

In November, I decided I needed to improve my health. I was playing roller derby with Fountain City Roller Derby. The new season was getting ready to start and I was not in good shape. I was heavier than I'd been in several years and wanted to be sure I'd be effective on the roller derby track. Weight was affecting my ability to play roller derby. It also created problems sleeping and performing normal everyday tasks. I would go home after work and just want to sit. I didn't have energy to play with my children or work around the house. Once I got home, it was time to sit on the couch and do nothing for the rest of the evening.

My wife encouraged me to start working out at the gym facility that Henderson Engineers, Inc. has in the office building. Nick Schultz and Casandra Peters were a huge motivation with my weight loss. They gave me great pointers and were there every day with great circuit workouts. I began with the beginner classes. They were Monday through Thursday and lasted about 30 minutes. The workouts were cardio and simple body weight exercises. I enjoyed the challenge and watched as my weight started to go down. After about a month I moved to the afternoon circuit workouts. These were more of a challenge. The cardio was longer and more intense. We also utilized weights for CrossFit style workouts. These workouts lasted about 45 minutes and pushed my limits. With the help of Nick and Casandra as well as the other circuit class members, my weight kept dropping. Due to my schedule, I decided to start the morning circuits group. These workouts were some of the most intense workouts I've ever done. They lasted from an hour to 1-1/2 hrs. Soon it was time to start training for Corporate Challenge events. By this point I had lost about 75 lbs and was starting to feel healthy and much happier. I was planning on helping in some of the events, but was not expecting to do what I did.

Nick and Casandra convinced me to start doing the shorter 2-3 miles runs. I did those and just kept going. Each week I added a mile with the goal to reach 6 miles and focus on shorter distances. Nick was looking for volunteers to run the ½ marathon. He asked if I would be an alternate if someone wasn't able to compete. I never participated in a race before, and running a ½ marathon was never considered. I agreed to keep my training up and the miles kept going up. About 3 weeks out from the race, Nick said I was going to run and reality set in. By this point I had dropped 85 lbs and I was healthier than I had ever been. Still, nerves were getting the best of me. I received encouragement and advice from the experienced runners in the morning circuits class. My wife also continued to encourage me to not give up and keep going. The encouragement kept me training and running. By race day, I had done everything I could to be ready to run. I knew I wasn't going to be the fastest, but went out and ran. 13.1 miles later the Henderson Engineers runners were giving me high fives and congratulations. I never had a desire to be a runner. Now, I've run a 1/2 marathon. The medal is hanging in my office cubicle to remind me about the last 7 months and all the hard work I accomplished.

~John Chase, Henderson Engineers

