

SEPT/OCT

# NFM NASHVILLE FIT MAGAZINE

# TRANSFORMATION ISSUE

## WEIGHT LOSS WITH PCOS

REAL STRATEGIES.  
REAL RESULTS.

## THE STRONGER VERSION OF TRACY SAUNIER

HER STORY.  
HER STRENGTH.  
HER WHY.

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## LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

Every year, there are issues of Nashville Fit that remind me exactly why we started this magazine. The Transformation Issue is always one of them.

In fact, I'd probably call it my favorite issue of the year.

There's something powerful about seeing what people are capable of when they finally decide to make a change. And in this issue, you're going to meet some incredible people. Several of the transformations we're sharing include weight losses of more than 100 pounds. That number alone is impressive, but the number isn't really the story.

The story is everything it took to get there.

It's the early mornings when staying in bed would have been easier. It's learning how to eat differently, move differently, and think differently. It's getting knocked off track and finding a way back. It's months and years of small decisions that eventually add up to something that once felt impossible.

After spending nearly two decades in the fitness industry, I've seen firsthand what the human body is capable of. Give it movement, better nutrition, recovery, and consistency, and it can do some incredible things. But I've also learned that the biggest transformation usually happens somewhere deeper. Confidence changes. Relationships change. The way someone carries themselves changes. People start doing things they never believed they could do because they've proven to themselves that they can keep showing up.

And that's why this issue matters.

These stories aren't here to make you compare your beginning to someone else's finish line. They're here to remind you that change is possible. Your transformation might be losing 100 pounds. It might be losing 20. It might be getting stronger, running your first 5K, coming back from an injury, taking control of your health, or simply walking into a gym for the first time.

Every journey looks different, and every one of them deserves to be celebrated.

That has always been at the heart of Nashville Fit. Yes, we talk about fitness, nutrition, gyms, trainers, and everything happening in Nashville's health and wellness community. But ultimately, this magazine has always been about people.

People doing hard things. People helping other people. People discovering what they're capable of.

As you read this issue, I hope you take time to appreciate the work behind every transformation you see. More importantly, I hope somewhere in these pages you find a little inspiration for your own journey.

Because the human body is incredible.

And the human spirit might be even more impressive.

Keep moving forward.

*Terry Barga*

OWNER/ PUBLISHER



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# YES, WEIGHT LOSS WITH PCOS IS POSSIBLE

KYLEE WEYRAUCH LOST MORE THAN 100 POUNDS  
DESPITE LIVING WITH MULTIPLE HORMONE  
CONDITIONS



At just 20 years old, Kylee Weyrauch weighed nearly 300 pounds. Today, she's more than 100 pounds lighter, but she says the biggest transformation wasn't physical. It was learning that lasting change begins in the mind. "I knew that I would not be able to physically change until I mentally made a change," Weyrauch said.

Her journey wasn't fueled by quick fixes or overnight success. It was built through consistency, vulnerability, education and the willingness to start over, even when life forced her to.

For much of her childhood, Weyrauch felt different. Although she was a three-sport athlete, she was always the slower kid, the bigger kid and the kid who couldn't understand why her body wasn't responding the same way as everyone else's. "I noticed very young that no matter how hard I tried, I was slower and I was tired all the time," she said. "I would eat less, and I would gain more."

By age 13, her grandmother noticed something wasn't adding up. "She was like, 'There's just something not right here.'"

After undergoing lab work, Weyrauch was diagnosed with hypothyroidism. Around the same time, doctors also diagnosed her with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), two conditions that can significantly impact metabolism, hormones and weight. The answers brought relief, but having answers didn't immediately change her habits either.

As she entered college, depression, anxiety and emotional eating began to take over. Feeling trapped in a career path she no longer wanted, Weyrauch turned to food, drinking and unhealthy habits to cope. "I just really got into kind of a dark hole," she said. "Food, going out, drinking, I thought that was the answer. I just didn't care about myself anymore."

However, after becoming seriously ill during the COVID-19 pandemic, a doctor's blunt warning became the wake-up call she needed. "The doctor basically told me, 'You would not be so out of breath and so sick if you were not so overweight,'" Weyrauch recalled. "I was like, 'Oh man, I'm not even really in my 20s yet, and I'm being told this.'"



Instead of immediately jumping into workouts or restrictive diets, Weyrauch focused on healing mentally first. "I made sure to get the help that I needed there first," she said. Once she felt ready, she made herself accountable in a very public way.

She recorded a full 360-degree video of herself, documenting her starting weight and measurements all for the TikTok audience to see. "I just put it out there that I was being vulnerable and I was starting, encouraging people who wanted to start with me."

The response stunned her.

The video surpassed eight million views, creating an online community of people cheering her on every step of the way. "I just had a whole tribe of people with me."

