



Success Stories

Healthy Living Matters. Prevention Works.

One Small Change At A Time

VETERANS STEPHEN FELIX AND SHARON FITZPATRICK DISCUSS HOW MOVE!® HELPED THEM GET SERIOUS ABOUT WEIGHT LOSS AND BETTER HEALTH

Overweight for a long time, Steve had gotten even heavier in the past few years. His partner, Sharon, also had battled her weight for a while and had tried every diet, without success. Steve always had an excuse, but finally realized that his weight gain was because of poor eating and lack of exercise. Over time, Steve and Sharon both decided they wanted to deal with their weight. And when Steve's VA physician suggested the MOVE! Program to him, he knew they both had to try it.



Steve's health had deteriorated—he had diabetes and high blood pressure—and he just wanted to feel better. "I knew that the key to losing weight was finally being honest with myself," Steve recalls.

In June 2014, he and Sharon began attending MOVE! classes at the Bedford (MA) VAMC. Steve also did TeleMOVE!, and met with a MOVE! dietitian and behavioral health psychologist. Sharon supported Steve as much as possible, even attending these appointments with him.

But after about a year in MOVE! with almost no weight loss, Steve knew something had to change. Motivated by his psychologist, he finally got "serious" about the program

One change at a time, Steve began to modify his eating habits. He also made changes to his physical activity. He and Sharon purchased bicycles and began riding. Perhaps most importantly, Steve and Sharon got and gave the encouragement to be successful. They supported each other, and got the motivation to stay on track from MOVE! staff and Steve's physician.

They found all of the information in MOVE! to be very helpful. "MOVE! gives you all the tools you need," Sharon says. "We needed to take things one step at a time, so it wasn't overwhelming. We benefitted from hearing the information repeatedly. It takes time for it to sink in."

Through MOVE!, Steve and Sharon learned to make the conscious decisions needed to eat healthy. They decreased their bread intake, ate smaller portions, and read food labels. They now cook more at home and eat less fast food. And they're physically active almost every day.

Steve explains that they both feel better and life is now much more active. "We don't struggle to go out and do things," he says. "We have the energy to have fun. We also have fewer aches and pains." Most recently, they purchased a stationary bike for indoor use, and they bike—indoor or outdoor—almost every day. They take a 10-minute walk after dinner. And they don't have to use electric carts to get around the grocery store anymore.

Steve and Sharon attribute their overall success to an improved diet, better portion control, and regular exercise—all techniques they learned in MOVE!. Both continue to participate in classes and get individual support through the program.

Steve now needs less medication to control his diabetes and blood pressure, and has decreased his A1C from 8.3% to 5.1%. His blood pressure is greatly improved and he's expecting to decrease his medication soon. Sharon's blood pressure is now normal. She's able go up and down stairs and is doing things more easily around the house.

“ Make one small change at a time. Be patient, it takes time. Give it a chance!”

– Stephen Felix

Steve's weight has steadily declined. As of March 2016, he's lost over 50 pounds and would like to lose another 15 -20 pounds by the summer. Sharon just recently reached her goal weight. She's gone from 195 pounds 2 years ago to 130 pounds today—down 65 pounds from her highest weight.

Steve and Sharon believe that MOVE! works if you just let it work. "The MOVE! program gives you all the tools you need," explains Steve. "Make one small change at a time. Be patient, it takes time. Give it a chance!"

