

WELLNESS CHAMPION

LETICIA
MARTINEZ

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Working as the sole custodian in a two-story, 10,000-plus square foot building would seem like exercise enough. However, for Lety Martinez, constant movement and lifting weren't enough to tackle the challenges she faced.

“Yo no podía bajar de peso porque era bien golosa,” [“I couldn't lose weight because I had a sweet tooth,”] Martinez admitted. “¿Por qué no bajo si hago mucha actividad aquí en mi trabajo?” [“Why didn't I lose weight if I do a lot of activity here at work?”]

The turning point came when Martinez started participating in wellness initiatives offered by the Hidalgo County Employee Wellness Program. A key factor in her transformation was meeting regularly with the program's registered dietitian, who provided guidance on balanced nutrition and portion control. She adopted the 80/20 rule – a principle endorsed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture – focusing 80% of her diet on healthy, nutrient-dense foods while allowing 20% for indulgences.

Her motivation wasn't just physical – it was deeply personal. “Te dice el doctor cuidado, tienes prediabetes,” [“The doctor tells you to be careful, you have prediabetes,”] she said. “Me asusté ... Yo necesito cuidarme. Yo me amo, yo voy a cuidar mi salud.” [“I got scared ... I need to take care of myself. I love myself, I am going to take care of my health.”]

With newfound determination, Martinez embraced changes both at work and home. She utilized her two



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15-minute daily breaks to exercise, replacing what used to be a time to rest. “En vez de irme a sentar y que aparte me de sueño, flojera, ahora he cambiado, esto me ha motivado mucho porque ahora hago ejercicio,” [“Instead of sitting down and being sleepy and lazy, now this has motivated me a lot because now I exercise,”] she said.

At home, Martinez overhauled her diet. Out went sodas, fried foods, and candy. In came vegetables, salads, chicken, and fish. Her results were dramatic—she shed 28 pounds and revitalized her energy and outlook.

“Hoy en día me preguntan, ‘Oye, pero cómo le hiciste tan rápido, Lety?’ Otras me dicen por allá, ‘Lety, no, tú te

operaste, tú te operaste,” [“People ask me, ‘Hey, how did you do it so fast, Lety?’ Others tell me, ‘Lety, no, you had surgery, you had surgery,’”] Martinez recounted with a laugh. “No, todo fue porque dejé de comer basura y comencé a hacer ejercicio. Me dije, ‘Yo ya no quiero estar gorda, ya no quiero estar así, yo quiero trabajar a gusto.’” [“No, it was all because I stopped eating junk and started exercising. I told myself, ‘I don’t want to be fat anymore, I don’t want to continue like this, I want to feel better about myself.’”]

Martinez credits the Wellness Program for not only helping her lose weight but also for fostering a sense of community and support. She now shares her story and healthy habits with coworkers and family, encouraging others to take small, consistent steps toward better health.

Her advice to those struggling? “Necesitamos tener esa fuerza, ese impulso de tirar todo lo que nos gusta, a la basura y en su lugar llenar el refrigerador de verduras para ensaladas, frutas, todo eso. ¿Cuánto cuesta una enfermedad? Es muy caro.” [“We need to have strength, that impulse to throw away everything we like, throw it in the trash and instead fill the refrigerator with vegetables for salads, fruits, all that. How much does an illness cost? It’s very expensive.”]

Now, Martinez approaches her work and life with renewed energy. “Ahora veo el trabajo con mucho amor,” [“Now I see work with a lot of love,”] she said. “Todo lo miro con amor.” [“I look at everything with love.”]

Her inspiring journey serves as a powerful reminder that small, consistent changes can lead to big results, improving not only physical health but also mental and emotional well-being.

