

JOSE GARZA

Wellness Champion of the Month



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As mentioned by his coworker, Adam Bertero, "Joe's physical transformation and dedication to self-improvement have been an inspiration for all of his peers."

Jose Garza, a Juvenile Probation Officer for the county, was taking multiple prescriptions for different medical conditions, such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol. That was around two years ago. He was 30 years old at the time.

His elevated heart rate was also a concern to him, as well as his weight, which was around 280 pounds. He was also linked to a family history of cardiovascular conditions. Garza's father had his first heart attack at the age of 40, followed by two more.

"For him, I think it's a heredity thing. He's thin. He's 160-170 pounds. He's always been at that weight," explained Garza. "He also suffers from high blood pressure and high cholesterol."

With the medications stacking up to manage his blood pressure and cholesterol, Garza admitted he was scared of falling onto the same path as his father. He knew he had to do more than manage his medical conditions. He needed to improve his health.

Garza says the only thing that made him hesitate was giving up on all the good foods.

"I didn't want to give up the sweets and the good food we like to eat. It's a sacrifice, to say the least," he said. "That was mainly the reason why I was kind of hesitant, also, because of the physical aspect of it. I didn't know [if] I was going to be up to it. But I was able to break those barriers and do it. Now it's just a daily routine for me."

The first month into his new lifestyle, Garza says he changed how he ate. He ate healthier meals. Then he added cardio.

"I started with exercise bands, a little bit of cardio. Then I'd do both. Now, mainly what I do is just try to lift weights," Garza said.

Garza says his daughters will participate with him during his workouts.

"I have a little home gym, so they'll go out and try to be around dad while he's working out. They try to get some of the weights and play around with them, but I try to teach them here and there how to use them. Especially when I first started, but now I kind of wake up too

early for them," Garza said. "But when I'm out there, they go out there to try to learn."

He says he doesn't force his diet onto anyone else. Garza says his wife has her own routine and that his daughters eat a lot healthier than he did at their age.

At the office, Garza says he will usually give his recommendations to his coworkers when it's asked of him.

"They come to me for advice sometimes. I tell them what I would look for in certain products, ingredients to look for, and stuff like that — things to eat. I try not to guilt them into doing it," Garza chuckled.

It's been about a year since Garza started his journey to a healthier life, and he stated he has lost 90 pounds.

In addition to his weight loss, Garza says he has his blood pressure and cholesterol under control and is no longer taking any medication but checks it every few weeks. He still makes regular visits to his primary care physician twice a year.

"There's a lot of information out there. YouTube. The internet. Of course, not all of it is reliable, but you can tell which sources are reliable. Mainly just getting started. You don't have to follow a certain routine all the time. Just at least start walking and modify your diet where you're eating cleaner. That's really the harder part," said Garza. "The hard part is just starting on those things, and from there, you start to learn a little more about yourself. And then you can kind of tweak what you're doing to kind of make it easier for yourself."

