

Fighting Back for His Life:

WITH MOVE![®], U.S. ARMY VETERAN EDWIN LOPEZ NOW LIKES
WHAT HE SEES IN THE MIRROR



Veteran Edwin Lopez says that his weight gain occurred so gradually over the years that he failed to notice that he had put on almost 100 pounds. But it wasn't hard to notice the health problems, pain, and depression that came with the extra weight. "I found myself never wanting to look in the mirror," he says. "And I became isolated from my family and friends."

Edwin realized that his life had changed so much from his time in the military in the 1980s. "When I joined the Army, I weighed 140 pounds," he says. "When I was discharged 4 years later, I was maybe just a few pounds heavier. I felt great then and I was very active." Over time though, he had become obese and was trying to cope with some serious issues, many of which were related to his weight. As his depression increased, so

did the family problems that eventually caused Edwin's marriage to end sadly in divorce. The pain was getting too great and he just knew he did not feel well.

"MOVE![®] has meant a lot more than just eating the right foods...it has been a lifesaver for me!"

Personal, Achievable

In 2010, VA nurses came to the wellness recovery center that Edwin attends and told him about the MOVE![®] Program. "The presentation got me really interested," he explains, "and I attended the MOVE![®] Introduction class at the Chappell VA Clinic (Daytona Beach, FL) that December." At his first MOVE![®] class, Edwin realized that he faced a daunting challenge: he weighed 230 pounds, had a 48-inch waist, and was bordering on *extreme obesity* with a BMI over 39. "But my nurses were encouraging,"

he explains. “They assured me that I could lose the weight, and they said that the program would be individualized just for me.”

Making his weight loss goals personal and achievable made all the difference for Edwin. “After I joined the 10-week MOVE!® program,” he reports, “I really started seeing results.” He got much-needed encouragement to start a food diary, and it helped him begin picking healthier, lower-calorie foods. Interestingly, Edwin found that with a better diet, he could actually have *more* food compared with what he was eating before.



Change for the Better

After some initial weight loss, he began sleeping better and the constant pain began to go away. Within a few months of increasing his physical activity and eating the right foods, his depression also started to lessen. “As I walked—even with my hurt knee—I started to enjoy the outdoors, really for the first time,” Edwin explains. “I can now ride my bike 45 minutes or so, and I look forward to it each day, rather than dreading it.” For him, MOVE!® has meant a lot more than just eating the right foods—it’s been a complete lifestyle change for the better.

Setting the Example

Edwin says that “MOVE!® has been a lifesaver—I no longer avoid mirrors and I’m not really depressed anymore.” He’s now a svelte 164 pounds and has trimmed his BMI all the way down to 28. But as importantly, he’s setting an example for his family. “I’m now trying to encourage my teenage son to eat healthier, so he won’t suffer like I did,” he says proudly. Enjoying his life and looking forward to every day as a new day, Edwin tells Veterans, “I did it and you can do it, too!”