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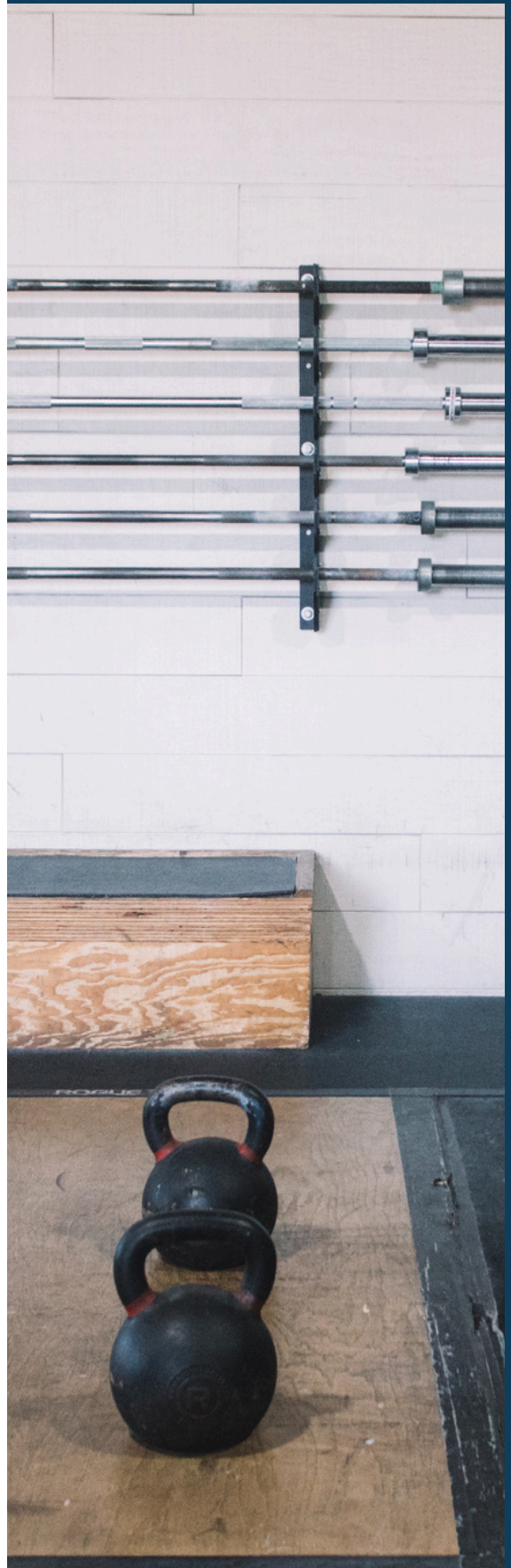
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MEET THE NFM TEAM

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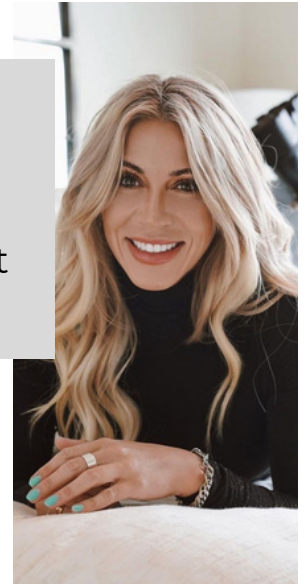
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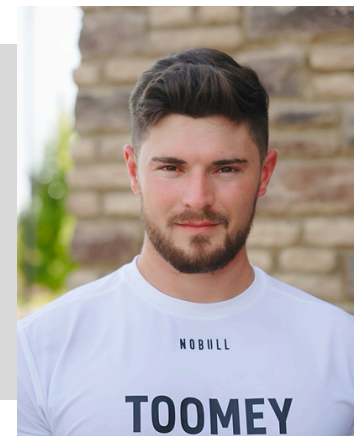
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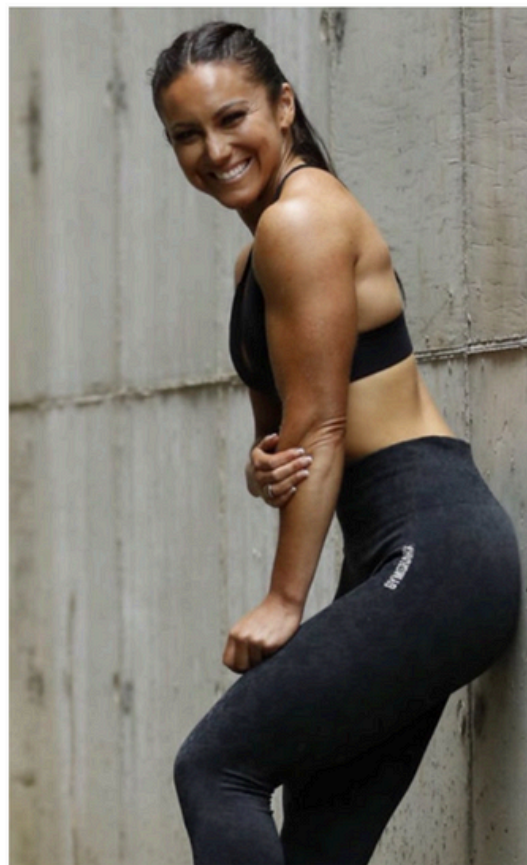
Nashville Fit Community,

As the crisp air finds its way into Music City and the leaves begin to change, we're reminded of the beauty of transformation – both in nature and our lives. Whether you're just beginning your wellness journey or have been consistent for years, this season offers a moment to reflect, renew, and continue evolving. This fall issue is dedicated to transformative journeys.

If I could give any piece of advice to those feeling stuck or stifled in their transformation – it's to start before you're ready, and to do it afraid. Start the business. Be a beginner in the gym. Fail your way forward. And don't be afraid to restart as many times as you need to.

A former coach once said to me (and I'll never forget this)... "If you're walking down the street and you realize you're walking in the wrong direction, do you keep walking that way? Or do you turn around?" Sit with that thought for a moment. How often do we whisper to ourselves, "Screw it – I messed up today," just to find ourselves writing off the rest of that day or maybe even that whole week because of one imperfection.

What if our small win for this season is to give ourselves grace for being human, and make a silent pinky promise with ourselves to keep pushing forward? One act of esteem, one day at a time. It all adds up.



