

## Randolph Jean Simon

Age: 41, weight loss: 60lbs

## Christina Jean Simon

Age: 36, weight loss: 84lbs

**H**e's worked out for years off and on. Undoubtedly overweight, he wanted to lose weight, so he started working out and eating better. But he could never quite obtain the goals he set. He finally had that come to Jesus moment, when he realized he needed help, if he ever wanted to meet his goals. Although he had been trying to do the right things, he recognized he needed someone to put together a plan, someone who would walk him through the journey and he would be ready and willing to do the work. Randolph always wanted to lose weight, transform his body and get to the point where he could actually compete. Personal Trainer, Nicole Raymond set the challenge and he accepted it. He said, "You give me the plan and I will execute it."

She was considered morbidly obese. While pregnant, she was diagnosed with gestational diabetes, testing her blood sugar four times per day and four times per day injecting with insulin. The diabetes, combined with having her first baby, made her realize she needed to take charge of her destiny. Working with the gestational diabetes nutritionists, got the ball rolling. She was even losing weight while she was pregnant because her food choices and portions were being regulated. Post-baby, Christina searched the internet and found a transformation division challenge. She approached Personal Trainer Nicole Raymond and told her this is something she wanted to do. Her weight was stagnant and she wanted to push herself to the next level. Nicole asked her, "Are you serious about this? Have you talked with your husband about this? Is he okay with you doing the Transformation division? Because there's a lot of work that goes into it and both of you need to be onboard."



She said, "Yes!" and accepted the challenge and Nicole said, "Let's do this!"

### Biggest Challenges

**Admittedly, an important lesson Randolph learned during this journey was that he would have to make sacrifices in order to achieve his goals.** Unlearning years of bad habits and everything I thought I knew and replacing those bad habits with good habits was the biggest challenge I faced. **How did you go about that?** I had to tell myself that my goal comes first and I had to be a little selfish with it. I also had to recognize that this is new territory for me. I had a problem and I had to put trust in Nicole to help me

fix it. Another crucial component was having the family support me and my goals. Not only did Christina support me but her family supported me as well. Out to dinner, family gatherings, they all understood I was working on changing my lifestyle. Global support; having the support and understanding of everyone that is close to me really made it easier to work towards my goals. As for the sacrifices I made? Drinking alcohol and giving up certain foods that I love and having to eat other foods was certainly a



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sacrifice in the beginning. The changes I was making have to be sustainable; it's not just for a competition, this was for life. Learning that if I was going to eat indulgent foods, it has to be in moderation. It's not just to say I've met my goal and now I'm done, this has to be continuous and ongoing. **Is it still a conscious effort everyday?** It is, I still have to think about it, but it has become more routine now. More habit than challenging, because I know this is what I have to do and I'm ok with it and I feel better because of it. This is the best I've ever felt in my life and this is the best shape I've ever been in my entire life. It's wonderful! **Do you still miss those foods you said you loved?** No, actually I don't because you learn to love something else. I've learned to love the way I look and the way I feel and to me that's more important. My priorities have shifted from hey, I want to gorge on a slab of ribs to replacing it with something that's better for me and that's just what it is.

**I think it's important for people to understand that this is the way that it works. It's not about depriving yourself, like you said, you've made other priorities and it's not like you can never have certain foods, you can have them whenever you want in moderation.** I look at food completely differently. When I look at a piece of chicken, a bowl of rice or vegetables, I more or less think about what it is doing for me rather than what it's doing to me. So, I eat with a purpose and I don't just eat for pleasure. For me that was a big thing. I used to go to a restaurant and order the most greasy, indulgent thing ever because I thought it would be the most satisfying.

The biggest challenge for Christina was being a new mom, full time employee from home and having to adjust to a totally new lifestyle. Now, add to that, fitness goals. Pre-baby, I would fit in a workout whenever I could while Randolph would always go to the gym early in the morning. Now since I'm training too, we had to ask ourselves "How do I adjust? And how do we adjust where we can both fulfill our fitness goals but still maintain our household with a newborn." Randolph had to adjust to sharing some of those early morning workout times with me. Juggling and scripting everything to accommodate both of us became necessary. **So often as a wife and mother we tend to put everyone else first and put ourselves last. So how did you shift to make yourself first?** We made the decision to get a nanny at 6:30am in the morning 2-3 days a week, which was a tremendous help. Next, we chose a gym that would have good childcare so that on Saturday mornings we could both

get in our workout together. Picking the right gym, getting the nanny, adjusting our schedules, working out whenever we can, we did what we needed to do. It required a lot of planning ahead and time management, but it allowed us to be more efficient and effective and that's a big part of how we make it work, recognizing we needed help if we wanted to reach our goals. This is important to us, so these are the changes we are going to make. It's a big thing. **A lot of people have trouble getting to that point. What was it that made you say - we need help?** Diabetes never even crossed my mind until I was pregnant. But with gestational diabetes and having to give myself insulin shots, it was a reality check and a real eye opener. Now that I've had the baby, my mindset shifted to wanting to lose weight and take charge of my destiny. We are doing it in a healthy way and Randolph and I now have new goals and we're doing it as a couple.

