



*Success...not if, but how*  
**MY WEIGHT LOSS SUCCESS STORY**  
**BY TARA CARUANA**

***I lost 50 lbs just a few years ago after  
a life changing automobile accident.***

*Yes, it's true and I have pictures to prove it! I was in a car accident 5 years ago which resulted in a severe neck injury. The doctors told me not to do anything (as far as exercise) ever again or I could make it worse. That worked for the first 2 years during which I was struggling with migraines related to the injury as well as physical therapy that seemed more like torture, at the time. I tried everything from medications, injections into my head and neck, acupuncture and even Botox to help with the headaches. Nothing was helping. I was feeding the pain with my favorite cookies and eating way too much for the zero activity level I had sunk to.*

*I woke up one day and took a look at my family, my husband, and 3 daughters (who were then 6 yrs, 4 yrs & 8 months old), and realized I needed to do something. They needed me. I spent so much time in a dark room trying to sleep off the migraines that I was missing them growing up. I also realized I couldn't just keep buying bigger clothes (I was squeezing into my size 12's at the time). I had to make a change. I started walking to my mailbox and back, which you may know in the Trinity neighborhoods is not far at all but it was all I could tolerate. Over the next several months, I slowly but surely was able to increase my activity level, in baby steps. As I did that I also joined Weight Watchers briefly. It was just long enough for me to realize I was eating way too much food. In all I lost 50 lbs total, even the baby weight that was still hanging on from my pregnancies.*

*Today, along with personal training, I teach several group exercise classes regularly each week, including Kickboxing, Spinning, and Cardio/Strength classes. (Some of you may even know me from the YMCA.) I still have daily pain from my accident and of course there are good days and bad days. But by focusing on the things I can do and sharing my story in hopes it will help someone else, I feel like I'm making a difference.*

*I truly believe that everything happens for a reason. I'm in better shape today than I have ever been in my entire life. I only started to regularly exercise when we moved to the area 10 years ago. Before that I would start and stop, start and stop and start and stop some more. As awful as my injuries are, I still think it was a wake up call for me to start living healthier. That's why I started my company, Integrated Wellness Programs, Inc. to continue to help others find wellness on their lives.*

*I hope my experience will encourage others to strive for their goals and never give up. Small steps will get you there...I made it.*

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