

[Finding your thinspiration](#)



This time of year is always a challenge. It is a time to celebrate, which we usually pair up with lots of dinners, treats, drinks with friends and so much visiting that the personal schedule is pretty much thrown out for the month, which also includes fitness time.

As a cyclist, I usually have summer targets for peak fitness. And by peak fitness, I mean to be able to generally keep up with the cycling group that I ride with. I've been cycling semi-competitively for about 6 years now which has helped me to maintain a fairly healthy lifestyle.

Challenges in life come along of course, and along with that can be unexpected changes in lifestyle. In the last year I had a number of changes in my lifestyle that resulted in a gentle decrease in fitness with a gentle increase in my intake. These two things combined together resulted in a 20 pound increase in my body weight.

This year I participated in the Tough Mudder event in Toronto. Because I knew that I was increasing my strength, I was more focused on doing resistance training and relying on a reasonable aerobic base to get me through the race. My diet plan was simple...no plan. I just ate at a typical North American rate of around 2400-2700 calories a day.

Diet and exercise are paired together...always. If you have one, or the other, but not both you will slip out of your overall fitness regardless of how much you increase the other.

Thinspiration

There is a term called "thinspiration" which is meant to be your thin-inspiration, or what it is that you see as your goal to reach a body image. I use a fitness goal as the only target, with the body image being the result rather than the desire. For me, there was a simple way to become "thinspired". I saw a picture of myself at the event and realized that although I was physically stronger because of my workout routines, that I was definitely carrying some extra weight.

This was my kickstart moment to get aggressive about my health and fitness again. On the heels of a great training year, I have now reduced my intake and changed my diet to be much more balanced. That being said, I also still enjoy great food and some sweet treats, but with the goal to either counter that intake with exercise, or to reduce intake at other times to reach that balance overall.

Within the 12 weeks following the event I had achieved my goal of levelling my weight back to my "race weight" goal and also to ensure that I continue to use aerobic base training and resistance training to increase my power to weight ratio and build on my core fitness to be over and above where I have ever been in the past.

#plankaday

✘ Part of my every day goal is now to add something called [#plankaday](#) to my routine which is to do a plank at least once a day, every day and make your goal to reach and increase your plank time each day. More than anything, the goal is to be consistent and to add that fitness regime to your daily tasks so that it becomes a priority, which is what your health and fitness should be!

In a week I have been able to get my daily plank time up to 2:17 and I have set my goal to reach 3:00 by January 15th which is a reasonable and achievable goal, but more than anything it is a goal.

Gentle changes make for simpler adoption

The long and the short of my story is that I was able to make gentle changes to my lifestyle in order to have reachable goals, and more easily make the diet and exercise plan easy to achieve within my schedule. I'm a single dad with two kids, so I've learned to be creative with squeezing in workouts including using home routines as simple as push-ups, planking and crunches when I don't have a chance to get to the gym.

Not only has it helped me to feel better about my health, but it has inspired my kids to also make exercise a fun part of their day. There is not much better to inspire me than to know that my family will be inspired by ourselves.

I'm sharing my story because I want to be able to do anything I can to help others see that there are successes possible without having to make massive commitments to time and crazy diet changes. It's also important to see that every day lifestyles can easily make simple changes to get you to feeling better about things.

I hope that you can find your thinspiration, and if anyone wants to learn any tips on how to make the same kind of gentle changes to their lifestyle to reach real, attainable goals, then feel free to add a comment, or [Tweet me](#) and I'd love to share in your journey to your own personal goals.