

Weight Loss Victories

By Christine Bernier Lienke

Battling weight gain is a common struggle for many women. Studies show that nearly 130 million Americans are overweight or obese and 78 percent of Americans do not meet basic daily activity levels.

Three Minnesota women have beaten those odds and tell us their incredible stories of how they won the battle against their weight.

To achieve her goal weight, Teri Kratz of Comfrey made a daily appointment for exercise that led her on a path to a new career and the Mrs. Minnesota Pageant. Mindy Kruger of Albert Lea has taken the sound approach of losing a significant amount of weight with the tried-and-true Weight Watchers program resulting in the restoration of her health. Tanya Smith of Fairmont achieved her weight loss with the help of daily prayer and self-control techniques.

Here are their inspiring stories:

On the Road to Fitness... and, Mrs. Minnesota!

What started as a mother's dream to become more active with her children has morphed into a new career and a bid for the title of Mrs. Minnesota.

Teri Kratz's wake up call came when her daughter wanted to swing with her in the backyard, and she wasn't able to fit in the pre-molded swing set seat.

"I felt so bad that I couldn't do something she wanted to do," says Teri.

At her highest weight, Teri found herself in ICU after having her fourth child at 242 pounds. She remembers oftentimes having difficulty breathing and struggling to chase after four children. Her weight came down to 190 pounds, but she couldn't seem to get beyond that point.

At the time, no fitness centers were available to Teri in her hometown of Comfrey, but then she saw an announcement stating that Anytime Fitness was coming to nearby Springfield. Teri met with Anytime Fitness owner Colleen Braun and quickly became a new member of the club.

"I didn't like to exercise," she says. "But I made a commitment to myself to get to the club every night and try it for 30 days."

Around 9 p.m. each night, Teri would complete her mommy duties for the day and when her four children were in bed, and in the safe care of her husband, she would go to the club. The 30-day

commitment soon turned to 127 straight days of exercise, only missing the 128th day to attend a Nickelback concert.

"I got my exercise dancing that night," Teri laughs.

Teri started her new exercise commitment with a daily 10-minute cardio regimen of elliptical training, slowly building her elliptical time and adding weight training until she eventually worked with a trainer to maximize her workout.

"At first, 10 minutes was hard, it was really tough. But I kept adding minutes little by little."

She began keeping a workout log detailing her exercise routine. On the back, she recorded her measurements each week. To remain motivated, Teri recorded the measurements of someone who was size 8 and compared her weekly measurements to those until she achieved the size 8.

She also tailored what she was putting into her body.

"You're not going to lose anything if you keep having two helpings of hot dish," she says. "What I ate was slightly more than what I gave my own kids at mealtimes. They're good eaters, so I wasn't starving myself, which is so important. Starving yourself and not taking in enough calories actually counteracts what you're trying to do because instead of burning fat, you burn muscle."

Teri began eating smaller healthier meals and snacks every two hours know-

ing that frequent meals cause the body to burn more calories and metabolize at a higher rate. Teri's new commitment to healthy eating transferred to her children, ages 18 to 4, who now often confer with her about whether foods are healthy choices before eating.

In the end, Teri lost a total of 70 pounds going from a tight size 18 to a size 4. Even more impressive, her body mass index went from 38 percent to a lean 15 percent.

Teri's personal commitment and healthy ambition turned to a new career when she started Muscles in Motion Anytime – a personal training company that she co-owns – where she teaches fitness classes including the "Look Good Naked Boot Camp." She also now manages the Anytime Fitness that helped bring her to a life of fitness.

"Had it not been for the convenience of a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week club, there's no way I could've had this success," Teri reflects. "I'm grateful for the Anytime Fitness franchise. You're not limited. You come in at your convenience, fitting exercise into your life and not the other way around. My family is also supportive and proud of what I've accomplished."

Teri has been selected as a contestant of the Mrs. Minnesota Pageant in March where she will represent Brown County. ▶

Teri's Tips to Weight Loss Success

- Make a commitment to exercise daily.
- Record workouts in a workout log.
- Eat something healthy every two hours.
- Adjust recipes to bring up its health value. For example, make the switch from ground beef to turkey burger or choose soymilk over regular milk.
- Enjoy special occasion or holiday meals, but work out that day, too.

Photo by Rick Apitz



BEFORE