In the spirit of growth and change, this fall marks a professional transition for me. Over the past four years, it has been an honor to serve as former Owner and current Editor-in-Chief of Nashville Fit Magazine. This magazine has become a safe space for members of the community to share the most vulnerable parts of their journeys, making others feel less alone in theirs. It has provided a platform for underrecognized groups in an industry that should already have a place for everyone, and it has brought people together far beyond the confines of our gym and business walls.

As we enter into the next evolution of Nashville Fit Magazine, I am excited to step into a new role as Director of Marketing Communications for NFM and its extended properties – including events, broadcast, B2B media and marketing services and more. I look forward to working with local, regional and national brands to craft new narratives that resonate with wider audiences through the power of storytelling.

Thank you for making the past four years a time of growth, learning, and connection. As we all step into this new season, I encourage you to embrace the changes in your own lives with open arms, knowing that each day—whether it's your first or your thousandth—is a chance to become a better, stronger version of yourself

With love,

Nicole Swickle
Editor-In-Chief



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An Insightful Journey:

From High School Struggles to Nashville Success

By: Garrett Phillips

In our effort to spotlight the stories of unassuming heroes in the health and fitness industry here, we heard many inspiring insights about Garrett from ProVita. Naturally, we had to learn more about this unsung hero who has overcome his own weight loss transformation. Garrett helps others in similar situations make the necessary changes they need in order to live a healthy, active lifestyle. Just as advertised, Garrett was gracious, humble, and burning with a passion for helping others. Below is our interview with Garrett Phillips!

Garrett Phillips is a fitness enthusiast whose story is nothing short of inspiring. From high school struggles to becoming a dedicated personal trainer at ProVita Fitness, Garrett's path is a testament to resilience, determination, and the power of support.

Garrett's fitness journey began during his junior year in high school. Weighing over 310 pounds, he faced significant challenges. "I was a big guy," Garrett recalls. "I had my brother, who was in Colorado at the time.



Photos by: Josh Ulmer

“Garrett’s path is a testament to resilience, determination, and the power of support.”

I went out there with him for about two months when I was 16 or 17 and lost about 58 pounds in 63 days." As he reflects on losing his high school sweetheart, this sent him into a stint where he was emotionally eating. He knew he needed to do something to "get it right."

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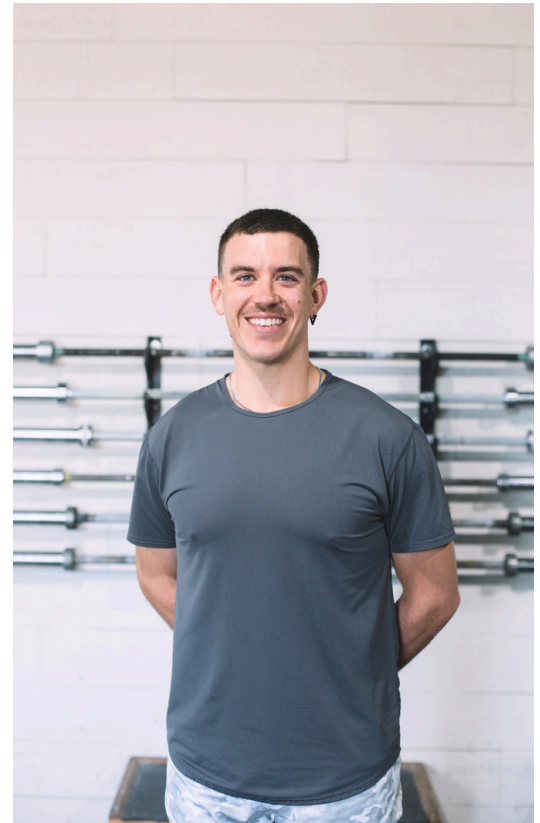


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After returning home, Garrett finished high school, however, the weight gradually returned over the next five years. "I was just not feeling good," he admits. "My brother had semi-retired and moved to Florida so I went there to figure it out. Over nine months, I lost another hundred pounds." Garrett's brother was an important role model for him, but that doesn't negate the toughness of the journey nor the intimidation he felt on said journey.

Garrett's move to Nashville marked a new chapter. Reflecting on his high school years, he shares, "High school was great, but being called 'big guy' always struck me weird. I played sports and rode horses, but my size limited my opportunities." Despite these challenges, at the time where it all started for me, he was actually owner/operator of a gym in Colorado called Fitness in the City (FITC). The 24 hour management was way back in the day when I was just a kid! Garrett adds that his brother is his best friend and works as a trainer now.



The emotional and physical transformation Garrett experienced during his senior year of high school was profound. "At 250 pounds and 17 years old, it was the best I ever felt. Mentally, I felt invincible," he says. Returning to school as a "new man" brought positive reactions from friends and a renewed sense of confidence.



