



As a child, I enjoyed both a healthy diet and plenty of exercise. I graduated high school at a super lean 6'2 185lbs. My body didn't really fill out until I was in my early 20s. Once I had my adult frame, I was a solid 215-220lbs. Even as late as 30 years old, I was still 230lbs because I maintained a healthy activity level. The one exception is during a bout of depression around 26. That little episode had me balloon up to about 250lbs, but I quickly got that in check and regained my 225lb body.

My weight only became a problem when I started my current job running the power grid. I'd never been exposed to such an intense, grueling shift rotation nor had I ever been chained to a desk for 8-12 hours and surrounded by so many poor food choices. I easily gained 40lbs my first year. Bad sleep, no exercise and living on fast food, foot long hoagies, pizza, pasta, pretzels and chips is not the recipe for healthy living.

The summer of 2009 was the last time I checked my weight and it was at a rotund 285lbs. Over the next year and a half, neither my eating nor my exercise got better. Clothes shopping became a nightmare. We ended up over at the XL Male store buying fat clothes. I knew I was out of control, but I didn't really care too much. Even going to the "fat" store was kind of funny at the time. We called it my "Big Boy" clothes. This is when I was at 300lbs.

As we rolled into the holiday season of 2010, Katie and I had a discussion about how we were

over our current lifestyle. Our plan was to, come January 1st, eat cleaner and be more active, which we did. I joined a gym and started lifting again. Come Spring time, we started walking the dogs as planned and not only did we feel better but we looked better as well. After taking some small steps in the right direction, I found myself justifying my fast food consumption because I was lifting again. My weight was bouncing between 275-285lbs. I was doing better than before but I was far from healthy.

My cousin, Casey, was having such an amazing experience as Crossfit Ripped in Weston, FL that he was shouting it from the mountain tops. After a considerable amount of nagging, I surrendered to Katie's requests to try Crossfit over in King of Prussia. I had no intention of joining this overpriced gimmick.

The baseline workout almost killed me. I skipped a whole lot of reps. The time on the board is 8:31 but I think I did a little more than half of each rep set. It wasn't for lack of trying but at 280lbs, I was dying. I simply could not do these bodyweight exercises for any period of time. The reality of my situation set in and I signed up.

At the end of one of my first few workouts, I was struggling through 70 burpees and was considering calling it a day. Just as I was getting ready to throw in the towel, Coach Vinny Joyce came over and said, just louder than a whisper, "Come on, bro. This is when change happens." That's the first time I really ever hated my weakness, so I kept counting... 25, 26... If I quit now, all the pain previous to this will be for nothing... 33, 34... Are these even real burpees? I'm just flopping on the ground and staggering back to my feet... 44, 45... Half way there, almost done... 59, 60... I've come so far, how am I still moving... 74, 75. TIME!!! I finished dead last but, for a few seconds, I was the undisputed champion of my world.

I started Crossfit at 280lbs, size 44 jeans and a 275lb deadlift. After six months of clean Paleo eating and hard work at the box, I'm currently weighing in at 225lbs, wearing a size 36 jeans and pulling a 375lb deadlift. I just PR'd my sumo deadlift by 30lbs, so I don't know what my real deadlift max is, but I'd guess it's higher than 375 now. I think this is the change Vinny was talking about.