

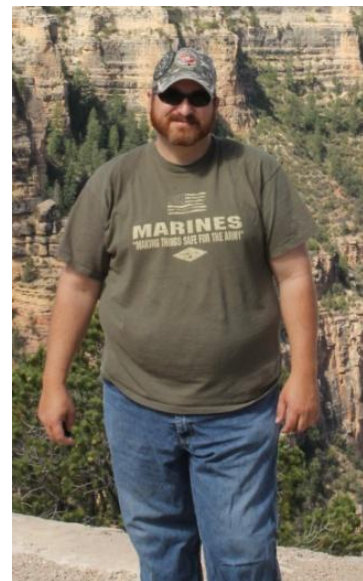
Defeating Limitations:

VETERAN T.J. SCHAAF DISCUSSES HOW MOVE![®] HELPED HIM
FIND THE DRIVE AND DETERMINATION TO LIVE A HEALTHIER LIFE

“The dictionary defines *limitation* as ‘the act of controlling or limiting something.’ But there’s also another definition: ‘something that controls what a person is able to do.’

We all face limitations and many are necessary. But some limitations keep us from accomplishing great things or from living our lives the way we should. Yes, some things—for whatever reason, no matter how hard we try—we will just not be able to do. But this should not stop us from pushing the boundaries of what we think are possible. When I was a child, I often heard, ‘*can’t* is just another word for *won’t*,’ and it’s true! We often put limitations on ourselves that stop us from doing what we *can* do.

Over the years, I let limitations in my mind stop me from doing things that I needed to do. I was injured—knees, shoulders, and back—while in the Marine Corps in the 1990’s. Throughout my service, I struggled with being overweight because my injuries prevented me from being active. Over the following years, I tried many fad diets, but still gained weight. Exercise became a double-edged sword: I needed to do it to lose weight, but when I did, I injured myself even more, and that prevented me from getting physically active again.



By September 2012, I had reached my breaking point. At a check-up, my doctor painted a not-so-pretty picture for me. Nearly diabetic, I weighed 301 pounds and had a cholesterol number over 300. My liver and kidneys were compromised and I’d developed osteoarthritis. If I kept going this way, I was going to lead a miserable life and die early. When my doctor mentioned MOVE![®], I didn’t want to do it because of my disabilities. But I agreed to do the program only so I could have bariatric surgery.

When I started MOVE!® in December 2012, I'd already gotten down to 270 pounds just through diet change. By the time I started TeleMOVE! the next month, I was at 265 pounds. But then I plateaued—I was not losing more weight and I needed to get active. So I started going to the gym with my wife's personal trainers, who developed a modified physical activity program for me. In March 2013, weighing 236 pounds, I started MOVE!® classes with Coleen at the Victorville (CA) CBOC. I needed to do more than just 'diet', I needed to make a 'lifestyle change'—a change that I could adopt in my life and live day in and day out.



MOVE!® was a great program: when I finished it in May 2013, I was all the way down to 207 pounds! I'm now at 190 and have maintained that since August 2013. I've been able to slowly progress from modified exercises to advanced physical activity. I'm up to 3 miles of running, and for example, I just returned from the Grand Canyon, where I walked 30 miles in 3 days! And I don't use my cane and knee braces nearly as much as I used to.

During this time, I rediscovered some things that I'd lost over the years: my heart and determination. They were still there inside, just hidden! And I was able to develop something else that was also missing earlier: the solid support system needed to get healthy. My wife was always there for me, but I never let her be my cheerleader because I felt defeated. Now, I have people who know where I've come from and understand my struggles. I owe my success to so many people and to God, who has given me strength each day. And my family is also successfully getting healthier with me: my wife did MOVE!® and lost 60 pounds, and my 16-year-old has lost 10 pounds!

I've lost a total of 110 pounds through MOVE!®, but I've gained so much more. I discovered the heart, determination, and 'I won't be defeated' attitude to overcome a multitude of self-imposed limitations. People think what I've done is easy because I'm young, but they don't know the serious chronic pain I'm coping with.



I used to put limitations on myself that kept me from improving my health and minimizing the impact of my disabilities. Instead of forging ahead, I used to accept pre-conceived limitations. Now I tell others, “Don’t let your mind defeat your heart! Find the drive and determination to get past your limitations! Reset the line where your limitations stop you, and move a bit further each day!”

I have come farther than ever before. It’s really cool—I just turned 38 and I feel incredible!”