



LOOK AT US NOW

WAS
307

WAS
250

LOST
combined
169
POUNDS



Chris & Deirdre Hock

Hometown Kansas City, MO
Was: 307 **Now:** 203

Hometown Kansas City, MO
Was: 250 **Now:** 185

What was the catalyst that made you take the first step?

Weight loss has been a life long battle for both of us. Deirdre can recall binge eating episodes all the way back to grade school. She managed to keep her weight down in high school by fasting. Chris was very overweight throughout his youth. When he graduated high school he weighed in at just over 300 pounds. As a young adult, Deirdre did a lot of "yo-yo" dieting, having her weight go up and down like a roller coaster. Chris managed to loose 125 pounds within 12 months after high school with crash diets. When we got together, we worked out at the same gym and we were both in great shape.

The dating process for us brought out the worst in both of our old unhealthy eating habits. Because neither of us had taken a structured approach to weight loss, we didn't know how to moderate ourselves, and consequently, started putting the weight back on.

We took a trip to Cozumel for our 5th anniversary. **We did a number of activities on that vacation, and each one was more exhausting than the previous.** It's not that they were strenuous activities; we were just that out of shape. We got back our pictures from the photo-mart, and were less than happy. What we saw was a couple who had been in terrific shape when they got together and that had completely let it go.

What changes did you make to start losing the weight?

We both knew we needed to do something. We tried different things, some worked better than others and different things worked for each of us. Deirdre started out with making only two small healthy changes - walking, and eating a healthy breakfast. Once she'd managed to stick to those two changes for a few months, she added another healthy change and stuck with it until it became habit. Eventually, packing her lunches and stopping by the gym after work were just as much a part of her day as brushing her teeth. Deirdre also spent a lot of time on different Internet forums researching and asking questions about healthy lifestyles to find out what did and didn't work for people. Eventually, others were asking her for advice in these forums. This blossomed into a passion for helping others and she started Fitwell-Lifestyles, a business to help others lead a healthier lifestyle. For Chris, weight loss is very frustrating, especially when hitting the plateaus which kept de-railing his efforts.

What got Chris finally focused in the right direction was changing his goals to something he had actual control over. Instead of setting a specific weight loss goal, Chris decided to set a "walking" goal. **He set his sights on walking 1500 miles in one year - 5 miles a day, 6 days a week.** This was something he could measure, and unlike weight loss goals, was something that was always within his control to succeed at. Chris also worked on healthier eating habits, and managed to keep them (at least most of the time), but the main focus was the walking. This helped him shed 50 of the 130 pounds he'd gained back. From there, Chris moved on to cycling, which has become a summer-time passion. He cross trains in the winter with jogging, swimming, and weight lifting.

Biggest struggles: We've each had our own struggles over the years. For Chris, the hardest part was the plateaus in weight loss. There were times when it just didn't matter how well he was eating or how much he exercised, he was just plain stuck at a particular weight for a period of time. That's why he changed his focus to goals he had more control over and which still contributed to weight loss and a healthier lifestyle.

For Deirdre, the biggest struggle has been emotional eating. This has been a battle since grade school. Whenever Deirdre experiences strong emotion, she tends to compensate with food. It doesn't matter which emotion she is having either. It could be happiness, pain, loneliness, boredom, or any other emotion. This was particularly hard when Chris was working as a consultant and ended up on a three-year assignment that kept him on the road 3 - 4 days a week. This was a large contributor to Deirdre's initial weight gain. After working to get most of the weight off, her emotional eating had manifested itself again after a severe back injury and extended rehabilitation period during which she had gained back 30 pounds in the last 18 months.

Biggest accomplishments: When we first got together we ate out constantly; sometimes 2 or 3 times in one day. At home we ate large meals with a lot of refined and fried food. We would have fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, corn, rolls with butter and brownies. But now, we have become "grazers", eating smaller meals/snacks, but more frequently. We typically eat 5 to 6 times a day, between 200 and 450 calories depending on whether it is a meal or snack. Deirdre has taken to preparing all meals for both of us, to ensure that they are properly balanced with nutrition and calories.

Deirdre stays motivated by continuing to research on-line and off to explore different methods and techniques that people have used to lose weight and stay healthy. Different things work for different people and she likes being able to have a variety of advice for her Fitwell clients, depending on who she's working with and what their circumstances are. She also applies what she learns to keeping herself and Chris on the right track. Instead of weight loss goals, Chris keeps setting goals to keep him focused on being healthy. Most typically these revolve around his passion for bicycling. Chris has now managed to get his weight back down to just over 200 pounds and is considered a long distance bicyclist with rides up to 100+ miles on some days.

How did losing weight together effect your weight loss?

Working together both helped and hindered our individual progress. While it has been a rewarding process to lose weight at the same time, other times we have been each other's worst enemies by encouraging the other to make poor choices or eat out too often. This has particularly been a problem when one of us was taking a "diet break" while the other was not super motivated.

At other times we have worked very well as a team. We have each taken our turn at being the disciplinarian when one has been weak and the other strong. We remind each other why we want to lose weight and get fit by helping the other stay focused on exercising and making good eating choices. We can give each other a reality check. Overall, we both feel healthier and it has enabled us to become a more active couple and experience more in life.

How do you keep the weight off?

We have found that you have to make rules and set boundaries for yourself. One rule that we made was that working out supersedes anything else. This is a great way to get out of chores but it's okay because it is helping you reach your goals. Also, set goals that you have control over. It doesn't have to be about the weight loss itself, but should contribute to losing weight and an overall healthier lifestyle. Instead of the weight on the scale, measure how many miles you walk each week. If you want to count calories per day, keep a food journal to track them. **Food journals are a fantastic tool for evaluating yourself in the long haul, and seeing what worked and didn't work at different times.** Finally, don't think you have to drop all your weight in short period of time. Weight loss for both of us has been a slow process with many bumps in the road. Making incremental, healthy changes may result in slower weight loss, but has provided us with the time to make positive habits out of those changes. Stay focused on the big picture and things you can control, to see you through the hard times. You'll be less likely to become discouraged give up at a weight loss plateau if you have other goals to focus on. better off staying motivated with a fitness goal and a plan.