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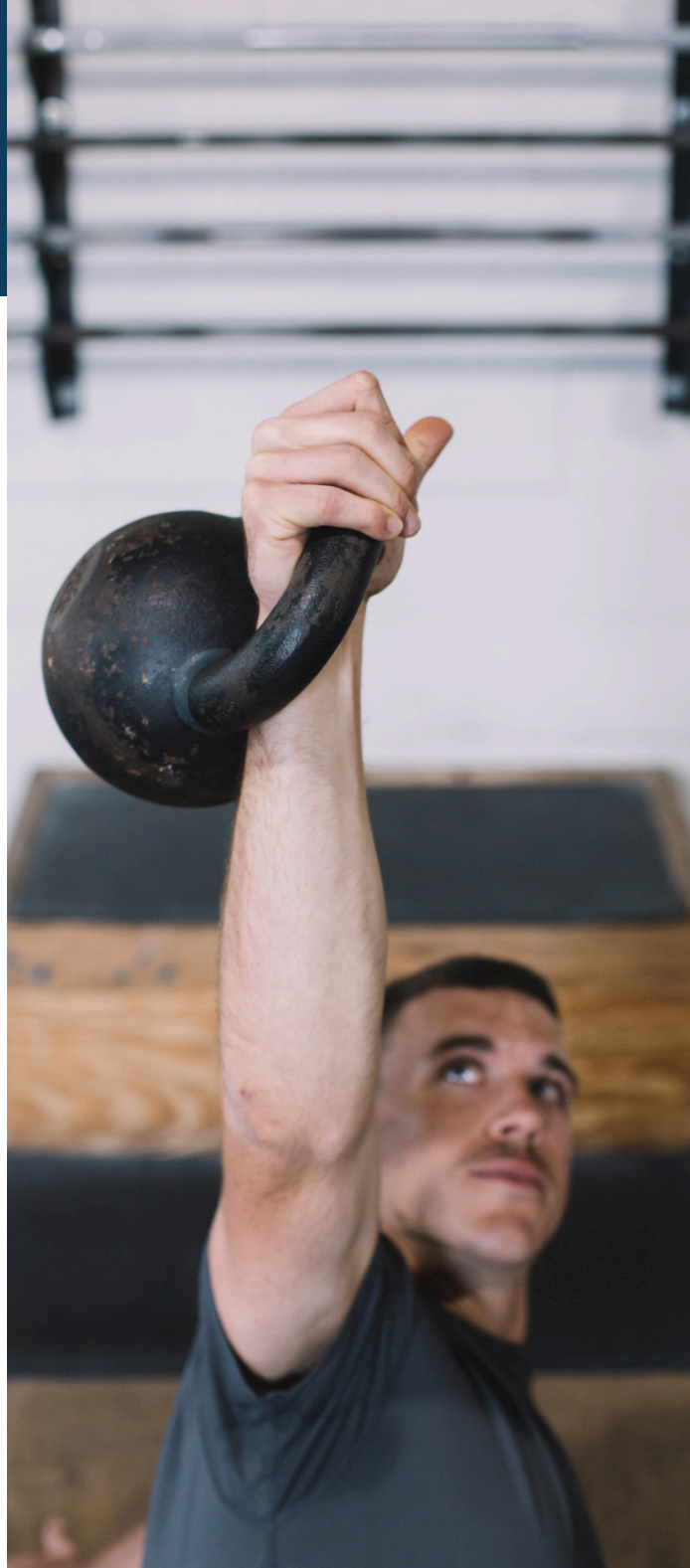


Compression

When asked if he thought he could lose the weight without help, he quickly quipped back and said, "NO." "Without a trainer, I don't think I could have lost the weight," he states. The initial journey was intimidating, with early morning HIIT classes and challenging runs. However, these experiences laid the foundation for his later success as he continues his journey to stay healthy and lead others toward the same goal.

Now as a trainer at ProVita Fitness, Garrett's past experiences deeply reflect his approach. "I know what it feels like," he explains. "My brother was a great trainer, but he didn't come from where I was. I can connect with clients and share my journey, which helps them trust the process." This is reflected within a common saying that trainers hear often from their would-be clients: "How can you help me if you don't know what it feels like to be overweight?" We asked if he had any advice for trainers who have yet to experience a massive weight loss journey like he had.

Garrett offered this valuable advice for trainers working with overweight clients: "Make it something they can do multiple times a week. The key is consistency. Listen to your body and meet clients where they are.



It's about stacking good habits and creating manageable goals." This is great advice, as it is important to help clients with the desire to return to the gym and build muscle. Killing them isn't how you help them.

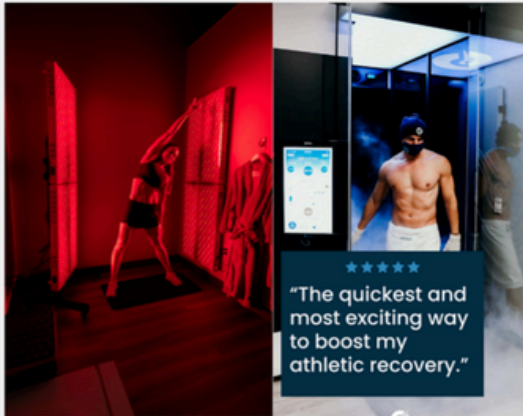
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"Any movement is good movement. Find something simple to check off each day, and build from there."

For those starting their fitness journey, Garrett emphasizes the importance of small, consistent steps. "Any movement is good movement. Find something simple to check off each day, and build from there. Once you feel the fire, it's a game-changer." He adds that short walks are a great place to start building consistency. Also, working to drink water and start the day with a healthy meal are great ways to stack good habits.

Garrett underscores the critical role of diet in weight loss. "I've always felt diet is 80% of it. You'll still feel better if you eat well, even if workouts are lacking. Consistency in diet and exercise is key."

Garrett's journey is ongoing, filled with daily battles and triumphs. "It's about balance and figuring out how not to put the weight back on. I've shredded layers of a new guy, and it's an everyday challenge."

With a supportive environment and a clear vision, Garrett is set for continued success. "I'm excited to see what happens and where I go from here."

Garrett Phillips' story is a powerful reminder that transformative change is possible with determination, support, and consistency. His journey from high school struggles to a successful career in fitness inspires all.

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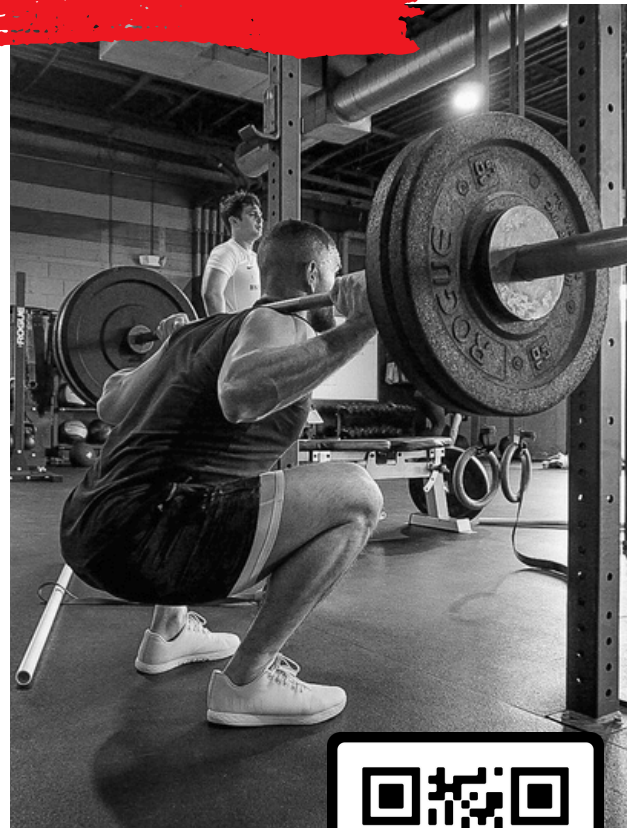
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SCAN ME

A Story of Strength, Resilience, and Mental Health

By: Terry Barga

In 2021, Nikki Taylor found herself at a crossroads, standing at the heaviest weight she had ever been as an adult. It was a pivotal moment, not just physically but emotionally and mentally. "Back in 2018, I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder," Nikki begins, "and some of the medications I was on affected my weight, my insulin levels, everything. By 2020 and 2021, I gained a lot of weight, wasn't active, and the pandemic worsened everything. My mental illness wasn't well-regulated, and it all started to spiral."

