

CONSISTENT HEALTHY WORKOUTS



My Story

When I entered the 7th grade, I was an overweight awkward teenager. I desperately wanted girls to like me in a romantic way, but I always ended up in the “friend zone”.

As a child, I was an over-achiever, which was normal for a kid whose parents were both teachers. My dad would drop me off at school every day at 6:30AM so I could get extra credit in math. On the way, we would stop by McDonalds and I would get a bacon egg and cheese biscuit for breakfast. If you’ve had one of these before, you know how amazing they are.

One day we were sitting in the drive-thru and I said to my dad, “Let’s go. I want to leave.” He gave me a confused look and asked why. “Just go!” I persisted, and so we drove off. After we had left, I admitted to him that I hated myself and couldn’t stand to be fat any longer. I told him about how kids at school would poke me, make fun of me and call me the Pillsbury Dough-boy. That they would always shout at me to giggle after they would poke my fat stomach. The pain of not fitting in and not having any friends who accepted me, had finally become more important than the food.

The next day, I replaced my bacon egg and cheese biscuit with an apple and instead of a burger basket with fries for lunch, I changed to a plain turkey sandwich. I began working out 5 days a week after school with the track and wrestling teams, though I participated in neither sport.

The first two years were extremely painful. I would cry some nights, clutching my stomach from the pain as I tried to fall asleep. But it was the mental pain of watching my family eat foods like pepperoni pizza or fried chicken that truly devastated me. Over time it got easier, and I thought less and less about the food. I stayed focused on my studies and my goals of losing weight and getting girls to like me.

I remember the first couple of months of my sophomore year of high school. I had grown several inches and lost most of the weight. After 2+ years of my commitment to diet and exercise, I finally got what I had been looking for, a hot girlfriend!

While possibly the most memorable, it was not the last time I struggled with my relationship with food and my body image. When I joined my marketing peer group in 2015, I weighed 220 lbs. I had spent the previous 10 years building my business and my health had spiraled out of control. I drank alcohol all the time and I rarely exercised. I worked 14-18 hours a day, sometimes 7 days a week. It hurt to walk up a single flight of stairs and at the age of 36, I looked 10 years older than I was.

I had another pivotal moment on July 5, 2015. After a heavy day of 4th of July drinking, I woke up and could barely move. Sure I was hungover, but this time it was more than that. Something in my body told me that I was killing myself and that it had to stop. Once again, something clicked in my mind and I made a conscious decision to change. I began walking 3 miles a day, 5 days a week and I started counting all of my calories. By the end of 2015, I was down to 178 lbs. and I felt amazing.

The stress of my business was not yet done with me and this process repeated itself in 2017 when I gain back 40 lbs. and went back to my old unhealthy habits of drinking too much and making poor decisions about diet and exercise.

In June of 2018, I met a man named Bryan Blackwell, a personal trainer who my wife had begun working with. She convinced me to go see him and after a single session with him, I bought a full session pack. Bryan changed my entire perspective on food and fitness and with his guidance, I started down a path of not only losing that weight I had gained back, but finally discovering what it was that had allowed me to regress into my old unhealthy habits.

Bryan turned me onto the book Atomic Habits by James Clear, one of my recommended reading books. In his book, James Clear quotes Carl Jung, the Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who collaborated with Sigmund Freud, "Unless you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life, and you will call it fate." Outside of wanting girls to like

me when I was young, I was never truly aware of why I wanted to lose weight or be healthier. Once I was married, it almost seemed pointless as that original goal was no longer a goal... I had a beautiful wife and what was the point of working hard for something I already had?

The problem was, I was always obsessed with the goal, not with the system. Goals ruled my life, and I was a slave to them. When I was young, I lost weight because I wanted to get girls to like me. When I started my own business, I wanted to make a million dollars. When I began a family, it was to buy my dream home and drive a luxury car. The goals always seemed like the purpose for everything, but they were actually my prison. James Clear also says in the book, "We do not rise to the level of our goals, we fall to the level of our systems." I failed because my goals were good, but my systems sucked or didn't exist at all.

Consistent Healthy Workouts is about developing a system that removes things like losing weight, removing foods you love or being in pain all the time. Consistent Healthy Workouts is about changing your mindset to look at the fun, the excitement and the beauty of the system, not the result. When you fall in love with the system, the result you seek comes much quicker. As James Clear says, "You are what you do repeatedly."

My System

Here is how I created and how I maintain my system of Consistent Healthy Workouts.

Mindset

Anything is possible or impossible, depending upon your mindset.

I never enjoyed working out. Every time I would get on treadmill or a stationary bike, I would sit and watch the clock and count down the seconds until it was over. I didn't want to be there; I just wanted the results to arrive without the hard work. I also had a flawed belief system about how diet and exercise worked together. Workouts gave me the excuse to make poor diet choices and often times, I would end up being worse off because I would overeat or choose foods high in processed sugars and fats as a way of rewarding myself for doing the workout. The entire problem was, I just HATED WORKING OUT!

After working with Bryan for 6 months, my perspective began to change. Every time we would train, I would enjoy the social outlet that I would get from speaking with him, meeting others at the gym and also getting positive results for my body. He began to challenge me to do more pull-ups, bench press more weight or do my rows with heavier dumbbells. As I did this, I started to feel like I belonged, and I began to think positively about my trips to the gym. I looked forward to seeing people, I looked forward to breaking my records and I looked forward to the mental and physical feeling I would get

after doing the workout. I began to desire the act of working out, and the habit began to form.

Without even realizing it, my mindset around working out began to change. I remember arriving at the gym one day, all fired up and ready to go. I remember realizing that I no longer felt apprehensive, which somehow made me feel betrayed. I was supposed to hate working out and somehow, I was really happy and excited to be there. I stopped and thought for a moment; I was no longer there because I was trying to lose weight or get girls, I was there because I genuinely enjoyed it. I had fallen in love with the system, and I wanted it. By the winter of 2019, I was down to 159 lbs. and 12% body fat, not because I wanted to get here, but because it just happened. I was always pointed in that direction and I always knew where I was going, but I learned to love what it felt like to DO THE ACT and let go of my obsession with the result. The result is important, but without the system, it is not sustainable.

Commitment

What I learned about working out was not that I hated it, but that I was focused on the wrong thing. I found something about working out that I desired, and it made me want to repeat the act. The 4th Law of James Clear's 4 Laws of Behavior Change is "Make it Attractive". One working out became attractive, it was easy to make the commitment. Once I repeated the Consistent Healthy Action enough, it became programmed into my mindset as something I truly enjoyed, which led to it becoming a new identity. I became a fitness lover. I now have a commitment with myself to workout 5 days a week, not because I am worried that I won't do it, but because the commitment is part of who I am.

My Workouts

Here is my schedule of workouts that I perform every week.

Monday: 30-minute weight training with Personal Trainer

Tuesday: Warm weather: 2.7 mile walk – Cold weather: 30 minute stationary bike or 45 minute VR workout – 10 minute ab workout

Wednesday: 30-minute weight training with Personal Trainer

Thursday: Warm weather: 2.7 mile walk – Cold weather: 30 minute stationary bike or 45 minute VR workout – 10 minute ab workout

Friday: 30-minute weight training uncoached

Saturday: Active recovery day – stretching, light walk

Sunday: Active recovery day – stretching, light walk