my first NPC Bikini Competition. I changed up my training and nutrition accordingly and have been working relentlessly toward this goal ever since. It turns out losing weight was the easy part! I had no idea what it took to build muscle and feel so empowered by the fact that I have shown up for myself daily since the day I decided my goals couldn't be sacrificed.

It has been a wild ride. An entire year without sugar or carbs, 600 consecutive days of logging into My Fitness Pal, and countless hours in the gym training by myself while working and raising my beautiful baby girl. Here we are almost two years later, 100lbs lighter, and with a mental and physical strength I never knew I was capable of. Bodybuilding has changed my life and I feel blessed to have discovered it and to be a part of this sport.