

Sharing Success: Susan Oglesby



They said it couldn't be done; or, rather, I think I had simply given up on ever getting it done.

In the fall of 2011, contemplating my upcoming 65th birthday, I had gotten, if not comfortable, at least used to my 100 extra pounds, clothes that looked decidedly not stylish, and a sluggish lifestyle in which a once-in-a-while walk on the treadmill counted as my entire activity. I rationalized that having survived a serious bout with cancer, a brain tumor, a seriously fractured ankle, quitting smoking and miscellaneous operations, I was happy just to be alive to enjoy each day; but I knew that wasn't true, wasn't enough. I really wanted to get more healthy and active to keep up with my active husband, to avoid dependency on others in my older years, and to get the most of my life which includes a second home in a dream location, including lots of travel.

So, with the help of a friend, I found Hilton Head Health, enrolled in December 2011, and now – 7 months later – I have really changed things around. Though I have really worked seriously on the healthy food aspect of the H3 program – and am 50 pounds lighter without any serious feelings of deprivation, much less starvation! The most amazing part of the H3 program, for me, has been the entire turnabout in my attitude toward energetic, fun and productive physical activity! I have enrolled in the H3@Home program, which is so effective in keeping me on the straight and narrow path to success, and with the help of Coach Amy Kelderhouse, we been able to plan for challenges, celebrate successes, and build an exercise regime that takes into account every one of my 65 years, but also helps build intensity and stamina at a reasonable, achievable pace. I truly feel stronger and now – incredibly, considering where I started from – find myself enthusiastically looking forward to my daily cardio/strength training, to energetic walks to town, and to athletic walks with my dog, Barone. Especially helpful for the training has been Amy's guidance in helping me build a micro-gym in Italy – where I don't have access to a regular gym or even a treadmill – so that I don't lose momentum when I'm away from home.

One of my most daunting challenges has been learning good eating habits while traveling, and while eating in Italy – land of hearty family meals that include so much tasty olive oil, pasta, bread, and world-class deserts. But with Amy's seemingly bottomless bag of healthy tricks (have you ever taken your suitcase on a brisk walk along airport corridors?), I have learned not just some sneaky strategies for making wise food choices but also ways to help coax my friends and family to support my healthy eating regime. The best part, however, is that I am building healthy habits to sustain this new lifestyle for years into the future. I hope that my experiences at H3 and with H3@Home can help motivate other Golden Girls and Boys (we don't call ourselves seniors, do we?) to take on the challenges of building healthy lifestyles for all the coming years!

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