Nikki's turning point came during a family trip to Orlando at the end of April. Her brother was competing in a cheerleading competition at Disney, and what should have been a joyful occasion turned into a moment of profound realization. "We decided to visit Disney, but I couldn't keep up. I was sad and frustrated. Then, at Universal, I couldn't fit on most of the rides at Harry Potter World. Growing up, I was a huge Harry Potter fan, so that hit me hard. It was humiliating when they stopped me from riding a ride because of my size."



Gym Photos by: Josh Ulmer
@thejoshulmer

Determined to make a change, Nikki returned home and took action. "That first week of May, I got a therapist. I realized that to make life changes involving your body, you need therapy—it's crucial." Nikki also took a brave step towards physical fitness by joining Seven Minutes, a gym where she found a supportive community. This support involved several coaches she connected with that were a driving force for returning, and a sense of belonging that had been missing for too long.



**NIKKI'S STORY IS ONE
OF RESILIENCE,
DETERMINATION, AND
SELF-AWARENESS.**

My big brother, mentor, and longtime co-worker (his son Phil was a trainer at Seven Minutes) challenged me as I began to step out of my “comfort zone” daily. He said “be uncomfortable daily”. He mentions the secret to growth is discomfort. The gym became my daily discomfort.

"I had been avoiding fitness because I felt like I didn't belong anymore," Nikki admits. "But with encouragement from my coworkers and the welcoming environment at Seven Minutes, I started attending classes and got a membership. That place has been my home gym for three years now, and it's been a key part of my lifestyle transformation."

Nikki's journey hasn't been linear—far from it. She's faced challenges, including the unexpected death of her father earlier this year, which deeply affected her mental health. "For someone with bipolar disorder, that kind of loss shakes your foundation. I've been in and out of fitness these past few months, but I'm back now. I reset with a nutritionist (former coach at Seven Minutes), and I'm trying to get back on track." I am back to working out with my good friend Fiorella, who joined me 2 years ago at the gym. She makes it better and is disciplined and you become what you're around.

When asked about her priorities in her health journey, Nikki emphasizes the importance of mental health. "It's a close tie between mental health and fitness. Getting active was crucial for my mental health, even though it was hard at first. I was anxious, ashamed, and didn't want to go to the gym. But overcoming that hurdle was key. Then, nutrition and physical health came next."

Nikki also highlights the significance of breaking down goals into manageable pieces. "When I started, I wanted to do box jumps and push-ups, but I was nearly 300 pounds and out of shape. It was tough, but I learned to break my goals into smaller, achievable steps. That mindset shift helped me maintain my mental health."

Through it all, Nikki has been transparent about her struggles and triumphs, believing that sharing her story will help others. "At my heaviest, I was around 300 pounds. My lowest was 225, and I'm still down over 50 pounds. It's been a lot of work, but I'm proud of how far I've come."



Nikki's story is one of resilience, determination, and self-awareness. Her advice to others? "Cuteness helps!" she laughs, recalling how working at Lululemon boosted her confidence. She shares that she always wore a baggy t-shirt and leggings and says, "Wearing something that makes you feel good can improve your confidence and is fun. And be honest with yourself about how you're feeling. Talk to your safe people because hiding how you feel only breeds more shame, and shame is paralyzing." She shares that Lululemon has also been a supportive community upholding values that are pivotal in maintaining her lifestyle changes like personal responsibility, fun, courage, and connection.

Nikki's journey is a testament to the power of prioritizing mental health, building a supportive community, and being unflinchingly honest with yourself. Her story will undoubtedly inspire others to embark on their paths to wellness, knowing that the journey, though challenging, is always worth it.

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The Importance of Sleep in Health and Fitness:

Insights from Dr. John, Board-Certified Sleep Specialist



In a recent conversation with Dr. John, a renowned board-certified sleep specialist, we explored the profound impact of sleep for health, fitness, and overall well-being. With over 25 years of experience and a holistic approach that has helped more than 50,000 patients, Dr. John's insights offer valuable guidance for anyone looking to improve their sleep for their lives.

Dr. John's journey into sleep medicine began early in his career, driven by personal experiences during medical school and residency. He noticed that when he managed to get better sleep, his academic and professional performance significantly improved. This observation, combined with a personal conviction instilled by his mother about the importance of eight hours of sleep, laid the foundation for his future in sleep medicine.

Throughout his intensive care practice, Dr. John observed that patients who could sleep better recovered faster, even in critical care settings. This realization led him to focus solely on sleep medicine in the last five years of his career.

Despite facing personal challenges, such as losing his mother and starting a new business, Dr. John found ways to prioritize and improve his sleep. His dedication to helping others do the same is evident in his work, where he has successfully guided countless individuals to overcome sleep disorders and reduce their reliance on sleeping pills through holistic methods.

For those in the health and fitness industry, particularly high-level professionals and trainers, Dr. John emphasizes that sleep is the foundation on which fitness and diet are built. "You can't go anywhere if you don't sleep well," he says. Whether dealing with stress or making important decisions, the standard advice is to "sleep on it." This is because sleep is essential for healing and recovery, both physically and mentally.

Regarding fitness, Dr. John highlights the importance of human growth hormones, which are secreted during sleep and crucial for muscle repair and growth. He explains that these hormones are vital for children and adults, particularly those engaged in regular physical activity. Without adequate sleep, the body's ability to produce these hormones is compromised, leading to decreased performance and slower recovery.

Furthermore, sleep is critical in regulating appetite through hormones like leptin and ghrelin. Poor sleep can lead to an imbalance, causing increased hunger and poor dietary choices, creating a vicious cycle that hampers fitness goals. Dr. John strongly advises against the popular notion of sacrificing sleep for productivity, reminding us that even Elon Musk, a well-known short sleeper, has acknowledged that most people need seven to eight hours of sleep to function optimally.

Practical Tips for Better Sleep

Dr. John offers two practical tips to improve sleep quality immediately:

1. Dedicated Worry Time: Allocate between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. to address any worries or stressors. Write down what you can solve and leave the rest outside the bedroom.

