

FITNESS

Daily Break | 10.22.07

Robyn Files | Suffolk

“I was tired of shopping in the ‘woman’s’ department, where the clothes were matronly. It was time to reclaim my life, my identity and my size 10 wardrobe.”

I DID IT!



OF ROBYN FILES

“In March 2006, I was adjusting to being a single, full-time working mom, busy taking care of ... everything but myself. ... I was 38, 6 feet tall, 232 pounds and size 22.”



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NUTRISYSTEM

are you a success story?

Look at the questions in today's feature. Send us your answers with your name, age, city and a bit about what motivated you, whether it be a book, a sermon or a pro. Before-and-after pictures are required. Reach us at (757) 446-2332 or pilot.fitness@pilotonline.com.

ROBYN FILES was a dedicated employee, a wife, a mother. “But I had lost my identity,” says the Suffolk resident, now 40. After her marriage ended, she decided to heed the pleas from her family, who worried about the pregnancy weight she had gained but never lost. She signed up for a diet program that features pre-packaged meals, and now she’s featured in its national advertising campaigns.

What was your breaking point?

In March 2006, I was adjusting to being a single, full-time working mom, busy taking care of my son, our house, the yard, the bills – everything but myself. My marriage was over, which helped me make up my mind the time had come to stop making excuses for my weight gain and my attitude.

What was your physical condition at the time, and your goal?

I was 38, 6 feet tall, 232 pounds and size 22. My son was 3 (he turns 4 today – happy birthday, Preston!), and I was having a hard time lifting and even playing with him without getting winded. I couldn’t climb a flight of stairs or do 10 minutes on the elliptical machine. My goal was to lose 72 pounds so I could once again wear a size 10.

How did you achieve your goal?

I made it a point to schedule time for *me* every day. I’d drop my son off at preschool and head to the downtown Norfolk YMCA, where it was easy to meet new friends with similar weight-loss and fitness goals. I worked out weekdays, 35 minutes on the elliptical and a circuit on the weights. While working out, I saw an ad for NutriSystem – the food is prepackaged and mailed to your house. I thought, if they can do it, I can, too!

What was the most surprising thing you learned about yourself?

I can do anything I put my mind to! I came to the realization that I was using food as a crutch because I was so unhappy in my life. I became aware that I had lost myself. After deciding to make time for myself, I was able to reclaim my own person and become accomplished in all aspects of my life.

My self-confidence has returned, along with my happiness – and the Robyn who was lost for those previous years. Scheduling “Robyn time” makes for a happier person and more of an active participant in my son’s life.

How do you continue to keep yourself motivated?

This is now my new way of life, and how my days get started. I get up, drop off my son, work out, eat right and live my life!

When my clothes become too big for me, I *immediately* take them to Act II to consign. That fat, unhappy person I once was will never be me again.

Your advice for others?

If you don’t put yourself first, no one else will. Stop making excuses, and make time for you – today! Once you make it your routine, you’ll wonder why it took you so long to get started.

Meet the motivator

Michelle Lee of Pensacola, Fla., Robyn Files’ sister



What’s part did you play?

I was scared and concerned when my sister gained so much weight during her pregnancy and it didn’t come off. She had always been in shape and concerned about her appearance.

However, being a separated, working, single mom with a young son, it seemed she was tied down by her obligations. Though our family was hundreds of miles away, we continually encouraged her to diet, exercise – anything to lose the weight. We talked to her about it incessantly.

After Robyn decided to go on NutriSystem, I decided to join her long-distance so she would have a weight-loss “buddy.”

We compared notes over the telephone or e-mails daily and remarked on our highs and lows and shared in our successes.

tip Consult a health professional before getting started.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW I DID IT!



THEN
Lauren Whitback, 28, Virginia Beach 17 POUNDS



THEN
Nathan Reid, 23, Chesapeake GOT MORE CUT



THEN
Susan Thomas, 40, Portsmouth 80 POUNDS

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN



THEN
Molly Brown, 34, Virginia Beach 90 POUNDS



THEN
Tiffany Santana, 30, Norfolk 37 POUNDS



THEN
Jennifer Boone, 31, Virginia Beach 55 POUNDS



THEN
Jennifer Neal, 38, Norfolk 65 POUNDS



THEN
Erica Archer, 27, Virginia Beach 50 POUNDS

PLANNING TO RESHAPE IN '08?

Here's some inspiration from locals who have done just that – two dozen regular people, ages 21 to 93, who together have shed more than half a ton of fat, and reshaped their bodies and their lives.

We told you about them this year in our every-other-week "I Did It" feature inside the Monday Daily Break. We contacted them again recently to see how they were doing.

What they have in common: There's not a single fad diet in the bunch, everyone exercised and the vast majority didn't go it alone.

"It's funny how people prioritize their lives," said David Ward, 50, of Chesapeake, who lost 122 pounds and is conditioning himself for a 22-mile run. "They will make time to watch a television program, a movie or do other things but won't make the time to eat healthy or exercise to possibly extend their lives.

"Just give it a chance. You will be surprised how good you will feel and how much energy you will have." *more on page 3*

By LORRAINE EATON | *The Virginian-Pilot*

ADVICE FOR THE JOURNEY AHEAD

"This is a journey that you want to experience."

– Nathan Reid, Chesapeake

"Cut back on portions, because food just tastes good, but nothing tastes as good as healthy and thin feels."

– Molly Brown, Virginia Beach

"If you don't put yourself first, no one else will."

– Robyn Files, Suffolk

"Set an attainable goal. Mark a day on your calendar to begin, and do it!"

– Tiffany Santana, Norfolk

"Allow yourself splurges. You can have that small piece of cake, but don't sabotage yourself and turn it into an eating spree."

– Jennifer Boone, Virginia Beach



THEN
Robyn Files, 40, Suffolk 72 POUNDS



THEN
Catherine Ackiss, 37, Virginia Beach 73 POUNDS



THEN
Robert L. Baldwin Jr., 30, Norfolk 65 POUNDS



THEN
Judi Oshiver, 70, Virginia Beach 45 POUNDS



THEN
Deresa Smith, 21, Norfolk 76 POUNDS