Over the next two years, Weyrauch lost more than 100 pounds. Her approach wasn't trendy, it was disciplined. "I decided that it was best to do it slow and steady."

She meal prepped every breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack to eliminate guesswork and hired a nutrition coach who understood her body and taught her how to fuel it rather than deprive it. She also trained five to six days a week, prioritizing weightlifting over endless cardio.

"I fell in love with the weightlifting aspect," she said. "I love that building muscle equals burning more fat." More importantly, she discovered that learning from knowledgeable coaches, and eventually helping others, became one of her biggest motivators. Like many transformation stories, Weyrauch's wasn't perfect.

While traveling across the country opening gyms for Crunch Fitness, she regained about 50 pounds. "It was very humbling," she laughed.

Rather than hiding that chapter, she now believes it's one of the most impactful parts of her story. "I think it's important for people to know that sometimes getting back into what you already were is even harder than getting started the first time."

For anyone who has regained weight or feels discouraged, Weyrauch wants them to know they aren't alone. "Your body has memory," she said. "Your body will bounce back quicker now than it did in the beginning. It may feel mentally tougher, absolutely. But your body has already done this once." Her advice is surprisingly simple.



**"My mantra is: do the small things. All the small things add up to the big things."**

She also encourages people not to wait until everything feels perfect before beginning. "Take the first step—one step at a time—and make a commitment to yourself." For Weyrauch, that commitment started with photos and videos she never wanted anyone to see. "I wanted everybody to see that this can be done."

Today, she coaches online clients through customized training and nutrition guidance and is using her story to help you. "My love and passion is health and wellness," she said. "We're getting there, we just have to build the foundation back."

Looking back, she no longer measures success solely by the number on the scale. Her greatest transformation came from discovering resilience, rebuilding her confidence and proving that even after setbacks, it's always possible to begin again.

Her inspiring journey and viral content have resonated with millions, helping her build a community of more than 74,000 followers on TikTok.

**Follow @KyRayFit to keep up with her journey and find motivation along the way.**





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# Inside the Mindset Transformation of Curve Model Miranda Morris

**One of Social Media's Most-Watched Body-Positivity Influencers Reveals the Transformation That Changed Everything**

For Miranda Morris, confidence was never supposed to come with a number attached to it.

As a model, content creator, and leading voice in the body-positivity space, Miranda has built a highly engaged social media community around a message that is both simple and powerful:

**Women do not have to lose weight, shrink themselves, or change their bodies before they are allowed to feel confident.**

That message has taken her further than she could have imagined. Through her work, Miranda has collaborated with major fashion brands, walked in runway shows, attended red-carpet events, and traveled around the world. But while the opportunities are exciting, the impact she has made on other women may be the most meaningful part of her journey.

In a culture that constantly tells women they should be smaller, leaner, or somehow different, Miranda has chosen another path. Her platform celebrates style, movement, experiences, and life without waiting for some future version of herself to enjoy them. She is helping redefine what confidence can look like by showing up exactly as she is.

That authenticity is what has connected with so many people.



Miranda isn't telling women they shouldn't have goals or want to make changes. Instead, she is challenging the idea that happiness and self-worth have to wait until those changes happen.

Her story is an important reminder that transformation doesn't always mean becoming someone new. Sometimes the most powerful transformation happens when we stop fighting who we are and start recognizing what our bodies already allow us to experience.

Miranda Morris is building a career, seeing the world, and creating opportunities on her own terms. More importantly, she's permitting other women to do the same — confidently, unapologetically, and without waiting for the scale to tell them they're ready.



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# The Stronger Version of Tracy Saunier

By: Terry Barga

When we talk about transformations in the fitness industry, we usually start with the numbers. How much weight did you lose? How many inches? What size did you use to wear? We love a good before-and-after photo, but after spending most of my adult life in this industry, I've learned the best transformation stories are rarely just about weight. They're about what someone discovers along the way.

Tracy Saunier has lost 120 pounds and kept it off, which is an incredible accomplishment. But after sitting down with her, I quickly realized that the weight loss isn't the most interesting part of her story.

**It's how someone who started exercising in her living room eventually built an entirely new relationship with fitness and now uses that experience to help others.**

Tracy grew up in a bigger body. By nine years old she was wearing adult-sized clothing, and by 10 she was already 5'6". But she wasn't sitting on the sidelines. Tracy was a highly recruited fast-pitch softball player, played basketball, cheered, and even started coaching at a young age. Being an athlete gave her confidence long before fitness became something she intentionally pursued.

As adulthood set in, her lifestyle changed. An office job meant she was no longer on her feet, and her weight continued to climb. Clothes stopped fitting, and a photo of herself didn't match the person she pictured in her head. Then came a workplace health evaluation.

