

WELLNESS CHAMPION

JOSUE MARTINEZ

ELECTIONS DEPARTMENT

When Josue Martinez first joined Hidalgo County in 2011, he didn't anticipate the profound impact his job and lifestyle would have on his health. Now, over a decade later, Martinez, a coordinator for the Elections Department, is taking control of his well-being and encouraging others to do the same. His journey from a demanding work schedule to an active, health-conscious lifestyle serves as inspiration for fellow county employees looking to find their own work-life balance.

Martinez wasn't always focused on his health. Like many, he was active in high sports, but after graduation, the weight started creeping up. "Once I did graduate high school, that's when I started gaining weight because, I mean, you just sit back really," he admitted. He tried different fitness routines, even lifting weights at one point, but inconsistent habits and long work hours often got in the way. "Sometimes we'll be working over 12 hours for a couple of weeks, even a couple of months, and I really just get tired."

It wasn't until a doctor's visit in 2023 that Martinez received news that would shift his perspective. "I had actually gotten diagnosed with prediabetes, but it was actually pretty high," he shared. That moment was a turning point. He knew changes needed to happen, and fast. "That's when I was like, okay, well, I need to start cutting back on foods. I cut out sodas completely at the time."

Martinez started small, walking more during his



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breaks at work. "I try not to let the stress get to me. I do take little walks during our breaks because we do get the 15-minute breaks," he said. At his new office location near Jackson Road, he found a reliable route. "We'll go and do that. We'll do like a mile and then just head back to the office."

Soon, he took his fitness journey a step further by joining the free classes at the Precinct 2 Indoor Sports Complex. "I go to the 5:30 [p.m.] class, and it's more like HIIT training, the high intensity," he explained. The mix of strength and cardio training, combined with his healthier diet, made a noticeable difference. "I was losing one or two pounds a week, it seemed like."

In less than a year, Martinez saw an incredible transformation. “At one point, I was at 365 [pounds], maybe even over that. Now, I’m down to 283,” he revealed.

Martinez found support not only with his coworkers but also at home. “My mom’s always worried about that too. She’s always tried to keep me on track as well,” he said. At work, he has become an advocate for movement and participation in the Wellness Program initiatives. “I’ll ask my coworkers if they wanna go for a walk. I started walking by myself, but I know some people would drive by and see me, and they would honk,” he laughed. “But it’s a good stress reliever.”

He also encourages others to take advantage of the county’s health and wellness initiatives, including the step challenges and wellness fairs. “Just to look into it. If they wanna start, challenge themselves with the step challenges,” he advised.

Since making these lifestyle changes, Martinez has noticed a difference in both his physical and mental health. “I do feel a lot more relaxed a lot of the time, not as anxious,” he said. “Being overweight puts a toll on your body.” His motivation comes from his family, particularly his niece and nephew. “I wanted to be healthier for them. I remember taking them to a co-worker’s son’s birthday party, and I was dripping in sweat just trying to follow them around.”

While his journey isn’t over, Martinez remains committed to his health. “I still have a lot more to go. I’m not trying to stop completely,” he emphasized. Though a doctor once suggested he should aim for 175 pounds, Martinez being 5’11” tall knows his body and goals. “I don’t think I can get to that weight; I’d have to lose muscle mass as well.”

For county employees looking to take charge of their health, Martinez offers simple but effective advice: “You gotta start somewhere. Just don’t be embarrassed about starting low, whether it’s weights, walking, or something else.”

His story is a testament to the power of small changes leading to big results. By prioritizing his health, Martinez has not only improved his own well-being but also set an example for others to follow. “I feel like I have more energy. A lot more energy.”

For Hidalgo County employees searching for balance, Martinez’s journey is proof that with dedication and consistency, a healthier, more fulfilling lifestyle is within reach.

If you’re ready to take the first step toward better health, the Hidalgo County Employee Wellness Program is here to help! Whether you’re looking for guidance, motivation, or just a little support, reach out to us at hidalgocounty.wellness@co.hidalgo.tx.us.

Let’s start this journey together!

