

In December of 1999 I decided to make a "New Millenium" resolution....to finally get in shape. I was at least 25 pounds overweight at 226 pounds, my body fat percentage was just under 30%, my blood cholesterol level was very high (6.80), my self esteem was very low, my clothes didn't fit well anymore and I was constantly tired and burned out.

I had lifted weights, on and off since I was 16 years old (for about 16 years), and thought I knew what I was doing! So I dusted off my Phoenix Fitness membership card, and in the first week of January 2000, I headed for the gym....this time I was going to stick with it! I worked out on my own for about a month, with a little guidance from Murray. He gave me pointers, suggestions, helped me put together a program that would help me achieve my goals and would occasionally help me with some exercises. I really liked the help and soon realized that I didn't know as much as I thought. OK, that's it! Time to get really serious. So I signed up for ten personal training sessions with Murray. After the first couple of sessions I thought I was going to die, but, I was finally beginning to see some progress. I began to learn the subtleties of weight training, I learned that the way I used to lift was not the best way for me and for my body type. Murray taught me to take the "ego" out of lifting...."it's not about pushing pounds....it's about intensity and form" he said, two words that had been foreign to my workouts in the past. "The body follows the mind", "feel the muscle", "you have to make it a priority" are all things he would continually say to me. He also said it was about balance, the right foods at the right time, in the right quantities, getting enough sleep, doing cardio work and working out with weights more than once a week. I was finally starting to "GET IT".

I made it through the first ten sessions and immediately signed up for ten more. The weight slowly started to come off and I could see my body shape changing. My friends and family were also starting to notice, so I kept at it! By the end of the year I was down to 210 pounds and my body fat percentage was down to 24%. When I started my goal was to get to 210 pounds.....DID IT! Now lets go for 200, a weight I hadn't seen in ten years, and a year before had thought impossible. So, with Murray's guidance we started to increase the intensity (always stressing form and intensity) and I was headed for 200! One day in April of 2001 the scale hit 199....I was blown away.....I had done it! Now it was time to re-evaluate my goals. Lets go for 185 and 15 % body fat....numbers I had once reserved for "athletes" and had convinced myself that I would look terrible at 185 pounds.

Today I weigh in at 195 pounds, my body fat percentage has dropped under 19% and my blood cholesterol has dropped by 31%. I have not felt better in years, my waist size has gone down by 3.5 inches, I am full of energy and rarely get "burned out", and I am getting compliments from people in the gym that I don't even know! Now I can see 185 on the horizon.

Without the expertise, motivation, guidance and nutritional counselling of a personal trainer I would have never stuck with it so long and would have never achieved these goals.....they would have just been dreams.

Andy Childs
Phoenix Fitness member since 1993