

Learning To Fly:

MOVE![®] HELPS VETERAN JESSE MCMURTRY LOSE WEIGHT AND GET HIS WINGS BACK

Veteran Jesse McMurtry is a man of the air. He loves two things— his wife and flying planes. He’s been building model airplanes since he was young, but now he builds the real thing!

Before MOVE![®], he weighed 235 pounds and wasn’t able to fly without restrictions. Medical issues were also getting in the way of his goals and dreams.

One day, he’d finally had enough. It was time to do something about his weight and get his life back!



Determined

Jesse decided to join the MOVE![®] Program at the VA Montana Health Care System. He was determined to fly planes freely again and driven to make changes in his life. “I knew what I had to do to get to where I wanted to be,” he explains.

First, Jesse started eating healthier. Even though he’d always had a sweet tooth, he stopped eating ice cream, donuts, pies, and cakes, and cut out his daily Coke. As he continued in the MOVE![®] classes, he began eating smaller portions, as well as more fruits and vegetables. “I’ve always liked fruit, but just never ate it,” he says. “Now, I love fruit even more and I eat it every day!”

Movement

But Jesse knew that he needed to do more than just change his eating habits—he had to get more physically active, too. So he bought a treadmill and began walking for 30 minutes every day. As his weight went down and his endurance went up, he increased his speed and time on the treadmill. Now, he’s up to a jogging pace, which he does for an hour each day. Jesse also continues to do everything he used to—fishing, yard work, walking—but now he does even more of it. With all of this activity and exercise, Jesse now walks about 8-10 miles a day!

Feeling Great

After over 10 months in MOVE!®, Jesse’s lost 45 pounds! He weighs 190 pounds, but is still working towards a goal of 180. Since losing the weight, Jesse’s been able to stop taking some of the medication he’d been on for years. “I no longer take blood pressure or cholesterol medications,” he reports. “I’m also off oxygen at night and I’m hoping to get off the CPAP machine soon, too.”



Jesse says he feels great and he credits his success to excellent support. “In addition to the support I received from the MOVE!® Program and staff, I have to thank my lovely wife,” he says. “Her support was ‘second to none.’”

Mind-Set Change

Jesse wants all Veterans to know that MOVE!® is available to help them achieve and maintain a healthy weight. He explains that MOVE!® has good information, but isn’t magic. “Having someone to turn to when I needed it really helped me lose the weight,” he explains. “But you also have to do your part. You need to take it seriously and your mind-set needs to change. If you make weight loss your first priority, you can be successful!”

[An article previously written by Holly Alastra, R.D., M.S.C., and Carol Schweitzer, R.N., of the VA Montana Health Care System, was edited to create this story.]