

9.6 Percent:

MOVE![®] HELPS VETERAN MICHAEL TOBIN WRITE IT DOWN AND TAKE IT OFF

“A few years ago, I weighed about 257 pounds and was working my way up the scale. After participating in a university sleep study, I found out that I wasn’t getting enough oxygen. I have a paralyzed diaphragm, and needed supplemental oxygen to breathe better. At the time, I didn’t really understand this health problem, so I started eating to deal with it.

I just wanted to get bigger, like a football player. I was eating mindlessly—cheese doodles, honey buns, and apple fritters. I got up to about 291 pounds, and even though I’m tall (6 feet, 5 inches), it was a lot of weight. I didn’t feel right—it was too much to carry around. I couldn’t wear belts and needed suspenders. I knew I needed to stop.



About that time, I started going to the Philadelphia VAMC and I saw an advertisement for a weight loss program. I started that program at 281 pounds. The only thing they told me to do was limit my calories and record what I ate. They rewarded me with money when I lost weight. Over 3 months, I earned over \$350 and lost 57 pounds!

But the program didn’t give me much support. I was always in pain at work, and was drinking a few beers each day to cope. So I started writing down everything I did during the day and decided to create a spreadsheet to help keep track. It helped me hold myself accountable each day, and helped me get my drinking problem under control. I continue to use it to this day!

Meanwhile, I started seeing results: my weight started dropping because I was keeping record of my diet and activities.

After completing the program, I was still recording everything and losing weight. I got down to 212 pounds and I really wanted to keep the weight off. But a few years later, I started feeling pain again and started eating more than I needed. I really wanted to get back into a weight loss program.

Back at the Coatesville (PA) VAMC, I got a new doctor and learned that they had the MOVE!® Program. It was September 2012, and I wanted to lose the rest of my weight. The competitive aspect of doing it together with my peers appealed to me, so I signed up and agreed to refine the lifestyle changes I'd made before and start exercising. The day I started, they gave me a diary. It was a little too small for me to read, so I adapted the dieting software I created in 2007 to fit the MOVE!® weekly report format. It worked well, so I later shared it with my class.

When I started MOVE!®, I was 239 pounds and in pain. I'd have to force myself to walk a half mile. Now, I weigh 216 pounds—a 9.6% weight loss!—and I do a regular, 45-minute exercise class and walk the dog 20 minutes each day. Diet-wise, I've cut down on sweets, butter, and ice cream, and gotten rid of candy bars and donuts. I'm not perfect with my nutrition, but I log what I eat and try to watch my weight. And I've gotten great support from fellow MOVE!® Veterans, and especially my significant other.

I tell others that MOVE!® gives you all the tools you need to lose weight, you just have to put them to use. Writing down everything you do and eat is the best thing to do! And if you're open and let people support you, MOVE!® will help you be successful!”