

PERSONAL TRAINING WITH PAM PAONE

By: Madeleine Levy

In late August 2000, I recovered from a debilitating blood disorder, Idiopathic Thrombocytopenia, ITP. I was one of the lucky ones to recover from this condition since the success rate is about 25%. Nevertheless, the treatment, with high doses of steroids, left me with decreased bone mass, extreme fatigue, mild depression, and excess weight and body fat. Coupled with a family history of Type II diabetes, colon cancer, heart disease and high cholesterol (mine was already 5.3, above normal), I experienced an overwhelming feeling of being out of shape and at a loss of how to deal with it.

My hematologist told me that the best 'medicine', for me now, was exercise. Exercise? I hardly had the energy to get out of bed. Nonetheless, I knew that I needed to set realistic goals for my physical and emotional recovery and achieve them. I wanted to address these three areas: physical fitness, nutrition, and preventative health issues. In early September 2000, I headed to Phoenix Fitness and began working on my cardiovascular system, to increase my energy level. I had to begin somewhere, as the task at hand seemed daunting. After a month of 'regular' workouts, cross training on the treadmill, elliptical and stairmaster, I was already stronger, more energetic and felt more positive about my accomplishments and myself. With my daily workouts at the gym, I met Pam Paone, a personal trainer, at Phoenix. She would always answer my questions and encouraged me to keep going. Pam spoke of the benefits of weight training, and I knew that this was the next step toward improved health. I felt comfortable with her and knew that she was the right trainer for me. In October 2000, I started weight training with Pam. What I came to realize, in just three months of working with this exceptional personal trainer, was the understanding and recognition that I was moving closer to achieving my goals. Not only did Pam work with me on the physical aspect of fitness, but she also guided me, with her wealth of knowledge, in many other areas, improving my nutrition, posture, core strength and emotional well being. Pam is always upgrading her skills; introducing new techniques into my sessions; and improving the workouts. They are always enjoyable! Affectionately, I call her the 'hawk' because she watches every aspect of my form to minimize injuries.

Well, it's been nearly three years now, training with Pam twice a week, and the results have been astonishing, beyond my expectations. I do the cardiovascular on my own, 3 times a week, and weight train with my husband or a friend one more time a week. In the area of health: my cholesterol level is now down to 4.6; a 20% decrease in body fat has reduced my risk of heart disease and certain types of cancer, breast cancer in particular (according to my family doctor); and my bone density has returned to normal levels. Another benefit is increased energy levels, and I sleep better. Moreover, regular exercise has had a positive effect on my mood swings; they occur less frequently. And with the increased dopamine and endorphins in my body, I am able to deal more effectively with the stresses in my life. I feel so much better and have a more positive attitude. Although I don't diet per se, I do watch what I eat, and my nutrition is excellent. Eating is about sensible choices. I follow the Harvard Food Pyramid; take a vitamin supplement; and have increased my calcium intake to 1800 mg. per day. Yes, I do drink red wine, in moderation; treat myself to desserts and binge on occasion. But no yo-yo dieting for me, and my weight has stayed constant. I now weigh the same as I did 25 years ago, and I wear a smaller size and look thinner. I attribute that to being leaner; having increased muscle tone and less body fat. Proper nutrition along with regular exercise is the key to staying fit, active and healthy, preventing or at least reducing the risk of Type II diabetes, osteoporosis and other health problems.

Do I like to exercise? NO, NOT REALLY! Yet, training with Pam is both a pleasure and a motivator. We work out goal strategies together, building on my accomplishments. There is no magic formula for maintaining good health and emotional well being. It takes effort and discipline, controlling what you eat and incorporating fitness into your lifestyle. Pam keeps me on track, psyched for success in achieving my goals and feeling positive!