Tracy stepped on the scale and specifically said she didn't want to know the number. The woman conducting the evaluation told her anyway: **300 pounds.**

She went back to her desk stunned. When she got home, she told her husband, Charlie, that they were done living the way they had been. Charlie was around 275 pounds himself, and his response was simple: if Tracy was ready, he was ready.



What I love about the beginning of their story is how simple it was. They didn't hire a trainer or join an expensive gym. They were broke, lived in an industrial area, and didn't have a convenient gym nearby, so Tracy bought three Tae Bo DVDs on eBay for about \$1.25 each. Three days a week, she and Charlie worked out in their living room, trying not to kick over the television or turtle tank.

Sometimes we make getting healthy so complicated that people convince themselves they can't begin until everything is perfect.

**Tracy didn't have the perfect plan. She started.**





Eventually she lost 100 pounds through nutrition changes and cardio, but the result didn't feel the way she expected. Tracy described herself as looking like a "deflated" version of who she had been. After accomplishing something enormous, she was still dissatisfied. She stepped away for several months and eventually realized what had been missing: she had completed a weight-loss journey, but she hadn't really started a fitness journey.

That realization changed everything.

Tracy joined the YMCA, discovered strength training, and found a fitness community that encouraged her to challenge herself. Eventually, she began substituting for group fitness classes.

One class became another; she developed a following, and people started asking if she could train them personally. In 2019, Tracy became ACSM certified as a personal trainer. Fitness wasn't something she was doing to become smaller anymore. It had become part of her life.

Her motivation has also changed. Tracy lost her mother at a young age, but before she passed, her mom discovered athletics later in life and started playing softball at 55. Tracy has watched her best friend deal with significant health challenges, and her sister is battling cancer. Those experiences have made her appreciate something many of us take for granted: the ability to move.

**She trains because she can, and she sees movement as a way to honor the people she loves who can't always do the same.**

Near the end of our conversation, I asked Tracy what she would tell the 300-pound version of herself. Her answer is the most important part of this story. She wouldn't tell that woman there was something wrong with her. She would tell her that she was already good, capable, and worthy, but there was another version of herself waiting to be discovered.

Tracy didn't start with a trainer, a big budget, or even the confidence that she would succeed. She started quietly with what she had and kept going.

The 120 pounds will always be part of Tracy Saunier's transformation, but I don't think it's the headline.

The real story is that somewhere along the way, Tracy discovered a stronger, healthier, and more capable version of the woman who had been there all along.

**Now she's helping other people discover theirs.**



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# RECESS FOR THE GROWN-UPS

By Jen Spice

The kids are back in class. Consider this your permission slip to put yourself back on the schedule.

Back-to-school season comes with a list for everybody except the parent. We buy the folders, label the water bottles, decode the sports schedules, sync four calendars and somehow arrive at Labor Day running on cold coffee, group texts and pure audacity. We survived getting kicked off the internet because someone picked up the landline, burned mix CDs one song at a time and navigated Nashville with printed MapQuest directions. I refuse to believe a packed school calendar is what finally takes us out.

As a mom and fitness professional who literally spends her days helping Nashville move, I still know the “I’ll work out when I have a full hour” lie—because I’ve told it, too. Respectfully, if we wait for a silent house, an empty inbox, the perfect class time and nobody needing a ride somewhere, we’ll be waiting until graduation.

**Babe, nobody is coming to hand you an empty afternoon. Take the small opening.**

Your child’s practice is not a hostage situation. If the facility and supervision rules allow, you do not have to watch every cone drill like ESPN is about to cut to you live. Walk laps around the field. Keep sneakers and a resistance band in your car. Do squats, step-ups, walking lunges and incline push-ups on a bench. You do not need sixty uninterrupted minutes, a matching workout set or Mercury to leave retrograde. Ten, fifteen or twenty minutes still count.

After school drop-off, take one loop around the block or hit a Nashville greenway before opening your email. Try a class at a nearby community center. Stretch for five minutes between meetings. Dance in the kitchen while dinner cooks. Take a brisk walk during the phone call that absolutely could have been a text.

**Consistency was always the cool girl. Perfection just had better PR.**

And some days, recess means absolutely no workout. Read ten pages. Drink your coffee while it’s still hot—groundbreaking, I know. Sit in your parked car where nobody is saying “Mom” for ten blessed minutes. Make the therapy appointment. Call the friend who knew you before your entire personality became snacks, carpools, and knowing everyone else’s schedule.

Self-care is not turning every spare minute into another productivity pageant. It is remembering that you are still a whole person.

Put your time on the family calendar with the same respect you give practice, tutoring, and dentist appointments. There is no trophy for Most Depleted Parent. Nobody is showing up at your house with a sash.

