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# THE CrossFit LIFE

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## The Year of Change

Inspired by her nephew, Tammy Mendenhall made a promise that 2011 would be the year she got in shape.

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By Tammy Mendenhall

June 2012

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It all started last fall when my sister and my 31-year-old nephew, T.J., started CrossFit. Listening to them talk about the workouts was pretty interesting and kind of annoying at the same time. T.J. would always say, "I missed you at CrossFit today, Aunt Tamo."

That is all he would say. He would say that every time he saw me. I got to thinking that if T.J. the computer kid actually liked working out, then this had to be some great thing.

On Dec. 1, 2010, I made a promise to myself that next year was my year to get into shape and lose weight. I was 48 years old, and I needed to change something. My promise consisted of these items:

1. No more soda. I was a Diet Coke queen and drank at least six every day.
2. No more fried food of any sort.
3. No more sweets. I was running to the bakery every day to get a maple bar.
4. I would join CrossFit and do it at least three days a week. I told myself that if my sister—who is six years older than me—could do it, I could too. I was the athletic one in my family, and I wanted to get that athletic ability back.
5. Drink more water.



Courtesy of Tammy Mendenhall

**The former “Diet Coke queen” on the run.**

On Jan. 3, 2011, my friend Emily Shumway told me what time the newbie class started at Bear River CrossFit in Preston, Idaho. She said she would be there for my first time to help me out. I was so out of shape I had no upper-body muscles—or any kind of muscles. I felt like a beached whale. I could not even do a knee push-up, so they modified my push-ups for me.

I was so sore that when I woke up the next morning I could hardly move. I told myself I would rather be fat and unhappy than feel so sore. I said I wasn’t going to go back.

I went back the next night. And the next. I kept going, and I am still going four to five times a week to this day.

I don’t own a scale, so I’m not sure what I weighed when I started. It took me two weeks to work up the courage to ask Phil Archibald, the owner of Bear River CrossFit, if I could weigh myself at the gym. On Jan. 15, 2011, I weighed in at 242.8 lb.

I knew I was big but not that big. I thought, *Holy cow! I’ve got some work to do.* But I was going to do it. I had no problems giving up soda and sweets. It was like a switch had been turned to off position and I had no desire to drink a Diet Coke or eat sweets or chips. This was my time to take care of myself. It was time I moved myself to the top of my priority list.

I would get winded just from going up and down the stairs from doing laundry, and I hated to walk anywhere. My balance was terrible. My cholesterol was high, and the doctor wanted me to go on meds. I told him I would start exercising more and eating better. This was the year before I started CrossFit. So I went a whole year with high cholesterol—a walking potential heart-attack victim.

I had been going to CrossFit for little over a month when I went to the doctor again. I had been losing about 2 lb. a week, and I was very excited to find out my cholesterol numbers and see my doctor’s reaction when he saw I had lost some weight. My cholesterol had dropped to two points below the high mark, and I had lost 10 lb. My doctor told me to keep doing what I was doing.

I asked him if my heart sounded good, because I wanted to really step it up more at CrossFit.

“Your heart sounds great. Your blood pressure is good. Go for it!” he told me.



Courtesy of Tammy Mendenhall



**Tammy Mendenhall dropped 105 lb. and 16 pants sizes to reclaim her life.**

I could see and feel a difference as the weeks went by. My shirts were starting to hang on me and my workout shorts were falling off. I knew I was losing inches and not just weight. I wrote down everything I ate, how many calories and how much water I drank. I also kept track of my workouts. Now I'm 100 percent Paleo with one cheat meal a week.

I have lost 105 lb. and dropped 16 pants sizes. I am not the fastest or the best CrossFitter, but as long as I finish the whole workout I know I have done the best I can do. That is all that counts.

It feels great to be healthy. Too bad it took me until now to realize that I needed to do something with myself. I should have been taking care of myself when my kids were young, but I put myself on the back burner and put my family first. Little did I know I was hurting my family more than I was hurting myself.

It is a great feeling to know I have accomplished a huge goal. My next goal is to run a half marathon. If I can get my mile down to at least 10 minutes, I would like to run the Epic, a team relay race from Logan, Utah, to Jackson, Wyo.

Bring on 2012! I have so much I want to do.

