

How Krebs broke her cycle

After years of using food to cope with depression, Rachel Krebs reclaimed her health.



Though she had been an active, athletic young woman growing up, a back injury sidelined Rachel Krebs from the sports she loved, and she subsequently put on a few pounds.

"That weight gain coupled with my depression made me think I could no longer be athletic, nor did I have the drive or motivation to try," she says.

Krebs took medication to help with her depression, but when she had to go off it when she got pregnant, eating became her new drug. "Without a healthy way of coping, I turned to food," she says. "Then my husband lost his job and we struggled financially, which led to problems in our marriage and eventually bankruptcy. Dealing with this stress and depression led back to food, which made me gain more weight, which just made me more depressed. It was a vicious cycle."

One night, Krebs was on the internet seeking motivation and came across a quote from Socrates: "It is a shame for a woman to grow old without ever seeing the strength and beauty of which her body is capable." Krebs realized she needed to make a

drastic change if she wanted to be the woman, mother and wife she wanted to be.

Go Big or Go Home

Krebs began by giving her diet a complete overhaul, eliminating processed foods and alcohol and tracking her macros. "When I felt like I was missing out on the 'fun' foods, I really focused on my goals to stay on track," she says. "I reminded myself that if I wanted to be an athlete, I had to train and eat like one, and I had to respect my body enough to fuel it properly."

Slowly, she began to rely on exercise rather than food to handle her stress. She also set a lofty goal: "I committed to doing a bikini competition and posted it on Facebook so I couldn't back out," she says.

Once in competition mode, Krebs traded cardio for weight training and started using supersets to burn maximum calories. To her surprise, she fell in love with weights and seeing how strong her body could become. Almost 18 months after the birth of her second child, Krebs had lost a

total of 95 pounds and was onstage in her first figure competition. She took eighth place that day and has plans to do several more shows in the future.

No Longer a Statistic

Today, Krebs maintains her healthy lifestyle and lifts five days a week, doing upper body twice a week and lower body three times a week. Her favorite exercises are banded Romanian deadlifts and Arnold shoulder presses. "Now I lift heavier weight and recover faster than I did as a high-school athlete," Krebs says.

Her family has also been extremely supportive throughout her journey and even had some victories of their own: Her husband lost a couple of pants sizes, her mom joined a gym and her dad meets up with Krebs to train regularly. Her kids even opted to trade their traditional Christmas dinner of turkey and stuffing for salmon and broccoli.

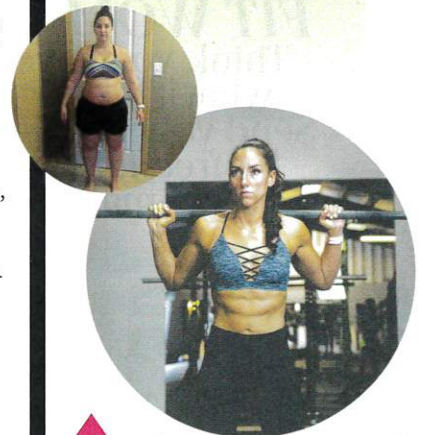
"I used to start sweating just trying to get ready in the morning," says Krebs in retrospect. "Now I can keep up with my kids, go for a bike ride or hike and just have fun."

stats

Rachel Krebs/
Bellingham, Washington
age: 32
height: 5'6"
old weight: 229 lb
current weight: 140 lb
occupation: Health and fitness coach

Words of Wisdom

- ▶ **Set small goals.** Focus losing weight in 5- to 10-pound increments. Once you get into a new weight bracket, rework your goals.
- ▶ **Seek support.** Find one or two people who really support you and will cheer you on and encourage you when you hit setbacks.
- ▶ **Keep it simple.** Focus on eating whole foods more so than recipes you use.
- ▶ **Look in the mirror.** Don't compare yourself to others — compare yourself to the person you were yesterday.



Before and after photos of Rachel