

My Farrell's journey started in the summer of 2016. I woke up one morning with horrible back pain. I hadn't slept well in months and at that moment I decided I needed to change something in my life. Little did I know how much my life was about to change. I had a friend that had enrolled in the Farrell's 10 week challenge a few years prior and he had great results, so I thought I'd give it a try, and I signed up for the summer session at the Boyson Road location.

The initial testing day was an eye opener to say the least. I hadn't stepped on a scale in several years because I was scared to know what it would say. "351.8"..... It was worse than I thought. But from the very beginning I was committed to give it my best effort and I can honestly say I did just that. The workouts were certainly difficult for me. I had never really worked out before, and I was scared of how people would look at me. I was scared of what people would say about me. I quickly found out that the only person at Farrell's that wasn't sure I could make huge changes in my life was me. The manager there was awesome. Lisa answered all my silly questions, and made me feel like I was part of a team. I stuck to the nutrition plan to a "T" and worked as hard as I could. I found out what "Level 10" means and stayed at it throughout. At first, most of the kickboxing workout was nearly impossible for me to do correctly as I simply couldn't move my body the way I needed to. As the weeks progressed so did I. I saw changes almost daily either in my physical appearance, or in my physical ability. I must say, it felt great.

By the end of my 10 weeks I had lost 48 pounds. Not a bad start, but a long way from where I needed to be. I had every intention of doing my 10 weeks and then take what I learned and go do it "on my own". But I realized that there is something that I get from walking through those doors of Farrell's that I would miss. So much encouragement, so much willingness from others to help answer questions, so many people with goals they are working for, and still willing to help me hit mine. For these reasons, I decided to sign up for a full year and also enroll in the 10k challenge.

Over the next several months I kept setting goals and I kept meeting them. This is also where I started seeing unexpected changes. Not just in my appearance, but in all aspects of my life. I started to be able to do things that I could not do before I started. Simple things like playing with my kids and truly experience having fun with them without needing to sit down and rest every few minutes. I could run. I could ride a bike. I could do all little things that most take for granted. It made me think deeper about how my kids see me. I want to be around for them for many years to come. I want the time that we spend together to be memorable. I also realized that I was not the husband that I could be. I did not realize all the extra work my wife was having to do simply because I would not, or could not do many of the activities my kids loved so much. A year ago, there is no way I would go to a public pool or water park. I was so self-conscious about how I looked, I completely missed the fact that she had to do all the work it takes to look after two little kids all day. Not to mention the fact that they truly wanted me to be a part of it. Now, I enjoy doing all those activities. I appreciate all my family has, and continues to give to me. It has made me a better husband and father.

One of the most common questions I get from people is "how do you stay motivated?" To answer that I again look to my family. I have a son with a special need that requires him to do intensive therapy every day. His day starts with a therapy session at 7:45 in the morning before school, then a full day at school, then off to more therapy until he finally finishes up and gets home at 6:45 in the evening. He's now 8 years old and does this 5 days a week and has since he was 5 years old. I look at him every day and realize at even such a young age he is working harder than anyone I have ever met, just to be able to learn to accomplish some things that come completely naturally and easily to most. He also does it with a smile on his face and never complains about it. I figured if he works that hard every day, there is no reason I can't. I couldn't be a good role model to him by being a 350-pound lump on the couch. So, he is what keeps me going when I don't want to keep going. I literally get to see and talk to my motivation every day of my life. Farrell's has helped me show him that with hard work, consistency, dedication, and time you can accomplish anything no matter your "limitations". I believe that it also shows him and his sister that it doesn't matter if others think you can't do something, if you know inside yourself that you can. I know they have noticed changes in me and are very happy to share my story with others. I think they are proud of me. What else could a father ask for?

As for the results I have achieved through this program, I am happier than I could even begin to explain with words. When I started I dreamed about what would it feel like to lose 100 pounds? It seemed like a goal that was probably out of reach, but I always kept it in the back of my mind. On January 9<sup>th</sup> 2017, I stepped on the scale and there it was "251.0" I couldn't believe it. I had done it. But I wasn't finished. I set another goal for myself, that I know wasn't going to be easy. I was going to get under 200 pounds before this challenge is over. So that's exactly what I did. I stayed laser focused on the nutrition plan and didn't miss a workout. Wouldn't you know it, I met that goal too. I have always been a "bigger" person even from my days in grade school, but I hadn't been under 200 pounds since my very early 20's. So yet again, I needed to set another goal. I was going to lose ½ of my starting weight. That means I would need to get to 175.9 pounds. I didn't change anything with my

nutrition plan, I simply followed all the rules in the Farrell's handbook. Even the free day! I was certain, I didn't have enough time to meet this goal by September 16, but yet again, on August 10<sup>th</sup>, the scale proved me wrong.

I started the Farrell's program to lose weight. It worked. I ultimately got to 164 pounds, which I am told is my "ideal weight" for my height. So now many people ask me "what next?". I tell them, I'm going to keep doing what I have been doing. Setting goals, and crushing them. Ha! Only difference now is that my goals have moved from weight loss to fitness goals. Not losing what I have worked so hard to achieve. Farrell's will be a big part of my life for many years to come. I may have lost lots of pounds, but what I have gained is much more impressive to me. Along with everything I have gained back with my family, I have also gotten my confidence in myself back. I have made life-long friendships with people whom I would have never met had I not decided it was time for me to take the first step. I gained the ability to help others along their journey. I gained my self-respect back. I got my life back.

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