**Your children are watching how you treat yourself. Let them see a grown-up who moves, rests, asks for help, and has a life they genuinely enjoy.**



**The bell rang for them. Let it ring for you, too.**

## THE PRACTICE-TIME RESET

10 minutes walking  
10 minutes strength  
5 minutes mobility  
5 minutes minding your business  
in blessed silence



Years ago, **I was a different version of the person I am today.** From a young age, I was teased about being overweight. All through school, I was extremely introverted and insecure. As a result, my weight was as volatile as my emotions. The summer between middle school and high school, I stopped eating. Quite literally. I made it through the days on Diet Cokes and dropped 40 pounds in two months. (I don't recommend it.)

The biggest consequence of that insecurity was accepting relationships that were unhealthy and minimized me. I didn't understand it at the time, but looking back, I can see I didn't feel worthy of being adored or treated well — because I viewed myself as fat. As an adult, with the added stress of everyday life, living with such low self-esteem was a constant fight.

# TRANSFORMATION STARTS ON THE INSIDE

*A PERSONAL REFLECTION ON BODY IMAGE, SELF-WORTH, AND WHAT REAL CHANGE LOOKS LIKE FROM THE INSIDE OUT.*

**BY VANESSA HAMPTON**

I remember waking up every morning, looking in the mirror, and mentally beating myself up for what I had or hadn't done the day before, or what I'd eaten. Every. Single. Day. The scale was a torture device, dictating my mood and emotional state each day. Even now, I'm still working to undo that self-abuse. It's deeply ingrained, and healing takes time.

***"The scale was a torture device, dictating my mood and emotional state each day."***

After years of living in my head — feeling unlovable, allowing myself to be minimized because I felt unattractive — I was 34 before I'd finally had enough. It took a hard wake-up call about the toxicity I was allowing into my life — the same unhealthy relationships, the same self-talk — but it finally happened. I did the only thing I knew how — the same thing I'd done earlier in life — and took control of my eating. I did it all wrong again, but this time I only cut out food groups instead of cutting out food entirely.

Over the next year, I dropped four sizes. After that, I started working out for the first time in my life. That ignited a real fire. Feeling in control of my food was one thing. Feeling in control of weights I could physically hold in my hands — that was the catalyst for true transformation for me. Learning what I was capable of in the gym started to change the conversation I was having in my head. That started to change the relationship I had with myself — the only way I was ever going to change the relationships I had with other people.

My story is not unique. There are incredible people who transform themselves physically — massive weight loss, body changes that make them look like an entirely different person. But the physical changes are just the result. A transformation is never just physical. Behind every change is a story, a struggle, a journey. It's someone who decided they'd had enough. The headspace, the emotional fortitude, the conversations in their head about what they see in the mirror — these are the true transformations.

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# Beyond the Athlete: Dr. Justin Harrington's Approach to Sports Medicine

By Terry Barga

When most people hear “sports medicine,” they picture professional athletes, torn ACLs, and injuries that happen under stadium lights. For Dr. Justin Harrington, sports medicine is much bigger than that.

Recently relocating to Tennessee after completing a sports medicine fellowship in Rochester, New York, Harrington brings a perspective to **Hughston Clinic Orthopedics** centered on movement, quality of life, and helping patients return to the activities that matter most to them.

Growing up in Southern California, Harrington eventually attended medical school in Indianapolis before returning to California for his orthopedic residency. It was during his training that he found himself drawn to the mechanical nature of orthopedics.

Unlike areas of medicine that primarily rely on medications to influence what is happening inside the body, orthopedics allowed Harrington to address a problem physically.

“Something is broken. It’s not functioning appropriately,” Harrington explained. “How can I mechanically, physically alter it, change it, fix it so that it’s working appropriately again?”

Sports medicine took that interest a step further.

Today, minimally invasive arthroscopic techniques allow surgeons to perform procedures through small incisions using cameras and specialized instruments. In many cases, procedures that once required opening an entire joint can now be performed with considerably less disruption to the surrounding tissue.



But the technology is only part of what attracted Harrington to the field.

For him, sports medicine is ultimately about helping people regain something they feel an injury has taken away.

That patient could be a competitive athlete trying to regain the final few percentage points of performance. It could also be a recreational athlete trying to get back on the pickleball court, a gardener struggling with shoulder pain, or someone who wants to wash their hair without discomfort.

The “sport” is different for everyone.

**“It’s getting them back to engaging in their life and their surroundings and relationships with people the way that they want to,” Harrington said.**

That distinction becomes especially important when treating high-performing athletes. Someone functioning at 50 percent who improves to 80 percent may experience a dramatic improvement in quality of life. For an elite athlete already performing at 95 percent, however, that final five percent can determine whether they remain competitive.

Those differences also mean treatment cannot be one-size-fits-all.

Harrington points out that a 19-year-old Division I football player recovering from an ACL injury should not necessarily follow the same path as a 55-year-old recreational athlete with the same injury. Their bodies may share a diagnosis, but their goals are completely different.

That individualized approach extends beyond athletes altogether.

