



## **The Best Black Friday Purchase I've Ever Made!**

Months earlier, at the start of 2013, my life took a turn. We'll say, down. Professionally, I was in my dream role, topping off the 15+ years of work in an industry that fulfilled my passion. I was working for leaders that I admired, and was surrounded by an amazing team of young professionals that I had the privilege of hiring and working with every day. Then came the day where I had to break the difficult news to my team that today would be our last day of work with the company. We were all being laid-off. Topping it all off, my husband and I also learned that same week that our beloved 14-year-old lab had cancer. These things change you. These things leave a mark.

Through the pain and emotional exhaustion of both of these experiences, which at one point had left me in bed for three days straight, I found truth in my new reality. I was tired. What was the biggest thing that I was tired of? It was staring back at me in the mirror: Me. I was tired of myself. Tired of the size 16, the largest size I had ever been, that stared back in the mirror. How did I get here? How did I let myself get here?

For years I had focused so much, too much, on my career, working 60+ hour workweeks for as long as I could remember. Always finding time for happy hours, but never having enough time for a workout. I realized that for the past months, I had little energy, little enjoyment, and a complete lack of confidence in myself. In reality, I had been putting on a good front, for a very long time showing a positive face that hid the turmoil that was at a constant boil inside. I also realized that in making the decision to lay off 1/3 of the workforce at my prior company, the company was making a decision based on their bottom line. And I, was not, and had not been, making decisions based on my bottom line. I was not prioritizing myself, my health, or my well-being. Talk about an eye-opening realization.

I started a new job in a new industry. Step 1: Completed. I joined Weight Watchers. Step 2: Completed. But over the course of six months, I was seeing very little in terms of physical results. And then I stumbled upon something in my Facebook feed about Farrell's eXtreme Bodyshaping. I signed up to be on the email list about a new location that was "coming soon" to Shoreview MN. I had nearly forgotten about it when I received a "Black Friday Special" email. I was going to do it. No more "I'm too busy", and the many other alternative things I had told myself and that had won out for my choices in the past. I signed up, committed to the 5 a.m. class, and looked forward to starting Jan 5, 2015. I chose a couple of key folks who I knew would support me--my

husband and two of my coworkers. I asked them to check-in and ask me how it was going every week.

The week before I started Farrell's I took a trip with my husband and two of our dearest friends to St. Thomas. As I sat on the beach enjoying the time away from the frigid cold of MN, I realized how much I needed, and wanted, the change that was awaiting me back home. Even though I wore a swimsuit, I did not take my cover-up off. It was yet another reminder of my fallen confidence. Full of nervous anxiety, at the start my 10-week session at Farrell's, I weighed in at nearly 191 lbs., 34.6% body fat, and somehow made it through sit-ups and push-ups. I felt numb. Not only were there now numbers written down for items that I had avoided for a long time, there was also a picture. For 10 weeks, 45 minutes a day, Monday through Saturday, I could do this. I dove in headfirst. I took copious notes at the nutrition session. I turned in my food logs weekly to get feedback and to keep myself accountable. At the end of my 10-week session I was under 170 lbs., and down to 30% body fat. I lost nearly 16 total inches and I committed to the "National Contest".

The past year has been a physical and emotional transformation. I've lost more pounds (72.8 so far), decreased body fat (now 21.8%) and lost inches (nearly 45 total inches). I've lost an entire wardrobe. However, it is what I've gained that I'm most thankful for. I've gained strength and confidence. My husband has become my workout partner and our partnership has never been stronger. I've been able to support him, and many others on their journey. I've gained the support and the camaraderie of a community that I happily call my "Farrell's Family."



What started as one of the most difficult and challenging series of months in 2013 has resulted in the most rewarding of months in 2014 and 2015. Life always throws twists and turns ... some are exhilarating, while others are ones that are, well, something quite the opposite of exhilarating. Both have the capacity to leave a mark on your soul, equally powerful, and life changing. Little did I imagine the extent of the physical and emotional transformation that awaited me at Farrell's. New challenges drive you to uncover who you are and to understand what you can accomplish. To get somewhere new, you must first decide that you are tired of being where you are. I am thankful every day for coming to that decision.

*Liz Hinz, Farrell's eXtreme Bodyshaping 2015 National Challenge Winner*