

## Does Thin Mean Fit? Meghan's Story

One of the most common myths in community health is that those of us who work in the field have never had weight issues. That we are naturally thin and could never relate to other people's daily struggles to eat right and get enough exercise.

Well, I am here to tell you, I have never been that person. Weight has always been a struggle of mine. When I started as the Community Health Coordinator with Get Fit Itasca, I was at an all-time high. Guess what I did last week? I ran my first ever 5k. I can now cross something off my list of things to accomplish in my life. I was the last one the whole run. I do not feel as though anyone judged me, but gave me encouragement.

This was not the first time that I have been at the bottom in my new quest to feel better in my body. I started watching step aerobics through the window at the YMCA and thinking how much fun flying around on top of that step looked. How do they know all those moves? Stepping out of my comfort zone, I went to a less intense class. I built up some muscle and balance. Then I gave step aerobics a whirl. The step instructor told me that it would take 10 or so classes for me to really feel like I had a clue what was going on, in the mean time just do a basic step. I wasn't very good at it, but it was fun! I took what the instructor said to heart and kept going back. Four months later I am now one of those crazy people flying over the step. Again, I do not feel like anyone judged me but praised me for trying. If they did judge me, who cares, I am getting stronger and fitter with every class.

Because fitness and health depend on the balance between physical activity and healthy eating, I have set a new eating rule for myself. If it is something I would not want my child to eat, I try not to put it in my mouth. I will admit, she will not be downing Diet Coke, but that is one vice I have not yet given up. Baby steps! I eat the recommended 5 a day of fruits and veggies. Sometimes I still have room for a treat. Other times I don't. A new favorite sweet of mine is a sliced apple with Nutella (A hazelnut, cocoa spread you can purchase in the peanut butter section.) and granola sprinkled on top. I get my fruit, plus my chocolate craving met and it also provides a good crunch.

The final piece of advice I was given was not to weigh myself for 6 months. This way it was not about weight loss, which can be highly frustrating without immediate dramatic results, but about health gain. This was one of the best words of wisdom I received. I really had accomplished something when I stepped on the scale and there was a 35-pound difference. Go me! Regardless of what the scale says, I have made huge gains in how I feel both physically and mentally. That is what is truly important for health.

Are you ready to take some steps toward a healthier lifestyle? There is a ton of information and support out there for anyone that is interested in feeling healthier. If you don't know where to start check out the resource guide at [www.getfititasca.org](http://www.getfititasca.org) or give me a call 327-1161 ext. 240. I'll hook you up with some great resources. If you have a story similar to mine do a little bragging and share it by email at [mbovn@ymcaitasca.org](mailto:mbovn@ymcaitasca.org) or by mail to Get Fit Itasca 400 River Road, Grand Rapids, MN 55744. Either way, you deserve it!