



Jodi Sampson
48, New Balance technical clothing designer, Middleton, Massachusetts

“I Ran My Way Through Cancer”

When her two-year-old son was diagnosed with a brain tumor, Jodi turned to running to help her stay positive during his six years of chemotherapy. Then, just when her son was declared cancer-free, Jodi discovered she had breast cancer. Her doctors felt that exercise would be beneficial, so she kept running—right through seven months of radiation. Just weeks away from being officially in remission, she shares how sweating kept her sane:

Put life on pause. “I couldn’t control what happened in the hospital, but I could lace up my sneakers, grab my iPod and hit the road. When I returned, I felt like I was better able to cope.”

Write it down. “I made two lists: one of things that stressed me out (too many social outings) and another of those that made me happy (exercise). It helped me pick activities that made me feel good.”

Reach out. “It’s hard for me to ask for help from others, but I’m learning. One friend gave me a gym pass while my son was receiving treatment, and that started my whole fitness kick.”

“I Won My Battle With Asthma”

At age 24, Dara found that her asthma forced her to puff from an inhaler, skip outings with pals and even visit the ER. So when her doctor mentioned that losing weight might help her breathe better, Dara dropped her fast food and soda habit and started exercising. Today she’s 85 pounds lighter, but the weight off her chest feels like much more than that.

Make smart swaps. “Sweet potato fries cure my cravings for french fries. I bake them, then dip in low-fat ranch dressing. I don’t even miss the ‘fried’ part!”

Switch it up. “I love being able to do my Tae Bo DVDs at home. But to keep from getting bored, I’m looking forward to starting a Zumba class soon with a friend.”



Dara Bell
26, hotel employee, Saint Louis

“I Reversed the Freshman 15”

After adding 15 pounds to her already overweight frame during her first year of college, Shannon wanted to reset her life on a healthy path. The business major began running 30 minutes daily, built a workout DVD library in her dorm and started scrutinizing the food labels in her campus cafeteria. Today she is 50 pounds lighter and enjoys sharing what she has learned with pals (including one who has lost 30 pounds since!). Shannon’s top tip:

Keep looking forward. “If you make a mistake, move on and plan to make a better decision next time. Many small, wise choices add up to a healthier, happier life.”



Shannon Tress
22, college student, Port Orange, Florida

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