

From Tom Buchta, Male Winner – Biggest Loser Contest Winter 2012/13:

I've never been severely overweight, but I always have been a little overweight and have attempted to lose weight numerous times since college. When I was younger I simply tried to 'outwork' my weight through exercise. I then moved into trying fad diets. I even tried Biggest Loser 3 years ago. In all cases, I lost weight to varying levels of success but the weight always came back. I hit my forties a number of years ago and it has been all downhill from a physical standpoint since then. I could no longer run due to osteoarthritis in my knees, I started taking medication for high blood pressure (which I no longer take), and I was starting to believe I would have a major medical issue soon if I didn't change my ways.

Up until a few months ago, my diet consisted of: breakfast on the run (gas station, donuts, bagels, muffins, etc.), fast food lunch, and snacking all night on junk. I was also drinking about 100 oz Diet Coke per day. I knew I had to change but didn't really believe I could. About the time I was getting motivated to lose weight again the Biggest Loser competition came along. I also knew I 'failed' it once before. But it was different this time because I knew I couldn't simply work harder to lose weight long term. I had to fix my eating habits. So I signed up for the program with a trainer and a dietician.

I worked with Dietician Kelly whose approach was absolutely fantastic. In my first week I went from a low 'F' to a high 'F', but she worked with me. She made recommendations that gradually moved me to a 'D'. Over the length of the program I probably moved myself to a 'B', but I have the knowledge to get an 'A', it is just a matter of making a few more incremental changes. If she tried to turn me into an A student the first week I would have likely been discouraged and felt she was being unreasonable and that the attempt to change was an exercise in futility. If anyone is thinking of doing this in the future and has a problem with eating habits I would highly recommend adding the Dietician component. In addition a group met weekly to discuss numerous eating related topics. Even though I thought I knew what was right, going through this assisted tremendously in taking action; plus I learned quite a bit.

I also worked with Trainer Stephanie. I have to be honest...it was really, really hard for me to get through the workouts in the beginning. I was saying things under my breath that I didn't think I was capable of saying. I work out most days (tennis, running, spin, etc.), but this is the only truly intense workout I do. The great thing was that I felt a sense of accomplishment at the end of the workouts. Plus I had this internal burn going for a couple days following the workouts that I'm sure kept my metabolism running high. I eventually started appreciating the intensity more and more to the point that I am now doing the continuation classes. I'm not sure I'll ever be able to completely get through one of her workouts without cheating a little, but I think it is important to push yourself at least once a week or so. In addition to the training, Stephanie is also certified in nutrition so I felt I was able to double up on that aspect and get a 2nd perspective. With respect to my diet Coke habit, I have to credit her with providing a solution for me. I had my last Diet Coke on December 26th and hope to never touch the stuff again. Of all of the things I thought not possible, this was number one on the list! She also assisted with my knee problems. I'm back to running twice a week and even completed a 5K in January.

My history would suggest that I will be back to my old weight in about 3 months time. But I believe it is different this time. I attacked and solved the root problem which was my poor eating habits. I have changed out my bad habits with sustainable good habits and think I've got this licked long term. I have my continuation classes and a continued plan for exercising in ways I enjoy. I have both short term and long term goals. I finally want to thank everyone involved: Kelly, Stephanie, Renee, and others who assisted in my transformation to this point. I could not have done this without your taking an active role in my well-being and I truly appreciate your involvement and effort. Thank You.