

WELLNESS CHAMPION

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PRECINCT 1

On any given weekday, Melissa Robledo can be found powering through nearly an hour on the StairMaster, the hum of determination matching the rhythm of her upbeat playlist. For Robledo, an account specialist at the Hidalgo County Precinct 1 Commissioner's Office, this isn't just a workout — it's a daily decision to take control of her health, reclaim her confidence, and push forward, one step at a time.

Just a few months ago, Robledo made a bold commitment to transform her lifestyle. What started as a response to a troubling cholesterol diagnosis has evolved into a full-fledged wellness journey. After years of fluctuating weight and rushed meals, she realized it was time to prioritize her health — not just for a short-term goal, but for lasting change.

"I didn't want to be on medication," she said. "So my doctor told me, 'Just work harder and keep doing what you're doing.' And that's exactly what I've been doing."

The results speak for themselves. Since making that decision, Robledo has lost seven pounds and dropped an impressive 3% in total body fat. But more importantly, she's gained something far more valuable: energy, strength, and self-confidence.

Before embracing her current routine, Robledo's eating habits mirrored the challenges many working professionals face. Between long work hours, errands, and fatigue, fast food became the easy option. Cooking at home seemed like a luxury she



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didn't always have time for. She describes a diet once filled with Whataburger runs, chicharrones, chips, and other comfort foods that offered quick satisfaction but long-term consequences.

Those habits eventually caught up with her. Her weight reached 187 pounds. Bloodwork revealed elevated cholesterol levels — a wake-up call that pushed her to reassess her health. With encouragement from her daughter and guidance from the Precinct 1 Wellness Center Coordinator, she began to make changes to her eating habits and fitness routine.

She swapped fast food and sugary

snacks for lean proteins, vegetables, and protein shakes. She started reading nutrition labels and even made herself eat things she didn't particularly enjoy — like fish — because she knew it was the right choice. She replaced regular oil with olive oil and scaled back on bread, chips, and sweets. "Even if I don't like it, I make myself eat it," she said. "I just tell myself: this is good for you."

Her transformation hasn't been a solo effort. Robledo credits much of her success to her support system. Her daughter, now 21, is her biggest cheerleader — encouraging her to keep going, complimenting her progress, and even buying her healthy meal replacements. Robledo also finds motivation in her mother, who at 73 is more active than ever and only recently began encouraging Robledo's father to go to the gym as well.

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"I see people at the gym and think, I want to be like that," she said. "Thin, strong, and in good health."

Robledo is at the gym five days a week now and has invited colleagues to join her on their breaks. She's become a quiet motivator, encouraging others in her department to make the most of the 15-minute sessions offered by her department. What began as short workouts in the conference room quickly turned into a full routine at Planet Fitness, where she pushes herself to go further each week. At first, she could barely last three minutes on the StairMaster. Now, she can

power through 40 to 50 minutes — and her new goal is to hit an hour and beyond.

Her renewed energy has extended well beyond the gym. She's able to do more around the house, spend more quality time with her family, and bring a stronger, more positive mindset into the workplace.

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It's not just physical improvements that have marked this journey. Robledo also noted a dramatic change in her emotional well-being. Where she once felt down or unmotivated, she now feels optimistic and focused. "I'm just trying to hit these goals," she said. "Five pounds at a time. I know I can do this."

With construction of the new Precinct 1 Wellness Center underway behind Lowe's near her office, Robledo is even more excited about the future. The facility will offer additional space and resources for employees in Precinct 1 who haven't had easy access to the county's indoor sports complex in Pharr. For Robledo, it's not just about convenience — it's about continuing the momentum and making wellness a part of everyday life.

She's proud of what she's accomplished but emphasizes that she's not finished yet. Her goals continue to grow, from improving her endurance on the StairMaster to maintaining consistent, healthier eating habits. She's also found joy in downsizing her clothing, shopping for new outfits, and embracing a style that matches how she feels — energized, accomplished, and confident.

“I’m in my 50s, but I feel better now than I have in the last 20 years,” she said. “And I’m not going back. This is the new me.”

To those just starting on their own wellness journey, her message is simple: be patient, be positive, and be persistent.

“Stay active. Stay healthy. Even if you’re not ready for the gym, walk every day,” she said. “Try to eat better. You don’t have to be perfect — you just have to start.”

If her journey proves anything, it’s that small changes, a positive outlook, and a little encouragement can go a long way. And for Melissa Robledo, the best is still ahead.