Whether someone is trying to return to competition, hiking, gardening, strength training or simply moving comfortably through everyday life, Harrington believes successful sports medicine begins by understanding what the patient actually wants to get back to doing.

**Because ultimately, sports medicine isn't just about returning people to sports.  
It's about returning people to their lives.**



Hughston Clinic Orthopaedics provides world-class musculoskeletal care across eight locations in Middle Tennessee, including Hendersonville, Hermitage, Lebanon, Nashville (Centennial, Harding Place, and Skyline), Smyrna, and Springfield. Its team of 16 physicians treats a wide range of orthopedic conditions and injuries affecting the foot, ankle, knee, hip, hand, wrist, elbow, shoulder, and spine. With an in-house MRI facility and highly skilled rehabilitation team, Hughston Clinic Orthopaedics delivers comprehensive, patient-focused care.

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## The Changes That Matter Most

By: Abby Miranda

It's easy to hear about health transformation and immediately think of a visible physical change in someone. And we love to see that if it's the goal, but what I've found through coaching people is that a true, genuine transformation around health and fitness is when changes happen that are deeper than a physical transformation.

Freedom around food, confidence, energy for the day, clarity of mind, finding a place in a community of other like minded people, strong bones, strong minds, healthy outlets, becoming capable. Becoming independent. Disciplined and so much more.

With summer coming to an end, it's common for people to give up on health and fitness goals because they're not trying to get the "summer bod" anymore and are transitioning into holiday mode.

I would encourage my clients and others in their journey to remember the things mentioned above and that being healthy doesn't always have to be associated with trying to get a certain aesthetic look. A transition in season can certainly mean a transition in aesthetic goals or changes in volume of food, but it shouldn't mean that healthy habits leave.

**True transformation**  
**means you recognize all of the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle and that is the reason for continuing to show up for yourself in all seasons.**

Most people start out wanting a physical change to happen, but in my experience, if they stick with it almost always get so much more positive change that is more powerful than just the physical and it's what keeps people going for life.

It's one of my favorite things to see and why I LOVE to do what I do as a coach.



## SUMMER EATS



# THE TOP 5 FLAVORS OF SUMMER: FOODS THAT MAKE THE SEASON WORTH SAVORING

Summer has a way of slowing life down just enough to remind us of the simple things. Longer evenings, backyard cookouts, beach vacations, and conversations that last well after the sun goes down all seem to revolve around one thing—good food.

The best summer meals aren't usually the most complicated. They're fresh, colorful, and meant to be shared. Whether you're firing up the grill or packing a picnic, these five seasonal favorites have earned their place at the table year after year.

### 1. Watermelon

Nothing says summer quite like slicing into an ice-cold watermelon on a hot afternoon. With its naturally sweet flavor and more than 90% water content, it's one of the most refreshing foods you can eat when temperatures climb.

Beyond being delicious, watermelon is rich in vitamin C, vitamin A, and lycopene—an antioxidant linked to heart health and exercise recovery. Toss it into a salad with feta and mint, blend it into a smoothie, or simply enjoy it straight from the rind.

*Why we love it:* It's refreshing, hydrating, and instantly reminds us of summer.



## 2. Fresh Corn on the Cob

Few foods capture the spirit of backyard barbecues better than sweet corn. Fresh-picked ears are naturally crisp and sugary, requiring little more than a few minutes on the grill or in boiling water.

While butter and salt are classics, don't stop there. Try sprinkling on smoked paprika, parmesan cheese, fresh herbs, or a squeeze of lime with chili powder for a street-corn-inspired twist.

*Why we love it:* It's simple, affordable, and the perfect side dish for nearly any summer meal.

## 3. Grilled Burgers

Summer is grilling season, and burgers remain the undisputed king of the cookout. Whether you prefer beef, turkey, chicken, or a plant-based alternative, burgers offer endless opportunities for creativity.

Fresh toppings like avocado, grilled onions, tomato, lettuce, jalapeños, pineapple, or homemade sauces can completely transform the experience. Pair your burger with roasted vegetables or a fresh salad for a balanced meal that still feels indulgent.

*Why we love it:* Nothing brings people together quite like gathering around the grill.



## 4. Fresh Berries

Strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries all reach their peak during the summer months. They're naturally sweet, packed with antioxidants, and incredibly versatile.

Add them to yogurt, oatmeal, salads, smoothies, or desserts—or simply eat them by the handful. Their vibrant colors and nutritional value make them one of the healthiest treats of the season.

*Why we love them:* They satisfy a sweet tooth while delivering fiber, vitamins, and antioxidants.



## 5. Homemade Ice Cream

Sometimes summer is simply about enjoying a treat without overthinking it. Whether it's traditional vanilla, homemade peach, fresh strawberry, or a rich chocolate swirl, ice cream has become part of the season's tradition.

