

RUNNER'S WORLD

This Mom Lost More Than 100 Pounds in 9 Months Attending Treadmill Classes

She finally carved out time to devote to herself and found running helped her mentally and physically.

BY KA'TLYN NELSON AS TOLD TO EMILY SHIFFER
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Name: Ka'tlyn Nelson

Age: 33

Hometown: Hebron, Indiana

Occupation: Photographer, veterinary nurse, and farmer

Time Running: 4-5 months

Start Weight: 261+ pounds

End Weight: 144 pounds

Reason for Running: I began running to not only get back in shape, but for a “mental break” that everyone seemed to describe that I never used to understand. Running has challenged me and changed my life when it comes to fitness by helping me to [achieve goals](#) I never thought I could.

Before running and starting my [weight-loss](#) journey, I was at a point in my life where I was ultimately lost. I didn't know who I was, and [struggled physically](#) and [mentally](#) with daily tasks. You don't realize how you feel until you recognize you need a change in your life.

My [weight gain](#) wasn't overnight—it gradually piled on over a 10-year span. It began while I was in veterinary school at Purdue University, and continued to increase once I got married and had three children, all while running my own photography business. Needless to say, my busy schedule and caring for others took away from caring for myself. I knew I needed to work out and [eat better](#), I just was too scared to ask for help on where to begin.

Unfortunately, during this time, I also developed [asthma](#) and often felt soreness around my [joints](#).

I remember my turning point like it was yesterday: January 20, 2021. It was the day before my husband and my ninth anniversary that I decided to better myself. I didn't just want to do this for me, but also for my family. I was 32 years old and over 260 pounds. I thought to myself, my kids are so little, and the route I am on isn't going to allow me to be here long enough to watch them grow in life. It just crushed me.

The old me would've said, “Just wait until after your anniversary to start.” But let's be honest, I had been saying this for the last 10 years and still kept putting it off. So, I ripped off the Band-Aid and begged for all the support and [encouragement](#) I could from my kids and my husband. They are my biggest cheerleaders, but I needed that boost to continue going when I felt like I was going to fail. I needed [accountability](#).

I began running at [STRIDE](#) in January 2022. My friend and sister-in-law talked me into joining, but I was so worried about stepping foot into a gym after being out of it for so long. I didn't want to be “that girl” everyone could pick out from afar that didn't have a clue what she was doing. I was completely wrong.

My first class at STRIDE, I just [power walked](#). After the class was done, I thought to myself, “Man, I think I could [push myself](#) a little harder next time.” And I did.

With love and encouragement from all the members surrounding me and the guidance and support from the [coaches](#), I have been running ever since *and* loving it. I have *never* been a runner. Ever!

Now, I feel like my day doesn't start without running, and that makes me so proud to say. I have come so far since joining STRIDE, but not just physically. [Running has helped my mind and soul](#) in more ways than one, and I'm so grateful for that.

I now run and attend STRIDE classes four to six times a week. I'm running anywhere from three to six miles, depending on the format of the class. I don't use any [apps](#) or plans. I also don't compete in any [races](#), but that is going to change soon—I love the challenge and the thrill I see from my peers. My ultimate goal is to sign up for a local race!

My [fitness schedule](#) is waking up at 3:45 a.m. to make it to 5:00 a.m. classes with STRIDE. I find that if I don't go [first thing in the morning](#), I won't be able to because we are always in the fields working on our farm and busy with the kids in the evening.

I'm pretty conscious of my [diet](#) now after losing more than pounds. I try to avoid [breads](#) and limit unwanted [carbs](#) and [sugars](#). I definitely feel much better doing this. Because we're farmers, I do eat a lot of lean [meat](#), but I have always done that. We also are not eating out as much as we were prior to starting my journey. If we do go out for [dinner](#) or lunch, I gravitate towards healthier and leaner options.

Running has given me a [purpose](#) again—a purpose to be a better mom; a purpose to be a better wife; a purpose to do better with my career; and a purpose to just better myself, which I so enjoy again. This is more than just [losing weight](#) and getting toned. While that is a huge plus, I never would've thought how this could change my life in the ways that it has.

Believe you can do it and you will. Most people would never know I was more than 260 pounds without me telling them. I get done running at STRIDE and I have people coming up to me saying they saw my story and my before/after photo, and they're using me as [inspiration](#), which is a total blessing. I have come a long way this past year, but I'm living life and enjoying it again thanks to putting myself as a priority once again.

These four tips made my running journey a success:

1. Make a schedule for your workouts

This is huge for us parents. I have quite the hectic schedule and live my life each day from our family calendar. I am a busy mom to three kids under the age of 9 and a farmer's wife, so rarely do I have anyone available to watch my kids and have always used that as an excuse. In order to get my [workouts](#) in, I schedule them out each month and now, because it's planting season for our family I always book the 5:00 a.m. classes—that seems to be the only time I can plan an hour for myself.

2. Create accountability for yourself

Whether this is telling family or friends you have begun a [healthy habit](#) of running or posting your workout summary on [social media](#), providing people with your story can help to [achieve your goals](#) of being consistent and showing up. Doing so, I have also had family join me on my workouts which makes it fun and is motivational. Also, if you're ever lacking in motivation, go out and buy yourself some new workout [gear](#)!

3. List out how running makes you feel great

Coming from a “not so healthy” lifestyle a year ago and not working out I remembered how that made me feel. Now I am able to use my workouts as a means of a [stress reducer](#) and it gives me a powerful and fresh start to my day. The days I don't go and workout at STRIDE I realize how it makes me feel, so I always do my best to make it there bright and early even if that does mean waking up at 3:45 a.m. It's worth it to me and I owe it to myself!

4. Ask for help

Staying focused and getting motivation from others is key. Whether you [lean into family](#) or friends at the gym, ask for support when in need. No one is going to know how you feel unless you express it, so don't be ashamed. When you pour your heart and soul into bettering yourself, think where you can be in a month from now, or maybe three months from now. I promise you, you won't regret it.

Ka'tlyn's Must-Have Gear

→ **Nike Running Shoes**: I run in Nikes. They're lightweight but offer great support.

→ **Woodway Treadmill**: I never thought this could play a factor, but the [treadmills](#) at STRIDE are absolutely the best. They offer control over your runs and don't seem to “structurally give” with every footstep like most treads do.

→ **Apple Watch**: I just have a standard 42 mm non-cellular watch to help me track my miles and calories.

