

Extreme Weight Loss Makeover

Find out how three guys found motivation.

The Makeover Motivator: A Nasty Doctor's Note

Danny Lafferman
Edgewater, FL

Height: 6'3"

Weight Before: 430 pounds

Weight After: 200 pounds

Lafferman bulked up as an offensive lineman in college. "I ate everything, and a lot of it," he says. "I went to a lot of buffets, and I drank a lot of beer." He played at about 300 pounds, but when a knee injury put him on crutches for 2 years, he gained 130 pounds.

The Turnaround: Visiting a new allergist, Lafferman was shocked to see "severely obese male" in the doctor's notes. "My knee was bothering me, I was tired all the time, and I was just too young to be so unhealthy," he says. Lafferman went to his primary-care doctor and asked for a diet plan.

The Strategy: Lafferman began working out at a YMCA and limited his food intake to 1,500 to 1,800 calories a day. A typical breakfast now is a ham-and-egg-substitute sandwich. Lunch is a lean roast beef sandwich, fruit, and yogurt with granola. Dinner might be grilled pork chops and salad, with fat-free ice cream for dessert.

The Result: In a month, Lafferman's clothes were getting baggy; after 2 months, he felt more energetic. He shed 230 pounds in 11 months. He now eats about 2,400 calories a day to maintain his weight. "My overall quality of life has improved so much that it's hard to put into words. I have much more energy and a lot less pain," he says.

Danny's Workout: Two or 3 nights a week, he'll do an hour and a half of weight training and 30 minutes of cardio. On non-weight-training nights, he runs or walks 3.5 miles.

His Tips:

- Be calculating. "At first, write out a menu for the following day. List serving sizes, calories, and fat. After a month of this, you'll know what you can eat."
- Check yourself. "I went to the doctor once a month. Those visits made me accountable for my progress and short-term goals."
- Just say, "No, thanks." "The hardest thing for me to give up was beer, but when I started dieting, I stopped drinking it completely until I got to my goal weight."

The Makeover Motivator: A New Job

Mike Ortiz
Bellevue, WA

Height: 5'10"

Weight Before: 268 pounds

Weight After: 180 pounds

Shooting and editing sports video for the University of Colorado meant lots of travel, little time for exercise, and a spread of tempting high-fat foods every night, after skipping meals all day. "I didn't realize that my body's metabolism was slowing down because I was starving it, and then eating way too much to compensate," Ortiz says.

The Turnaround: A new job at the University of Washington inspired a fresh start. Following the team's lead, he hit the weight room, ate at regular intervals, and cut down on fatty foods. "The 'everything in moderation' mantra is a good one," says Ortiz. "I want to enjoy food, but I don't need a whole pizza to feel satisfied." He lost 70 pounds in 1 year and eventually dropped almost 90.

The Strategy: Ortiz eats six times a day, runs 5 miles 5 days a week, lifts three times a week, and plays tennis on weekends. Breakfast is a peanut-butter sandwich and fruit. Preworkout, he snacks on cheese, fruit, and nuts. Postworkout: a piece of fruit, and either yogurt with almonds or a protein shake. Lunch is a turkey sandwich, vegetables, and trail mix. For an afternoon snack, he'll have dried fruit and a granola bar, and for dinner, he eats chicken, pork, or fish; a salad; vegetables; and a cup of pasta, potatoes, or rice.

His Tips:

- Think cause and effect. "I made it a point to know how many calories I burned and how hard it felt to burn them off. Why cancel out the 30 minutes I spent on the treadmill by eating a supersized meal?"
- Don't weigh in. "Stay away from scales for a month. You may not see the 'on-paper' results; instead, focus on how you feel."
- Speed up. "Once my weight loss plateaued, I changed my cardio routine to an interval workout to vary the pace."

The Makeover Motivator: A Divorce

Adam Hornyak
Ravenna, OH

Height: 6'1"

Weight before: 260 pounds

Weight after: 190 pounds

In college, Hornyak paid no attention to what he ate, and he put on 85 pounds. Even after he married a nutritionist, Hornyak didn't downsize his portions or hit the gym. "She tried her hardest to get me to change," he says. "It was nothing for me to eat breakfast with my wife, and then grab fast food on the way to work as well."

The Turnaround: His lazy-slob routine led to divorce. After a month-long pity party of drinking and eating, Hornyak went cold turkey. "I think she finally realized that I was a lost cause, so in a sense, I think I was proving to her that I could change," he says. He joined a 24-hour gym and went every day at 5 a.m. to lift weights and use an elliptical machine. He lost 15 pounds in the first month. "People commented on the weight loss. I realized that what I was doing was making a difference," Hornyak says.

The Result: In 8 months, Hornyak dropped 70 pounds. He starts his day with a protein shake, oatmeal, a banana, and a few almonds. His first snack is a protein bar and fruit at 9 a.m. Lunch is usually chicken and fruit. At 3 p.m., a protein shake and an orange. Dinner—always before 7 p.m.—is another protein shake.

The Reward: "My ex was amazed at the transformation. It has felt really good to get compliments from everyone, but especially good to get one from her."

Adam's Workout: He lifts weights 6 mornings a week and follows up with a 3-mile run. After work, he runs 2 more miles. He regularly runs 5-K races.

His Tips:

- Seek help. "Call a doctor or trainer if you don't know what you're doing. They will be more than happy to help."
- Recruit enforcers. "The more people who know what you're trying to do, the guiltier you'll feel if you don't attain your goals. It's embarrassing to look those people in the eye if you give up."
- Get smart. "Nutrition is 99 percent of the battle. If you can change your poor eating habits, you will lose weight."