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**“This is the best I've ever felt in my life and this is the best shape I've ever been in in my entire life. It's wonderful!”**

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### **Meal Prep**

Randolph cooks healthy foods the majority of the time. Now since I've jumped on his bandwagon, he just has to cook twice as much! It was a mental shift for us too, because we have kids in the house; not only the baby but we also have a 12-year old and neither of them always eat what we eat so, we have to sometimes cook totally separate meals for them. It's definitely become a joint effort in the kitchen; and again, we're doing what we need to do to reach our goals. Nicole sent us our plans and really focused heavily on nutrition. When your trainer says 80% of your success is diet, it's truly 80% diet!

### **Competition**

Randolph's dream of competing on stage came to fruition at the 2021 NPC Southern Muscle Showdown, where he competed in Men's Bodybuilding, competing in four categories and placing in all four — True Novice, 4th place; Novice, 3rd place; Masters 40+, 5th place; Open Super Heavyweight, 2nd place. I definitely plan on competing again as I continue to make improvements in my physique. Christina said, I didn't realize I was so big until I saw a picture. There was no trauma or depression. I was happy with my life. I was eating well! But, I knew I had to make a change. I did the Transformation division this past August, placing 2nd. While I was already somewhat familiar with bodybuilding through Randolph, I could now see that community from a female's perspective. I met a lot of women and that inspired me to push to the next level. My new goal is to train for my first official NPC show in the Wellness division. Getting on stage in a tiny bikini and training for Wellness is not something I ever planned on doing. It wasn't a bucket list item, I just need something to push me and challenge myself with.

## How long did it take you?

It took Randolph 6 months to lose 60lbs. That's approximately 10lbs per month. **You have to really be committed to following the plan to lose that amount of weight, in that amount of time.** People want or need to see change right away and being our own worst critics, we don't always see the changes even when it's happening.

Again I say, set small goals because then you can achieve it. And being happy with small changes, you can build on it. Every 10lb was my goal. **How did you reward yourself?** My reward was to be able to continue seeing what more I can do. Christina's 84lbs weight loss came over 17 months. Considering she was a new mom, 5lbs a month is a very safe and healthy way to lose the weight and keep it off!

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## Two other tips

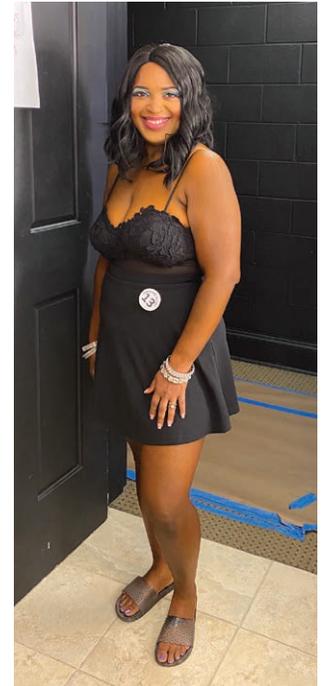
Another key to my success was I surrounded myself with people that I knew were going to support me. And what does that support mean? I hate to say it, but I (temporarily) stopped hanging around certain people that I knew would be a negative influence and detrimental to my diet and to my goal. Sometimes you have to go to the extreme and remove those enablers, otherwise you're never going to reach your goals. I had to figure out that was one of my problems. Once I made those changes, it made losing weight a lot easier because I had people around me that were supportive and they understood. For years I struggled because I was trying to do it on my own. But to know whether I go out with friends and family and still stick to the plan or I've had to say "Hey, I can't join you today because I just can't." or when you feel the temptation is too great and you bow out early, the people around you understand. And that was definitely a contributing factor to my success. Finally, you have to be able to do this on your own. It's a lifestyle. Educate yourself and take responsibility. Each time changes were made to our nutritional plan, Nicole took the time to explain why we were making the changes, so we could learn and it made sense. It's not easy, but it doesn't have to be difficult either.

## Advice

Christina's advice to anyone wanting to start their own journey is to pray about it and seek guidance from God. Start somewhere. Set small goals like this week I'm going



Photo by Nvision Photography of Atlanta



to drink 8 glasses of water each day and next week I'm going to walk 10 minutes. Start somewhere. Don't think about the negative. Just think about the positive and take it one day at a time. It's not easy, but you can do it. Randolph's approach is that first and foremost you have to really think about your goals and what it is you want. Start small. Make the smallest change. Using school as a metaphor, think of your goal as levels and each level is a grade. You go through each grade and progress and get better. Take small baby steps, establish the goal, prioritize the goal, he said, that's really what it was for me. Small steps, small changes, changes turn into progress. You keep repeating this and you will reach your goal.

## 7 TIPS TO SUCCESS

1. Small steps
2. One day at a time
3. Committed consistency
4. Make yourself a priority
5. Surround yourself with people who support you and understand your goals
6. Educate yourself and take responsibility
7. Remember this is a lifestyle and YOU'RE WORTH IT!