2. No Phones in the Bedroom: Keep your phone out of the bedroom at least 30 minutes before bedtime. Screens emit blue light that can disrupt your body's natural sleep-wake cycle.

He likens these practices to a TSA screener at the airport—if you have worries or your phone, it's time to leave them out before entering the bedroom. This simple, but effective routine can significantly enhance the quality of your sleep by allowing your mind to rest and prepare for the next day.

Dr. John underscores the interconnectedness of sleep, fitness, and diet. Adequate sleep enhances physical performance and improves mental focus, decision-making, and dietary choices. Conversely, regular physical activity and a balanced diet contribute to better sleep quality, creating a positive feedback loop that supports overall health and well-being.

Dr. John's message is clear: "Sleep equals gains." By prioritizing sleep, you can unlock your full potential in fitness and beyond, ensuring a healthier, more productive life. So, take his advice to heart—sleep well, and be well.



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Interview with Morgan Willett:

From Small-Town Texas
to Nashville Dreams



Interview by
Terry Barga

Photos:
Kelsey Cotton
[@visualsbykelsey](https://www.instagram.com/visualsbykelsey)

Terry Barga (Nashville Fit Magazine): Morgan, it's great to have you here! Let's start by getting a little background on your life. I know you've lived in California for a while, but are you initially from there?

Morgan Willett: Nope, not a California native! I was born and raised in the quaint little town of Granbury, Texas. It's a speck of a city with about 10,000 people—very Friday Night Lights vibes. Small-town football, one movie theater, and I didn't ride a horse to school! After high school, I went to the University of Texas in Austin and lived there for a bit. Eventually, my crazy reality TV era led me to Los Angeles. Now, I've found my way to Nashville, where I reside.

Terry: I love it! Let's rewind a bit to teenage Morgan. What were you into during high school? Were sports always your thing, or did TV call to you early on?

Morgan: Oh, I was a diehard cheerleader—I ate, breathed, and lived cheerleading. I even skipped my senior prom for a cheer competition in Florida! I was also the student council vice president, a member of the honor society, and involved in every extracurricular club. My parents instilled a strong work ethic in me, and it stuck. Cheerleading was my main focus, and I was determined to cheer in college, which I did.

Terry: Wow, dedication! And props to your parents for all those late-night drives to practice. How did that work ethic shape your career post-college?

Morgan: It shaped everything. After graduating, I worked at a PR firm in Austin, but I quickly realized that a desk job wasn't for me.





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It lasted two weeks before my sister suggested I audition for Big Brother. I sent a casual tweet to the casting director, got called in, and eventually quit my job on a whim to film the audition in L.A. It was a wild move, but it paid off—I ended up winning the show, which launched my reality TV career.

Terry: That's an incredible leap of faith! What was your favorite part of that whole reality TV phase?

Morgan: The travel. I filmed my last TV show in Africa, which sparked my love for travel. I've been to places like Mauritius and Qatar—places a girl from Granbury, Texas, wouldn't usually see. Those experiences were priceless.

Terry: That's amazing. What did you learn about yourself through all of that?

Morgan: I learned that I can do hard things. Big Brother was challenging—75 days without contact with the outside world, living in harsh conditions with people I wouldn't usually get along with. But I pushed through and won. It taught me that being a good person pays off and reminded me how much my small-town Texas values shaped me.

Terry: How did your parents react to all this?

Morgan: They were initially nervous—no parent wants to hear that their kid quit a stable job to go on reality TV. But they ended up being proud, especially after I won. I even took them to Cabo as a thank-you!



Terry: That's awesome. So, you finished your stint in L.A. and moved to Nashville. What brought you here?

Morgan: Honestly, there wasn't a big reason—I just visited a friend, fell in love with the city, and decided to move. I've got a podcast, launched a fitness app, and am building a community here. Nashville has become my dream city.

Terry: Tell me more about the podcast. Do you have any favorite interviews so far?

Morgan: The podcast started as a random idea on Instagram, and it's taken off. My favorite interview so far has been with Mitchell Tenpenny—such a nice guy, so down-to-earth. I even got to star in his music video, which was a surreal "I'm officially a Nashville girl" moment.

Terry: That's so cool! And you've also launched a fitness app—tell us about that.

Morgan: Yes, it's called Move Like Morgan. It started during the 2020 lockdown when I began live-streaming my workouts on Instagram. It evolved into a full-fledged fitness app with workouts, challenges, healthy recipes, and more. I focus on making fitness fun and realistic—think the 80/20 rule, where you can still enjoy pizza and margaritas!

Terry: You're speaking my language! The Nashville fitness community is fantastic, and you're a perfect fit. Welcome to the Nashville Fit family!

Morgan: Thank you, Terry! I'm excited to dive deeper into the community here. It feels like home.

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Reclaiming Vitality

Chad Goldstein and Cory Caruthers
on the Truth About Hormone
Therapy for Men



When it comes to men's health, Chad Goldstein and Cory Caruthers, the dynamic duo behind Gameday Men's Health in Nashville, are on a mission to empower men to reclaim their vitality and confidence. With a passion for helping guys feel their best, they both tackle common misconceptions about hormone therapy head-on, which offers insights that can transform lives. In this Q&A, Chad and Cory break down the myths and realities of hormone optimization, providing a clear path for men who are ready to take control of their health and get back in the game.

GameDay Men's Health Q&A

Chad Goldstein and Cory Caruthers, owners of the Gameday Men's Health franchise brand are making it their mission to help guys get back in the game and feel their best.

Q: What 's the most common misconception you come across regarding hormone therapy for men?

A: We consistently dispel the perception hormone optimization and peptide therapies are only beneficial for serious fitness enthusiasts. The reality is, most of the male cliental we see are average men within their early 30's. Most are working too many hours and has a packed schedule between kids, friends, family, etc. They associate their busy schedule to the cause of poor sleep, lack of energy, inability to focus and lack of a consistent fitness routine. However, it is common to see these guys come get their levels tested only to find out their hormone levels are almost non-existent. After optimizing those levels, it changes their lives. They are sleeping better, the mental fog is eliminated, motivation in the gym spikes, and improvement in physical relationships are reinvigorated. With the accessibility of hormone testing today, we should all know our numbers and be aware of the effects non-optimized levels have on us.



Q: Is testosterone therapy just a way to get “medically approved” steroids?

