

Shapin' Up!

By Antwaun

Before I came into care, when I was 9, I was slim. I was the skinniest of all my cousins. We never had much food in my house, so when I came into my foster home I was straight. At times I couldn't stop eating. I started to gain weight, but I stayed in shape playing basketball.

Gained 150 Pounds

At the age of 14 I began lifting weights to improve my body. I figured that to be in shape and add a little muscle wouldn't hurt me. So I began lifting about 200 pounds of free weights to build up my chest and my arms.

When I hit about 15 I stopped playing basketball. I also started drinking nothing but soda and eating twice as much as I did before. Instead of having one sandwich I would have two with extra mayo. When my aunt made chicken I used to eat at least a whole chicken myself. I would stay out late eating street food, the usual Chinese food, pizza, beef patties, Oreos and Doritos. I began to gain a whole lot of weight. Between 15 and 17, I must have gained about 150 pounds.

Like Oprah Two Years Ago

I didn't realize how big I was getting until I looked at pictures and saw I had a fat neck. My stomach was out there, and my thighs were huge. I hated the way I looked, and I noticed I wasn't getting the same response from females as I did when I was slimmer. I knew I needed to think about losing weight.

Then one summer two years ago, I was with a female and she flat out told me that she was not used to dating big men. She said over the phone that in some ways she was embarrassed by me.

I knew I had to lose weight but her comments pushed me over the limit. I was like, "It's a wrap. It's time to train like Rocky."

Training Like Rocky

I went to get a routine check up from the doctor and I weighed 291 pounds. I was upset that I allowed myself to ever get that big. That next week I began my training, harder than I ever had in my life.

I had something to prove to myself, and I wouldn't let anyone stop me from losing weight. I was going to lose it the right way, and I knew no diet would work. I wasn't messing with no pills, no drinks and no special impossible-to-follow diet.

I started to drink more water, about five to six glasses a day. I began eating less. I still ate what I would usually eat, the same baked ziti, chicken, all that good stuff. The difference was how much I ate. I knew to eat one piece of chicken instead of the whole bird, eat mainly vegetables and stay away from carbohydrates like bread, rice and potatoes. Instead of sucking down six pieces of Wonder Bread, I would eat two pieces of wheat bread.

Eating Right

Before, I never ate breakfast in the morning, so when I came home to eat lunch, I would eat too much. Then I would have a big dinner and fall asleep. I couldn't do that anymore, not if I wanted to lose weight. So I would eat something for breakfast, maybe a banana, and some O.J. When I came home for lunch I wasn't as hungry. So I would eat a tuna sandwich and drink a glass of milk and then have an apple for a snack a half hour later. That way I wouldn't be starving for dinner. At dinnertime I would eat less meat and starch and twice as many veggies. At night if I wanted a snack, I ate crackers with a little Kool-aid. I was good.

Jabs and Hooks

I also started working out. My basic workout was shadow boxing. That's no different from boxing, but it's by yourself. I figured that boxers are some of the fittest athletes around, so why not imitate them to get in shape? I would work on the speed of my jabs and hooks.

After about 15 minutes of boxing, I would do some sit-ups and then some push-ups. I would do no more than about 20 pushups to start off with and about 50 sit-ups a night. I also bought a jump rope to help build my endurance and stamina. I would jump rope for at least three minutes straight.

When I first started I knew my body would not be able to take long workouts like it used to. I would start off working out for only a half hour. Then, after every month, I planned to increase the time by about 10 to 15 minutes so my body could get adjusted to it. I also knew working out solo would be boring, so I added some music to my routine. Also, I went back to playing basketball.

Sometimes when I trained I thought about that comment my girl said to me, that I was too big for her. Then I would think, "Who cares what she says, this is about my health and if I don't care about it, then who will?"

The Results Came In

I worked out the whole winter. When Thanksgiving and Christmas came around, I ate whatever I wanted, but that next morning, I worked all the turkey, chicken and cakes off. From December 12 to the end of February I worked out continually. When March hit, the

results of my work were visible. People were like, "Antwaun! Oh my God, you lost so much weight!"

At first I didn't pay no mind to it. I thought they were saying it to say it. Then more and more people told me that I lost weight-- my teachers in my school, my grandparents, my aunt, my cousins and even the girl who was embarrassed by me. She was all on me, like, "You look so good. I'm so proud of you."

I was thinking, "I didn't do this for you, I did this for myself."

Looking Good

But it was true. I'd lost a lot of weight. I was able to wear tank tops, and they fit me properly. I could fit into my old jerseys and old sweaters. When I got back on the scale that March I weighed 240. I had lost 51 pounds in three months. I did all that with no diet, no pills, just a lot of working out and eating properly.

I began wearing brighter colors because I looked right in them. I wore more white, more red, gray and blue. I took pics wherever I went, and I noticed the difference in my appearance.

I still feel I have some weight to lose. Now I am 233-235, and I am 6'1, so I don't want to lose more than 20-30 pounds. But I think a solid 200-215 would fit me fine. I want to keep in shape, maybe build a little six pack, and some LL Cool J arms.

But for now, I'm also happy with what I've accomplished. It felt good to lose weight, and it felt good to set a goal and stick to it.