For a healthier spin, try blending frozen bananas with berries or Greek yogurt to create a naturally sweet frozen dessert that still satisfies.

*Why we love it:* Because some summer memories are made standing in line at the local ice cream shop.



## The Secret Ingredient Is Who You Share It With

While these foods define the flavors of summer, the real magic isn't found on the plate. It's found around the table. The laughter after a backyard barbecue. Kids running through sprinklers with sticky watermelon smiles. Friends lingering over burgers long after dinner is over. Family vacations where everyone insists on stopping for homemade ice cream.

Summer food isn't just about eating—it's about creating memories.

So fire up the grill, visit your local farmers market, grab a fresh watermelon, and invite someone over. The best recipes are often the ones that bring people together.

After all, the taste of summer isn't found in one ingredient—it's found in the moments we share.

TERRY BARGA

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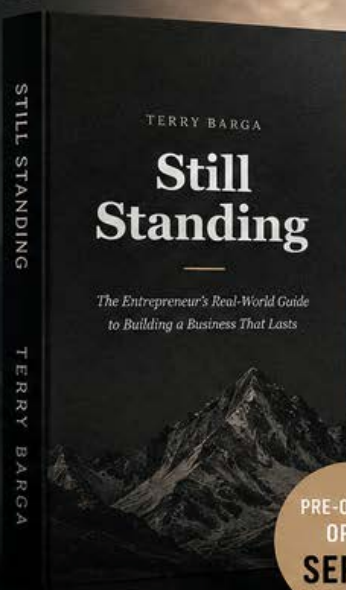
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Author of *Building a StoryBrand*

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# From 300 Pounds to Purpose: The Story Behind Swole Dough

By Eden Daniel

Raised in a Hispanic Christian household, the son of a Puerto Rican mother and a Dominican father. He describes himself as someone who has always been fun, energetic, and positive, a personality he leaned on hard during years he now calls some of the darkest of his life.

At his heaviest, Josue weighed over 300 pounds. Today, 175 pounds lighter, he's the founder of Swole Dough, a low calorie, low sugar cookie dough brand built on the idea healthy eating doesn't have to mean deprivation. But the story he's really telling, he says, isn't about cookie dough at all. It's about what happens when a person decides their life can look different.

**Josue is candid about the fact his transformation reshaped how people treated him.**

He believes he wasn't respected at his heaviest. Not because people were cruel, he's careful to say, but because it's hard for others to respect someone who doesn't yet respect themselves. He doesn't blame anyone for that. What he does want people to understand is that behind the "fun and energetic" persona he presented to the world, he was quietly struggling with depression.

That's the part of the journey he wishes someone had named for him sooner, that his worth was never tied to his body. He says the version of himself who was struggling needed to hear he was already loved, first by his faith, and that his value as a person had nothing to do with his physical size.



## **Before Swole Dough, Josue was a rapper. He hasn't stopped telling stories, the medium just changed**

These days, the story is his own fitness journey, packaged, quite literally, into a jar. He is intentionally not pushing the product on anyone. He's showing people what's possible and letting them decide.

That philosophy extends to how he built the brand itself. Rather than leaning on guilt or restriction, common currency in the diet industry, Swole Dough was designed around balance. Keeping ingredients low calorie and low sugar mattered, Josue says, but so did giving himself something sweet at the end of the day. He credits that balance with helping him actually stick to his nutritional goals long enough to lose the weight in the first place.

**He's also deliberate about separating weight loss from self worth in how he talks about the brand. Swole Dough isn't marketed as a weight loss product, it's positioned as a healthier alternative to one of the most calorically dense snacks around.**

And because Josue has lived on the other side of extreme weight, he says he's uniquely positioned to meet people without judgment, wherever they are in their own journey.

One moment sticks with him more than any sale. At the Music City Fit Expo, a kid approached him who was in the middle of a fitness journey strikingly similar to Josue's own. Not the dramatic before and after, but the messy, uncertain middle that most people never see. Josue recognized himself instantly in the kid because they were exactly where he stood just two and a half years prior himself. Taking time to pour into their journey wasn't about a sale, Josue says. It was recognition of where he started, how far he fought to get to where he is and where he is going. It remains the interaction that keeps the "why" he started Swole Dough in the first place at the forefront of his mind.

**Asked what he wants his legacy to be, Josue doesn't reach for the brand. He talks about passion, for fitness, and for the belief that people can change their lives if they truly want to.**

If Swole Dough disappeared tomorrow, he says he'd want people to remember that his story proved transformation was possible, with or without the company.

Looking further ahead, to any future children or family, Josue says the lesson he hopes outlives him has nothing to do with fitness at all. It's faith, the belief that worth isn't earned through achievement, but is inherent from birth. It's the same truth he says he didn't understand at 300 pounds, and the one that, once he did, changed everything else.