A: This is just not true at anywhere near clinically recommended levels. The misinformation out there requires us to educate ourselves. We are referring to natural substances your body already produces. These substances identify when your body is no longer capable of producing these hormones at the levels you need, and bringing back up optimal levels (far from abusive “steroid” levels). As we age, our bodies become less efficient at producing optimal hormone levels. This takes a significant toll on our mental clarity, energy levels, ability to build muscle and burn fat, sleep performance, libido, and the list goes on. This declining levels often trigger the, “he’s going through his mid-life crisis phase” men are often labeled with that starts as early as 30yrs of age. By identifying your biomarker levels and where your body is naturally becoming deficient you can prevent or reverse the symptoms. “Menopause” is a real and natural occurrence as we age. Guys really need to start talking about this and building awareness.

Q: I’m back in the gym, working out harder than ever, but I’m not seeing the body composition changes I want. I simply need to work out harder and burn more calories, right?

A: We see this all the time with our male patients. The truth is as we age you simply cannot outwork the lack of a solid nutrition plan and optimized hormone levels. We estimate proper nutrition and optimized hormone levels equate to as much as 70% of your success relative to building muscle and losing fat. A solid fitness / recovery plan is the remaining 30%. Many men naturally gravitate towards this idea of focusing on an aggressive fitness routine alone to see results. This may be true in our 20’s, but our bodies become less efficient as we age. After the age of 30, it’s estimated we lose 3% – 5% of our muscle mass every decade. A key component to longevity is optimizing the balance of fitness, nutrition, and hormones to build and preserve as much muscle mass for as long as possible.

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
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
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Anthony Vigilante: PainFree Performance Specialist

Anthony Vigilante, originally from Staten Island, New York, is a dedicated personal trainer with over five years of experience in the fitness industry. As a former athlete, Anthony knows firsthand the intensity that sports can take on the body. After struggling with injuries and realizing that conventional training methods were no longer serving him, he shifted his focus toward a more sustainable approach to fitness.

Today, Anthony's training philosophy centers around longevity, mobility, and safe strength training techniques designed to promote a pain-free life. His aim is to educate others on how to exercise safely and effectively, which promotes a more active and pain-free lifestyle.

Photos by: Christian Pennington

Anthony holds several certifications, including PPSC Pain-Free Performance Specialist, Functional Kettlebell Trainer, Fitness Nutrition Specialist, and RHU Certified Row Coach. His expertise and personal experience make him a trusted guide for anyone looking to improve their fitness in a safe and effective way.

For more workouts and fitness tips, you can find Anthony on Instagram @a.vigilantefitness. You can also take a class with him at All Strength Nashville or Rowhouse Cool Springs.

**TURN THE PAGE TO
DISCOVER ANTHONY'S
DYNAMIC WORKOUT
ROUTINE!**

ANTHONY'S DYNAMIC WORKOUT

➔ Warm-up Circuit

- Banded Overbacks 2 x 10
 - Banded Pullaparts 2 x 10
 - Seal Jacks 2 x 20
-

➔ 2 Rounds

- Beast Walk - 10 steps forward & back
 - Hanging Leg Raise (Toe to Bar) - 10
 - Air Squats - 10
 - Ball Slams - 10
-

➔ 3 Rounds

- Sand bag clean to squats - 5
 - Sandbag Carry 2 x Length of Gym or 30 seconds
 - Landmine Rotational Snatch 5/5
-



➔ 3 Rounds

- Swing high pull - 10
 - Lateral Lunge Clean to Curtsy Lunge - 5
 - Gorilla Row - 20
-

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Finding Balance: Christy Pruitt-Haynes on Her 106-Pound Weight Loss Journey



Terry Barga: Christy, it's great to have you here today for Nashville Fit Magazine's Transformation Issue. I've known you for 15 years and am thrilled to share your incredible journey with our readers. Let's start by introducing yourself to those who may not know you.

Christy Pruitt-Haynes: Thanks, Terry! It's a pleasure to be here. My name is Christy Pruitt-Haynes, and I'm a Nashville native. I've moved around a bit, but Nashville is home, and I keep finding my way back here. Professionally, I'm a consultant and speaker working with companies worldwide on HR practices and similar topics. But outside of work, I have a real passion for bourbon and whiskey, which has turned into a side hustle. I host bourbon and cigar tastings, which I love. I'm also a mom and an aunt—my 20-year-old is in college, and my 24-year-old is a chef, engaged, and doing great. My daughter and niece are the center of my world, and I'm always seeking out things that bring me joy.



Terry: That sounds like a full life! Now, I know our readers are eager to hear about your transformation.

“I knew that if I didn’t make changes, I might not be there for those moments, or if I were, I wouldn’t be able to fully enjoy them. So I got active, started eating better, and worked hard to get where I am now.”

Terry: You’ve lost an incredible 106 pounds. What inspired you to start this journey, and how has it impacted your life?

Christy: Yes, I’ve lost 106 pounds, and I count every single one because they were all hard-fought! My inspiration came from my physical health and wanting to smile when I looked in the mirror again. I’ve tried to lose weight before, but I realized I was often doing it for the wrong reasons, like vanity. This time, I dug deep and figured out that I wanted to be around for my daughter and niece to see them grow and thrive. I knew that if I didn’t make changes, I might not be there for those moments, or if I were, I wouldn’t be able to fully enjoy them. So I got active, started eating better, and worked hard to get where I am now.

Terry: When you first started, we celebrated when you lost 35, maybe 40 pounds. But like many of us, you faced setbacks. Can you share what happened after that initial success and how you turned things around?

Christy: Absolutely. After that initial success, I gained all the weight back—and then some. My fibromyalgia flared up more often, my blood pressure went through the roof, and I didn’t feel good. I felt swollen, and my joints, especially my knees, were suffering. I even had to have a knee replacement, which was inevitable, but my weight sped up the process. I finally reached a point where I knew I had to do something. I had the knowledge and resources, so I got serious and started making changes.

Terry: You’ve mentioned that this time around, you approached things differently. What were some of the fundamental changes you made that helped you succeed?

Christy: This time, I took it one step at a time. I started by drinking more water—about 100 ounces a day—which made a big difference. Then I gradually changed my diet. Instead of eliminating anything, I reduced carbs and sweets. I also increased my protein and vegetables, and found healthier alternatives for my cravings. I didn’t give up alcohol, but I switched to drinking spirits straight, which cut out the extra calories from mixers.

“It was all about finding what fits my lifestyle and keeping it enjoyable.”

