



“putting myself first”

Years ago, this reader never would have dreamed she'd be 60 pounds lighter thanks to diet, exercise, and a new mind-set. BY KELLY MARAGES



Therese Abair
Florida
Age 46
Height 5'7"
Pounds lost 60
At this weight 4 years

Therese's challenge

Therese kept her weight in check until she took a demanding job in corporate mergers eight years ago, working from home: “I woke up, sat at my desk for 12 hours, and stress-snacked a lot,” she says. She quickly packed on 30 pounds, hitting the 200 mark.

Getting up and out

Therese put down the photos, laced up her sneakers, and went for a walk. “All I could manage was 15 minutes,” she says. “But I was determined not to give up.” She started walking every day, gradually adding distance. Two months later, she lost 10 pounds—and gained enough confidence to go to the gym. “I’d been a member for years, but since I went sporadically, I’d always push myself too much and feel sick after,” she says. This time, Therese tried a water aerobics class. “It was just the right level for me: challenging, but not so hard that it scared me away,” she says. Soon she’d worked her way through all her gym’s classes—from yoga to cardio kick—and was up to four workouts a week. She liked the activities so much she became certified in yoga and Pilates instruction.

Therese also reworked her diet, adding fresh fruits, veggies, and fish. “I found I didn’t have room for junk anymore. I went from devouring soda, ice

cream, and burgers every day to not even missing them,” she says. Within six months, she lost 50 pounds.

Finding balance

As Therese’s health improved, her lifestyle did too. “Before, I would work until all hours,” she says. “But when I started scheduling exercise, I had an end time for my job. I was finally in control.” Thanks to her diet and fitness regimen, Therese continued to drop weight: 10 months after her first walk, she reached 140 pounds—and had a new attitude. Once she finished a tough project for work, Therese decided to follow a dream that had been forming: She started her own well-being company, hosting exercise programs on TV and at community events. “I never thought I’d change careers in my 40s,” she says, “or that I’d feel this young.”

The camera doesn't lie

Therese knew her habits were unhealthy, yet she couldn’t motivate herself to fix them. But at a company party, she ran out of breath dancing during the first song; her weight was affecting her more than she had realized. The next day, she took pictures of herself from all angles. “When I saw my backside, I gasped,” she says. “I finally resolved to change.”

3 stick-with-it secrets

- > **Ditch the soda** “I used to drink up to six diet colas a day, which made me feel bloated. Now that I work out, I crave water. I haven’t had soda in almost two years!”
- > **Resist peer pressure** “When I first started to change my diet, my friends would tease me for skipping the cocktails and appetizers I used to love. At first I gave in and ate more. But I learned to answer only to myself.”
- > **Study up** “Finding healthy recipes in magazines improved my meals. I never realized that if I chose the right things, I could eat so much and still lose weight.”

Weekly workout schedule

- > **Pilates or yoga** 60 minutes/3 days a week
- > **Cardio** 30 minutes/2 days a week
- > **Strength training** 30 minutes/2 days a week



After
“I’ll never go back to sitting around now that I know how good working out feels.”