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# TRANSFORMATION IS A SKILL. SO IS KEEPING IT.

BY: COLLIN SCHOEN

Every summer I watch people get lean for the beach, and every fall I watch a piece of them come right back. It's not a discipline problem. It's that nobody ever taught them maintenance is a completely different skill than the one that got them there.

Cutting for summer works because it has a deadline. Deficit, structured training, a pool trip, or a wedding on the calendar forcing you to stay consistent. Most people can grind through twelve or sixteen weeks of that because they know exactly when it ends.

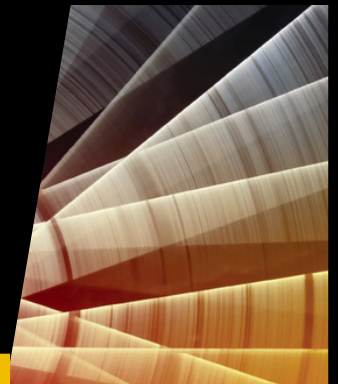
Fall doesn't give you that deadline. You can't stay in a deficit forever, but you also can't just stop paying attention the second the weather cools off. Maintenance means learning to read your own body without someone telling you what to do every day, adjusting food based on how training's going instead of following a fixed plan, and not spiraling every time the scale moves two pounds.

**It's calibration, not willpower.**

Honestly, this is what I think about more than almost anything else in coaching. Getting someone lean for sixteen weeks isn't the hard part. Teaching them to think for themselves once the plan ends is. The people who actually keep their results year after year are the ones who treat that fall transition as its own skill worth practicing, not something they just wing.

If there's one thing I wish the fitness industry talked about differently, it's this:

**The after photo isn't the finish line. It's where the real training starts, the kind that has to hold up through every season, not just the one everyone's posting about.**



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# SUMMER WORKOUT WITH VINCENT HALL OF DECRE TRAINING

My name is Vincent Hall, and I'm the founder of DECRE Training and a Performance Coach with more than a decade of experience coaching individuals and athletes across collegiate, professional, and private gym environments. DECRE Training provides sustainable training for all through strength & conditioning methodology, enabling clients to maintain their fitness routine from January to December - not just a fad or quick scheme. As a retired Division I athlete with a degree in Health Education, I specialize in helping clients build muscle, lose weight, improve overall wellness, and navigate rehabilitation through structured, evidence-based coaching.

This workout is one of my favorites for beginners because it uses minimal equipment. This session allows us to get a full-body workout using lower- and upper-body patterns, plus a circuit at the end to raise your heart rate for a little added conditioning. Hope you enjoy it!



## DB Front Squat - 3x12

- Start with 2 dumbbells racked at shoulder height (see picture for reference)
- Slowly descend as far as you can into the squat position
- Then stand back up for 1 rep



## 1 DB RDL - 3x10

- Hold the DB in front of your hips, as seen in the photo
- Slowly push your hips back as if there were a string pulling on your hips
- Once you reach your knees, raise back up into the original position



## AMRAP (As many reps as possible) - 6 min

This is a beginner upper body & core circuit. Set your timer for 6 minutes and complete as many rounds as you can within the time limit.

You will follow this circuit order below:

### DB Neutral Grip Military Press - 10 reps

- Hold DB in neutral position (see picture)
- Squeeze core and press DB overhead

### DB Bent Over Row - 10 reps

- Lean down, with an emphasis on keeping back flat
- Keep your chest over your knees and pull DB to your hips

# DECRÊ



### DB Toe Touch - 10 reps

- Lie on your back
- Raise your feet in the air
- Reach DB as far as you can to your toes

**Rest 10-15 sec as needed and repeat the circuit**

If you'd like to train with me, you can schedule your free 30-minute consultation at [www.decretraining.com](http://www.decretraining.com). If you have any questions, reach out to me at 713-550-2853 or [vincenthall@decretraining.com](mailto:vincenthall@decretraining.com). We also invite you to follow us on Instagram and Facebook:



@decretraining

# More Than a Before and After

By Kristina Armstrong

When people see a transformation photo, they usually notice the physical changes first. They see the weight lost, the smaller clothing size, and the difference between the “before” and “after.”

What they cannot see are the years between those photos. The grief, depression, restarts, setbacks, and quiet battles that shaped my journey.

At my highest weight, I weighed 300 pounds. I was a mother and business owner who had become very good at caring for everyone else while continually placing myself last. In 2019, I began losing weight and eventually reached 165 pounds. I believed becoming smaller would automatically heal the way I saw myself, but

**weight loss did not erase my insecurities.**

Even after losing more than 130 pounds, body dysmorphia sometimes made it difficult to recognize my own progress.

