



Success Stories

Healthy Living Matters. Prevention Works.

Way More Active, Way Less Worried

VETERAN MARK LANG DISCUSSES HOW MOVE!® HELPED HIM LOSE 103 POUNDS AND GET INTO A HEALTHY FRAME OF MIND AND BODY

After Mark Lang had a “scary visit” to his doctor that forced him to confront his mortality, he decided to reverse years of ineffective weight-loss efforts and fad dieting. With the structure, education, and support provided by the MOVE! Program and VA staff, Mark got “the kick in the butt” he needed to make long-lasting, permanent changes to his diet and lifestyle. Now 30% lighter and enjoying a busy life, Mark has only one regret—that he didn’t join MOVE! sooner!



Why did you try MOVE!?

“Over the years, I tried everything to lose weight including a cabbage soup diet! But I’d get tired of dieting and stop, and my weight would go back up. In 2015, I had a scary visit to my doctor. I wasn’t necessarily ready to make changes for myself, but realized I’d like to see my grandkids grow up.”

When did you start the program?

“After my VA provider Karen Nichols mentioned it a couple times, I finally contacted the Jefferson Barracks MOVE! Program in the VA St. Louis HCS. I started the 16-week class in May 2015, did a 6-week VA healthy cooking class, and continued in weekly FITT exercise classes and the walking group.”

How was MOVE! different?

"Unlike other diets, it provided support, someone to go over the information with me, and one-on-one treatment even in the group classes. Instructors Angie and Jean helped motivate me—I couldn't have done it on my own and needed that structure. Because I'm stubborn and hard-headed, I needed someone to kick me in the butt to go in the right direction. MOVE! taught me how to practice moderation—like not losing weight too fast—and I was able to maintain a weight loss of about 1-2 pounds per week."

How much weight have you lost?

"Through April 2016, I lost 103 pounds and I've maintained that loss since. I'm down from about 322 to 220 pounds—over 30% of my original weight—and from a 48- to 42-inch waist. I'd like to lose about 10 more pounds, but I'm happy to maintain my current weight, too."

Who helped you reach your goals?

"My MOVE instructors were supportive and helpful. My family, including my wife, daughters and son, also was behind me the whole time. I needed people like that. Even though I did it for myself, it's even better to have outside support and encouragement. Although some people don't recognize me now, I'm just glad to have dropped the weight."

How's your life different now?

"I learned that any exercise is beneficial. I'm way more active—I'm up off the couch and walking, golfing, or riding a bike daily. I've increased the time I ride—from 15 or 20 minutes to an hour now. I mix up my activity so I don't burn out. I'm also now on lower doses of medication for my diabetes, high blood pressure, and thyroid."

"I couldn't have done it on my own and needed the structure... My MOVE! instructors were supportive and helpful."

— Mark Lang

What long-term lifestyle changes have you made?

"I'm engaged in my healthy habits now. I check my blood pressure daily, and still read and use my MOVE! book. I measure my food, read food labels, keep a food diary, and weigh myself a few times a week. By choosing lower-calorie options, I'm able to meet my calorie goals without feeling hungry. I've cut back while still enjoying my food, and slowed down while eating. I learned all these things from MOVE! I'm as busy as when I was a police officer, but it's a better kind of busy!"

What would you like other Veterans to know about MOVE!?

"I wish I'd joined sooner! I feel so much better and I'm not worried about my mortality. I hope to be around for a while longer, and feel I've done everything I can to improve my life. MOVE! helped me get into a healthy frame of mind and my quality of life is much better."



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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