

HOW I LOST FIVE FEET

I am a retired teacher for the Ontario School for the Deaf. This was a good fit for me as I am completely deaf myself. When I was younger I was very active playing hockey and football but over the years my lifestyle became more and more sedentary.

After the death of my wife I experienced depression and had a tough time dealing with the loneliness. I turned to food to fill the void, stocking my cupboards with unhealthy choices and eating fast food regularly. My weight ballooned to 378 lbs. Because of my weight I was always tired, short of breath and could not sleep.

My wakeup call came when I went to the emergency department at my local hospital with numbness on the left side of my face. The ER doctor referred me to the Stroke Prevention Clinic at QHC Belleville General Hospital. My physician there advised me to change my lifestyle as I was massively obese, experienced anxiety, shortness of breath, high blood pressure and insomnia. I was sent to a nutritionist and diabetes nurse for counselling.

This is when I decided to shape up and take better care of myself by joining GoodLife Fitness. I requested a personal trainer and Len Melburn was recommended to me. I found Len knowledgeable in both weight training, and nutrition. He was also flexible: making my workout harder on good days and easier on days when I wasn't feeling my best. Len understands my condition and has a keen sense of humour that really helps when I am having a bad day. Len's devotion to his profession was evident when he was trying to learn sign language. But, best of all, he keeps me motivated and I always look forward to attending my sessions with him three times a week.

When I first started training I had to rest several times on the stairs then sit on a bench and recuperate just to get up to the change room. Mat work was a real challenge and Len would have to help me up or I used a bench for support. When it was time for a weigh-in Len would have to help me get my shoes and socks on and off because I couldn't bend over and reach my feet. My first weight came in at 343lbs. In the beginning I had a hard time just walking across the gym. Recently I was visiting Toronto to see a Blue Jays Game with my family. While walking from Union Station to Rogers Centre I found myself walking alone. When I looked around I realized I was walking faster than everyone else and had to wait for them to catch up. What a great feeling to have my life back!

So far I have lost 124 lbs.(down to 219 lbs) and lost 60 inches. That's right five feet. What a change in my appearance. Not long ago I attended a staff retirement party at the school; several co-workers didn't recognize me so I played a game called "who am I".

Going through weight training and an exercise program has changed my life in so many ways. When I started at GoodLife self-esteem was a real issue for me. Despite being fluent in lip reading, I rarely engaged in conversations with other members; I walked with my head down to avoid eye contact. Today I am much more confident and regularly talk to people working-out. I feel like a completely new person.

When I had lost one hundred pounds Len wanted to emphasize my weight loss so he put out two forty-five pound plates and a ten pound plate. When I lifted them I realised how much harder my body had to work to carry that weight. I can now climb the stairs without difficulty and have the tools and know how to continue my journey and never again will I use food as a crutch.

The results I have achieved are truly life altering. I hope if you read this testimonial you will be encouraged to take the challenge, get fit and make a positive change in your life. In closing I would like to give credit to a supportive group of people who encouraged me to succeed. These include a friendly and supportive staff at Goodlife Fitness, close friends and family and the patience, understanding and camaraderie with Len.

Finally I would like to say having my life back was totally worth the investment.

Bill Gregory













