

WELLNESS CHAMPION

RAMIRO ROBLED0

ROLL-OFF DRIVER

PRECINCT 4

Ramiro Robledo spends his workdays behind the wheel of a massive roll-off truck for Hidalgo County Precinct 4's sanitation department. The job demands precision, patience, long hours of driving, and little time for movement. But earlier this year, the 58-year-old driver decided to change his direction—not on the road, but in life.

When Robledo stepped on the scale on January 2, he saw the number 304 staring back at him. It wasn't the first time he'd struggled with his weight; at one point, it had climbed to 350 pounds. But that morning, the number wasn't just a measurement—it was a warning. He was constantly fatigued, out of breath climbing in and out of his truck, and aware that his health was slipping away.

"I got to the point that I said, 'That's it,'" he recalled. "It was time to do something about it."

Since that day, Robledo has lost 82 pounds. But his story isn't about a quick fix—it's about patience, persistence, and the quiet discipline it takes to turn small steps into life-changing habits.

Robledo didn't start with an intense gym routine or a restrictive diet. Instead, he began by doing what many experts recommend—making gradual, sustainable changes.

At first, he walked for just 15 minutes a day. Then 25. Then 30. Over time, those short walks grew into 45-minute sessions filled with purpose and pride. He

began



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began doing simple bodyweight exercises—crunches, leg lifts, and stretches—to improve his stamina and strengthen muscles he hasn't used in years.

He also learned the power of portion control. Instead of giving up his favorite foods, he cut his servings in half, then half again. Breakfast, which he once skipped, became a daily ritual. His snacks—once chips or bread—were replaced with apples, grapes, kiwis, and blackberries. "Whatever you're eating right now, eat half," he often tells others who ask about his progress. "Then later, eat half of that."

These incremental changes added up.

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Within months, the man who once struggled to climb into his truck found himself moving with ease, breathing freely, and rediscovering the energy he'd lost years ago.

Robledo's transformation isn't a solitary journey. His wife, his greatest supporter, joined him in daily workouts and prepared healthy meals that helped him stay consistent. "She's the one who helps me out," he said with a smile. "Before, I used to say, 'Come on, I want more,' but now she tells me, 'No, that's it for today.' And I listen."

Their teamwork extended beyond the kitchen. Together, they embraced healthier routines that strengthened not only their bodies but their relationship.

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But the roots of Robledo's motivation go deeper. About two years ago, he lost his 32-year-old son unexpectedly in his sleep. The tragedy shook him deeply. His son had struggled with his weight and had just begun exercising with him. For a time, grief made it hard for Robledo to care about his own health. Eventually, however, that loss became his reason to keep going.

"I just want to be here as much as I can for my grandkids," he said. "My son wouldn't have wanted me to give up."

Like many county employees, Robledo's workday involves long stretches of sitting and waiting in line at disposal sites. The air-conditioned cab can make it tempting to stay put, especially in South Texas heat. Still, he's learned to push past those comforts. He

stretches, moves when he can, and resists the easy habits that once held him back.

He's also learned to say no—to office sweets, celebratory cakes, and the small temptations that derail so many good intentions. "I've got a sweet tooth like crazy," he admitted. "But I say no. I still have that willpower."

Instead of cutting sugar completely, he's found moderation that works—occasional sugar-free treats, and a steady focus on the bigger goal: staying healthy enough to enjoy his family and his work for years to come.

For Robledo, losing weight has been as much about mental transformation as physical effort. A year ago, he didn't think much about his health. Now, he views every meal and workout as an investment in his future. He no longer views exercise as punishment or diet as deprivation—it's about control, balance, and longevity.

He checks in with his doctor every three months, tracks his progress carefully, and celebrates milestones without losing sight of what's ahead. His goal isn't a number on a scale—it's a lifestyle he can sustain. "I just want to lose 100 pounds slowly," he said. "Not by next month. Slowly."

His coworkers have noticed the change, too. They complement his slimmer face and smaller uniform size—down from a 46-inch top to 40.

Though he's aware of the county's wellness challenges, Robledo prefers to compete only with himself. "I just rather do things on my own," he said. "My goal is my health."

If there's one lesson Robledo hopes others

take from his story, it's that meaningful change doesn't happen overnight. It starts with one choice—then another. “Start doing cardio. Slowly,” he said. “Don't do it all at once, because you'll just get tired and quit.”

His story underscores the importance of consistency over intensity, of mindset over motivation. It's a reminder that wellness isn't about perfection—it's about progress.

At nearly 60, Robledo isn't chasing youth or image. He's reclaiming his strength, his health, and his peace of mind—one mile, one meal, and one mindful decision at a time.

