



## Tom Bolick

**M**y health journey started about 10 years ago. That was the time that my doctor diagnosed me with Type 2 Diabetes. For years my doctors had been trying to scare me into living more healthy with predictions of heart attacks. But it was the diabetes that actually frightened me. Dying was one thing, but living with insulin, or blindness, or some other result of diabetes was scarier to me.

I immediately stopped drinking soft drinks, even though I had been drinking 2-4 a day. I began drinking more water, eating salads, and other changes. I also got a personal trainer at my gym to help me get started on weight training. Paying for a trainer was key, because I knew that I'd be wasting money if I didn't keep on track or didn't go to the gym. It is simply too easy to find a reason not to go if you can go any time, and don't have someone to keep you pushing yourself.

These changes helped for a while, but I could feel myself losing ground. I had decided to start working out on my own but didn't know enough to get the results I wanted; I was gaining weight and losing muscle and I was still struggling with keeping my food intake reasonable. I finally found a program, however, that helped me be more mindful of what I was eating, and to make peace with food. I could have anything I wanted, as long as I kept the portion small or balanced my overall intake of calories and carbs. Office co-workers were shocked to see the small bite of cake I'd take from an office birthday party. When I was given a huge slice, I'd simply take one bite to enjoy the flavor, and throw the rest away.

I made the decision to start back with a trainer at my gym and have been consistently training for two years. This time, however, I had some specific goals I was working towards. I tried to look at all of it as connected. The main thing that I learned was to find what I could live with. Once I found what worked for me, what I could eat regularly, how often I could find time for the gym, and how to manage my expectations and goals for my life, I lost 40lbs and my doctor is very pleased. It wasn't easy, it was however, at a gradual pace that again worked for me and I have been able to keep the weight off. Last year, I added a cardio element to my workouts and did my first 5k, and purchased a stair stepper that makes it easier for me to get in cardio workouts at home.

I look at myself now as finding a new life that I could live with for the rest of my life; not something that I was looking forward to hitting a number on a scale, or an amount of weight I could lift, and then feel like I was done, and could go back to old habits. Working out 2-3 times a week, doing cardio, and being more mindful of what I eat is a complete 180 from where I started. There are still improvements I'm working towards, but striving to live healthier is my new normal.

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