

Desire + Will = Success:

MOVE![®] HELPS MICHAEL CAMPBELL LOG IT, WORK IT, AND LOSE IT

While in the service, Veteran Michael Campbell found it easy to maintain a weight of 185 to 190 pounds. But when he retired as a supermarket warehouse worker, his struggle with weight began. He developed some bad habits—overeating, eating out a lot, and not being active—and before he realized it, his weight had topped 254 pounds!

When Michael's primary care provider, Dr. Ildi Halasz, recommended the MOVE![®] program, he was interested in it although he'd never participated in a weight loss program. "She helped me understand that my weight was impacting my health," he recounts. "I was already on medications for cholesterol and high blood pressure, and I was at risk for developing diabetes."

(Re-)Learning To Eat

Michael began the MOVE![®] group program at the Boston VA Healthcare System in March 2011, and finished in June 2011 after completing the 12-week course. In the program, he first learned the importance of watching—and recording—what he ate. "When I compared the recommended serving sizes to the portion sizes that people typically eat, I was shocked," he explains. "I'd been eating more than twice the serving size without even realizing it!" Michael also became a devoted reader of food labels, which helped him to identify proper serving sizes and determine the amount of fat, sodium, and calories in his foods.

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He began writing down what he ate, and regularly showed his food logs to his dietitian, Trish MacDonald. With this information, she helped improve his overall nutrition and diet, which in turn helped with weight loss and other medical concerns. "I also realized that cooking my own meals was usually much healthier than buying processed foods and cold cuts," he says. "So now, I cook more at home and don't eat out much."

Getting Active, Making Friends

Michael also learned about the importance of physical activity, and how something as easy as walking can have a huge impact on weight loss, stamina, and energy levels. “I’m much more active now, and I’m not only healthier, but my life is more rewarding,” he reports. “My feet are no longer swollen, so I’m able to move more easily. When I started, I could barely walk a mile in 30 minutes. Today, I can do a mile in 12 minutes!”



Every day, Michael walks between 3 and 3 ½ miles around his neighborhood—to keep it interesting, he changes his route every day. “An added benefit of walking is that I’ve met a lot of people and gotten to know my neighbors better,” he says. “I’ve also noticed increased energy and improved sleep, and my overall health has improved.” Michael’s doctor has taken him off one blood pressure medication, halved his second blood pressure medication, and decreased his cholesterol medication.

Incredible Shrinking Man

When he started MOVE!®, Michael weighed 254 pounds. Today, he weighs 192 pounds—a loss of 62 pounds and 8 inches from his waist size. “I’ve maintained my weight loss for almost 2 years since completing the program and met my goal of improved health,” he reports. “I attribute this success to my West Roxbury MOVE!® team—Trish, Dr. Halasz, social worker Sandy Maher, and kinesiologist Jim Kelsey.”

Attitude Adjustment

MOVE!® has fundamentally changed Michael’s attitude towards food. “A few months ago, for example, I bought a pizza and ate four slices,” he says, “but I noticed the next day that I was up 3 pounds. So instead of eating the remaining slices, I threw them away and did some extra walking over the next couple of days.” Along with eating healthier, Michael has become more aware of his food weaknesses. “I avoid Chinese food and now drink only ‘light’ beer,” he explains. And he’s making substitutions—he used to eat an 8-ounce burger, but now he eats a 4-ounce burger on whole wheat...with lots of vegetables.

One Day At A Time

Michael continues to work on controlling what he eats, staying away from temptations he can’t control, and pushing himself to get active every day. He’s also been sharing his

new-found knowledge and personal experience with friends and family—so he can help others like MOVE!® has helped him. And he’s really hoping that interested Veterans give MOVE!® a chance. “You need to take it one day at a time and you need to believe you can do it,” he explains. “But I’ve learned that if you have both the desire and the will to make yourself healthy, you will succeed!”

--This story was adapted from an original story by Karen Harnois, MOVE!® R.N. Care Manager at the Boston VA Healthcare System.