

## **Kristin Reinke**

I first attended a Western Bariatric Institute seminar in August 2005 after regaining the entire 70 pounds I'd worked so hard to lose just a couple years before. I listened to what was being said and yet still felt that I could do it on my own by simply eating less and being more active. After all I'd done it countless times before, so I vowed that this time I would be successful in maintaining my weight loss. Of course I wasn't, and after being placed on Metformin for prediabetes, struggling with high blood pressure and some recurring Achilles tendonitis that made it difficult to get around, I went to another seminar in the fall of 2011. I ended up making an appointment shortly afterwards when it was apparent I needed to do something about my foot. I realized that the recovery time after weight loss surgery would be much faster, and that losing weight would help with all my medical conditions. I was still uncertain about making such a drastic lifestyle change, but kept going through the steps toward surgery even after Dr. Ganser told me that he would recommend a Roux En Y procedure rather than the Lap Band I'd convinced myself might just be okay. I had gastric bypass surgery on December 14, 2011 and haven't ever regretted making the decision to go through with it.

I never took another dose of Metformin after surgery, my blood pressure is perfect and my Achilles tendonitis hasn't flared up once since I started losing weight. I was 313 pounds at the time of my surgical consult, 289 pounds the day of my surgery and have maintained right around a 140 pound weight loss for the past couple of years. My body fat percentage went from 53% to 23.5% in a year and a half. We won't even talk about the amount of inches I lost overall as I can't add that high.

One of the things that I am most proud of is how committed I have become to exercising, as I realize just how much it's helped me transform my body and build my confidence. I started walking immediately after surgery and have continued to find new ways to challenge myself the further out I get. I currently work out several days a week at the gym, and I head outside on the weekend for hikes and bike rides. By doing strength training exercises a couple times a week I was able to increase my muscle mass while losing my excess weight. As a result I have a pretty high metabolism and feel stronger and more energetic than I ever have in my life. I've found I'm pretty competitive with myself and my previous achievements. Once I realize that I've told myself that I could never possibly do something, I work towards proving myself wrong. Running a mile nonstop? Done. Finishing a 5k? Done. Cycling over 260 miles in 21 days? Done. Hiking nearly 15 miles uphill both ways? Done. 100 atomic pushups while suspended in the air? Done. I can't wait to see what I'm able to push my body and mind to do next.

One of the things that I feel has helped me most is weighing myself regularly, tracking my measurements and going back to WBI to find out how my body composition has changed since surgery on an annual basis. I don't keep a daily food journal but I track my calorie intake from time to time to make sure I'm staying within my target amount. Protein always comes first and I stay away from empty calorie foods. I realize that my obesity isn't actually cured, so I use my fear of weight regain to keep learning about new foods, new cooking techniques, new mindful eating strategies, and so on. I also became a support group leader this last year so that I would continue to attend monthly meetings. I realized how beneficial it is to hear from others whether it be what has driven them to consider weight loss surgery, what they've conquered, or what they are struggling with post operatively. In that vein,

please to feel free to contact me at [kerkerr23@yahoo.com](mailto:kerkerr23@yahoo.com) or come to a support group meeting at WBI (4th Mondays at 6pm) if there is anything I can do to help encourage you in any way. Having weight loss surgery has helped me change so much both physically and mentally, and I am so grateful to have been given this opportunity to transform myself into someone much happier and more positive about life. Thank you to Dr. Ganser and the entire WBI staff for all your help!

**Kristin before surgery 12/14/11**