Terry: That’s an intelligent approach, making gradual changes you can sustain. What about exercise? How did you incorporate that into your routine?

Christy: I started with something simple: walking up and down my driveway every morning. From there, I added weightlifting, which changed how I looked and felt. I also tried different activities to keep things fun, like dance classes and Pilates. I had to experiment to find what worked for me. Even when I faced setbacks, such as my knee replacement, I adapted by increasing water-based exercises. It was all about finding what fits my lifestyle and keeping it enjoyable.

Terry: That’s a great message—finding what works for you and sticking with it. Now, Christy, what advice would you give them for someone who might be on the fence about starting their health journey?

Christy: First, remember that you didn’t gain the weight overnight so it’s not going to come off overnight. This is a long-term commitment. Don’t focus on short-term goals; think about how you want to live your life in the future. Just getting up and going to the gym puts you miles ahead of where you were before. And don’t worry about what others are doing in the gym—people who exercise are usually very supportive and will cheer you on. Finally, don’t be afraid to experiment. Try different activities until you find something that works for you.

Terry: That’s fantastic advice, Christy. Thank you for sharing your story with us—it’s truly inspiring. Before we wrap up, I have to ask: can we expect to see a photo of you holding a bourbon and cigar for this feature?

Christy: [Laughs] Absolutely! Balance is critical, right? I’ll send a few photos, including one with a bourbon and cigar. It’s all about enjoying life while staying healthy.

Terry: Perfect! Thanks again, Christy, for being so open and sharing your journey. I know our readers will find your story as inspiring as I do.



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Vui Hunt: Nourishing Nashville One Bite at a Time by Terry Barga

Vui Hunt stands out as a beacon of health and wellness in a city known for its vibrant culture and culinary diversity. Through her beloved establishments—Vui's and Vui's Juice—she is transforming the way Nashvillians approach food. Both offers more than just a meal, but a lifestyle rooted in nourishment and community.

The Essence of Vui's: Fresh, Flavorful, and Health-Focused

At the heart of Vui's restaurants is a simple yet powerful philosophy: food should be as fresh, flavorful, and wholesome as possible. Inspired by her Vietnamese heritage and a deep passion for clean eating, Vui has created a menu that speaks to the soul. The menu balances vibrant flavors with health-conscious ingredients. Whether it's the crisp freshness of her salads, the aromatic depth of her pho, or the nourishing richness of her bowls each dish at Vui's is crafted with care and intention.

Vui's impact goes beyond the plate. She is on a mission to make healthy eating accessible and enjoyable for everyone. By offering a diverse menu that caters to various dietary needs and preferences, from plant-based options to gluten-free dishes, she ensures that everyone can find something that resonates with their palate and health goals.



Photos by: Christian Pennington

Vui's Juice: A Fresh Take on Wellness

Complementing her restaurants is Vui's Juice, a juice bar that has quickly become a favorite spot for locals looking to refresh and rejuvenate. The focus is on purity—each juice is made from the freshest fruits and vegetables with no added sugars or artificial ingredients. Whether you are grabbing a green juice to start your day or a vibrant smoothie as an afternoon pick-me-up, Vui's Juice delivers natural nutrient-packed beverages that support overall wellness.

The juice bar is more than just a place to grab a quick drink; it's a community hub. Health-conscious individuals can connect, share tips, and inspire each other on their wellness journeys. Vui and her husband have fostered a welcoming atmosphere where customers feel part of something bigger—a movement towards better health.

A Family Effort: Impacting the Local Community

Vui's husband plays a crucial role in this endeavor, bringing his passion for health and community. Together they have cultivated a space focusing on holistic well-being, which supports the local economy by sourcing ingredients from nearby farms and working with local suppliers. Their commitment to quality and sustainability resonates with their customers, many of whom are loyal patrons who appreciate the care that goes into every meal and juice.

Beyond their businesses, Vui and her husband are active members of the Nashville community. They often participate in local events and initiatives that promote health and wellness. The influence extends beyond their restaurants as they strive to positively impact the lives of those around them reaching to their own employees, customers, and beyond.

A Taste of Vui's: A Recipe to Try at Home

As a special treat for Nashville Fit Magazine readers, Vui has graciously shared one of her favorite recipes—a testament to her belief that healthy eating can be delicious and easy to incorporate into your daily life. Whether you're a seasoned chef or just starting your culinary journey, this recipe will inspire you to bring a bit of Vui's magic into your kitchen.



Vui's Chopped Kale Salad

With Walnut Parmesan and
Lemon Herb Dressing

Serves 4

This salad is a delicious and healthy dish that combines the texture of kale with various crunchy ingredients - a great blend of crunchy, tangy, and nutty flavors. With these ingredients mixed up together makes it a perfect side dish or light meal on its own.

6 cups kale chopped (2 bunches)
1/2 lemon, juice only
1 cup purple cabbage thinly sliced
1 cup carrots shredded
2 cups baby arugula
1 cup edamame (shelled)
1/4 red onion thinly sliced
1/2 cup peanuts crushed
1/2 cup walnut parmesan*

1. Rinse the kale leaves in cold water. Remove the leaves by pulling off from the stem. Spin dry in a salad spinner or shake dry and dab with a kitchen towel. Chop kale leaves into bite-sized pieces. Place in a large bowl and massage the leaves for 2-3 minutes with the juice of half of a lemon to soften and reduce bitterness.

2. In a large bowl, assemble massaged kale, baby arugula, shredded carrots, edamame, red onions, and thinly sliced cabbage. Sprinkle chopped peanuts and walnut parmesan over the salad and toss lightly. Enjoy with the Lemon Herb Dressing*.

This salad can be customized by adding other toppings like crispy chickpeas, avocado, soft-boiled eggs, or your favorite proteins.



Walnut Parmesan

- 1 cup walnuts raw
- .5 cup nutritional yeast
- .5 tsp salt
- .5 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tbsp white miso paste



This is a great plant-based alternative to traditional Parmesan cheese. It is a perfect for sprinkling on pasta, salads, or any dish that needs a cheesy touch.

1. Toast the walnuts (optional): Preheat your oven to 350°F; Spread the walnuts on a baking sheet and toast them in the oven for about 8-10 minutes until they're golden and fragrant. Be sure to keep an eye on them so they don't burn. Let the walnuts cool slightly.
2. In a food processor or high-speed blender, combine the walnuts, nutritional yeast, garlic powder, salt, and miso paste. Pulse the mixture until it reaches a crumbly, Parmesan-like texture. Be careful not to over-process, or it could turn into walnut butter.
3. Taste the mixture and adjust the seasoning if needed. You can add more nutritional yeast for a cheesier flavor or more salt if desired.
4. Transfer your Walnut Parmesan to an airtight container and store it in the refrigerator, can be kept up to 2 weeks.