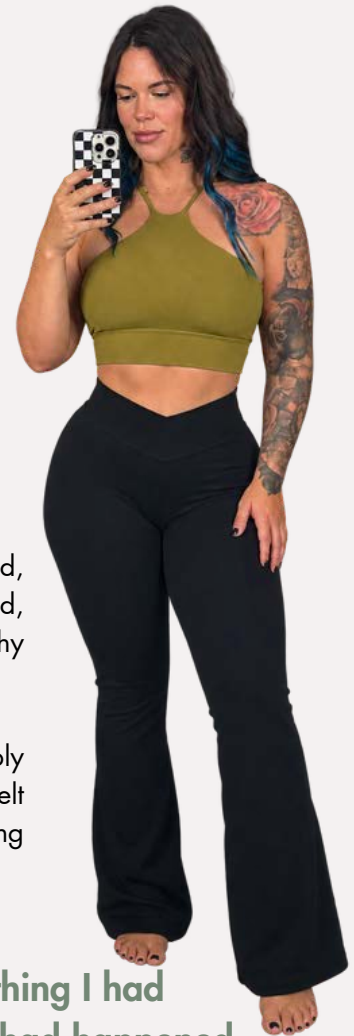


My transformation unfolded alongside unimaginable loss. I lost my mom, dad, sister, and grandparents. I also moved through divorce, single motherhood, depression, anxiety, ADHD, and the demands of running my photography business full time.

There were seasons when fitness could not be my priority because I was simply trying to survive. I regained some of the weight, and starting over felt embarrassing. When people have celebrated your transformation, regaining weight can feel like failing publicly. Eventually,

**I realized that the weight I regained did not erase everything I had accomplished. It simply meant I was human and that life had happened.**

I restarted around 190 pounds, but this time, I was not chasing the smallest version of myself. I wanted to become stronger, healthier, and happier.





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With encouragement from my boyfriend, Peyton, and expert guidance from my coach, Dusty, I committed to weight training, cardio, and eating with purpose. The gym became more than a place to burn calories. It became a place where I could work through grief, quiet my anxiety, and prove to myself that I could do difficult things.

I learned that consistency does not mean perfection. Sometimes, consistency simply means returning after a difficult day, month, or even year.

On July 11, 2026, I stepped onstage during a transformation showcase at the Chattanooga Fitness Expo. That morning, I had officially lost 139 pounds from my highest weight.

I was terrified. I nearly cried as I stood on that stage, but I also felt incredibly proud. For once, I could see the strength everyone else had seen in me.

That moment represented every version of myself: the woman at 300 pounds, the grieving daughter and sister, the overwhelmed mother, the woman who regained weight, and the woman courageous enough to begin again.

**One of my greatest joys is allowing my children to watch me choose myself. I want them to understand that self-care is not selfish, setbacks are not endings, and strength is built by continuing even when life becomes difficult.**

Today, I am proud of the weight I lost, but I am even prouder of what I gained: strength, discipline, confidence, and joy. I did not become worthy when I became smaller. I was always worthy.

If you are afraid to start over, remember this: You are not beginning from nothing. You are beginning again with experience.

**Your hardest season does not cancel your progress, and your story is not finished. It is still being beautifully written.**

---



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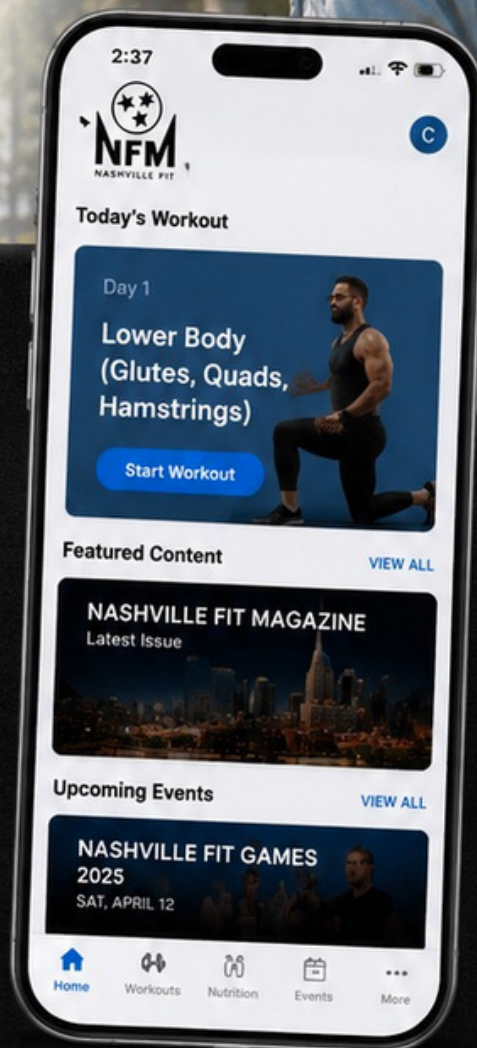
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