

Member Story

My Journey to a More Advanced State of Fitness

~Terry Skelton

Retired now from a very busy job; I have so much less stress and more time to do what I want to do... work out, quilt and of course travel more... I love all three things quite equally. I also love to eat and drink wine... therefore I must work out even more, so I can enjoy my vices without guilt. My husband was always a fitness guy and I thought it was time to really, and authentically join him in this pursuit towards physical fitness. Prior to this I would walk fast on the treadmill for 30 minutes and call it a workout... but to accomplish more, I knew I needed to do more, plus I wanted to get a bit of extra weight off. I was really only trying to lose 15 pounds, but it has been tough to get it off and keep it off.

I saw the advertisement about the Biggest Winner program at the Recreation Complex that started in January 2015 and thought, that looks like fun! I liked group activity, and maybe I would be able to lose the 15 pounds. I remember so well my assessment with Kim Gibbs when she tested my level of fitness. "Do a plank" she said... this was the first time I ever did one of these and 10 seconds in I wanted to fall on my face. She said "You will be doing a full one-minute plank in no time". Ha, I sure did not believe that was possible at the time. So I started out the new year with this great program; was joined with a nice group of teammates and trainers, Rob and Catarina. It was such a fun and motivating group program and I learned so much. Although I only lost 7 pounds, when the program was finished I didn't want to quit; fortunately Kim organized some follow-up sessions twice weekly ("Still Winning") that upped the level of intensity of training. These sessions were absolutely amazing, and it was during one of these sessions that I met my wonderful gym partner Maria.

Maria and I hit it off right from the beginning. We had the same goal, to get and stay fit and healthy. We vowed to meet at least three mornings weekly to work out and encourage each other. For the last year we having been doing just this, and having so much fun together. It has been so great to have another like-minded person to meet up with. Although there is a 10-year difference in our age (me being the eldest), we always have so much to talk about and we both enjoy trying out new exercises, classes or fitness approaches. I am so thankful that I met her through our involvement at the gym.

I started to incorporate some treadmill running into my cardio warm-ups; 1 minute at first with walking and then increasing up to 5, 10 and 15 minutes. I had always told myself that I couldn't run, and that I hated to run. But I found, though it was tough at first, it's great to be able to increase my endurance over time. I also really enjoy participating in the 15 minute core morning workout sessions with the trainers; it's amazing the variety of exercises that the trainers introduce us to. It was at one of these sessions I mentioned to Kim that I thought I was doing better with my training and could now even run.

One day in March, 2016, Kim asked me, "Would you like to do a 5 km run to support women's health?" I responded, "I don't think I could do it; I'm 65 and I just started to run!" She said very assertively, "You can do it!" Well, I thought about it for a couple of days and then told Kim I would give it a try. What did I have to lose? If I could not run it all, I could walk... and it was for such a good cause after all. I stepped up my treadmill running at the gym, getting up to 30 and 35 minute runs. I tested myself on a 5 km in the controlled gym setting and was able to complete it in 37 minutes. I was more confident at this point but had still not tried a run outdoors. Then when I tried runs through my neighbourhood I was not as successful, as I had to intersperse running with walking. This was discouraging, but I had already signed up for the run and I didn't want to give up on myself.

May 7th was run day, a beautiful sunny day. I met up with an inspiring team of 10 km and 5 km runners that Kim had gathered together. I found some renewed determination. As I started out on the run something that another trainer Kim W. (who's a new mom) told the group in the core workout session the previous week resonated with me: "Don't think about it, just do it, thinking can hold you back." So, I just ran and pushed through any self doubt; I finished the run in 38:06 minutes and was absolutely thrilled to have completed my first 5km. I even impressed myself with my standings in the overall 5km group and within my age division. Now I can hardly wait to do it again... the Terry Fox Run this fall is next, and now I am wondering if I might eventually be able to up my game and even do a 10km run one day. It too might be possible if I train really hard for it.

Through it all, I have found the trainers and the staff at the Pickering Recreation Complex to be just wonderful; they are a very skilled, professional, and enthusiastic group, and most of all they are extremely supportive and encouraging. I can't thank them enough for all their help in motivating me in this new, exciting, and healthy direction.