*Lemon Herb Dressing

- 1 cup EVOO
- .5 cup apple cider vinegar
- .5 cup lemon juice fresh
- .5 cup agave or local honey
- 1/4 cup Dijon mustard
- 1/2 cup parsley roughly chopped
- 1 tsp coarse kosher salt
- .5 tsp black pepper

Place all ingredients except EVOO in a food processor or blender to mix, and slowly add EVOO to emulsify. Store in the refrigerator, can be kept for up to 2 weeks.

Vui Hunt's dedication to health, community, and culinary excellence makes a difference in Nashville. Through her restaurants and juice bar, she's not just serving food—she's serving a way of life that nourishes the body, mind, and soul.

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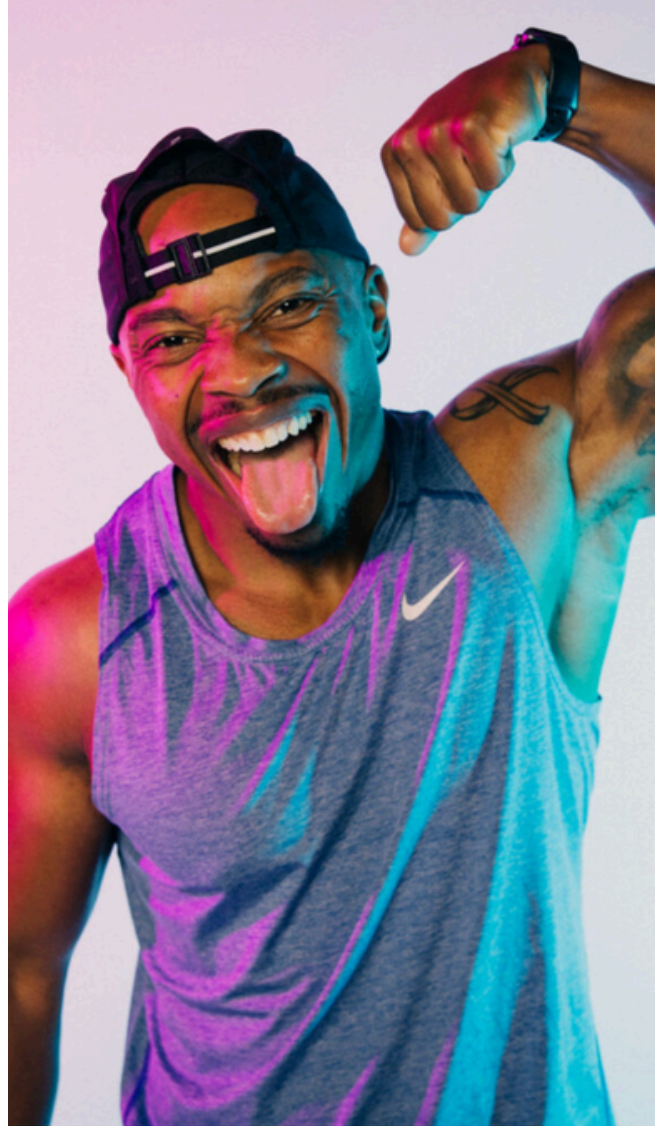
I'm in a Glass Case of Emotion!

By Gerell Webb

As a former athlete, I am often asked why I train the general population rather than perform training for athletes. While I still dabble in athletic training, the bulk of my clientele is what you would call "regular people." I have a client roster ranging from some of your favorite Entertainers and Athletes to "Sally the Soccer Mom." The reason why this is my preference is because of the transformation that I see. There is a great joy of guiding and watching them go through these incredible transformations. Yes, the physical transformations are amazing, but the emotional and mental transformation is the best part. I watch clients go from hating what they see in the mirror to swaggering. It's amazing!

In the world of fitness, the focus is often on physical transformation. Before-and-after photos flood social media feeds, showcasing the impressive results of hard work, discipline, and sweat. But behind every physical transformation lies an equally profound mental and emotional journey.

Throughout this journey my role as their trainer evolves. Initially, I am a source of knowledge and motivation that helps my clients take those first intimidating steps toward their fitness goals.



As the journey progresses and we get a chance to lock in, I become more of a coach and mentor, guiding the client through the emotional ups and downs and helping them develop what I call "Testicular fortitude."

The journey of transformation often begins with a moment of self-realization. For many, this moment comes when they look in the mirror and feel disconnected from the person staring back at them. This is only sometimes because I've gained 50 pounds and no longer recognize myself.

More often than not, I've lost myself in all my titles. (CEO, Wife, Husband, Entrepreneur, Mom or Dad) It's my job to remind you who you are. We do many hard things to prove that you are still amazing just as I believe you are! I always tell clients that I am going to push them out of their comfort zone because that's where the magic happens. I will give you many hard things to do, but I will only ever provide you with something you CAN do. To truly achieve your complete transformation, you have to be open to being pushed both physically and mentally. The body responds to new stimuli with soreness and fatigue, but the mind faces a steep climb. It would help if you confronted long-held beliefs about their limitations, self-worth, and identity. "Listen to me, not the little voice in your head." The emotional highs and lows during your transformation can be intense. Successes such as lifting a heavier weight or completing a challenging workout bring excitement and a sense of accomplishment.

The flip side of that, however, are setbacks. Such as a missed workout or slower-than-expected progress can lead to self-doubt and frustration. In these moments, you must remind yourself why you started. Your transformation is going to be more mental than it is physical. There will be days that you want to quit. Days that you have low energy because of life, work, family, or sometimes all three making it difficult to push through. As your trainer, let me be the first to tell you, "I don't care." The goal is: The environment doesn't have to be perfect for you to win. Every day won't be 75 and Sunny. Most days won't. You won't be at 100% every day, and that's ok. Bring me what you have. To achieve this transformation, you must eliminate self-doubt and believe in yourself like never before. But if you fall off, so what? Get back up and keep going. Your transformation is a marathon, not a sprint.

We have all fallen off at some point. I'm looking for consistency, not perfection. If you're consistent, I promise you won't lose weight unless you're trying to lose weight. Let's go to work fit, fam!



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