

Trainer helps transform life (and body)

Marc Collins turns to personal trainer to drop 100 pounds (and going)

BY ANNA WILSON
BLUE RIDGE HEALTHCARE

MORGANTON - When Marc Collins agreed to write a testimonial for Blue Ridge Health-Care's Phifer Wellness Center, this is how it began:

"When my family, friends and colleagues tell me that I'm half the man I used to be, they are paying me a compliment."

That's because, at age 36, Collins made a decision that has changed his life - and his lifestyle. Nine months ago, he weighed 313. Even at 6-feet 1-inch, that's a lot of extra weight to be carrying around.

He became so short of breath after walking 30 yards to his mailbox that he began to drive to pick up his mail.

Even so, Collins wasn't having any health problems. He began thinking about his father who died at age 53 from lung cancer. He heard about a colleague his age who died after having a massive heart attack during a public hearing.

As Burke County's Planning Director and Assistant County Manager, Collins did not want that happening to him.

"If something genetic is going to get me, that's one thing," he said. "But if I'm doing it to myself, that's something else. I woke up one day and decided to make a lifestyle change."

He made the changes all at once. He joined Phifer Wellness Center and began eating things his body can use, not what it can store. "It's easier if you do it all at one time," Collins said.

Nine months later, he weighs 213 pounds and regularly jogs three miles in 30 minutes or less. A trip to the mailbox doesn't even break a sweat.

He didn't have surgery. He didn't use fat burners or any pills. And he didn't go on any kind of fad diet being promoted today.

But he knew he couldn't do it alone. He had to have help.

PERSONAL TRAINING

That help came in the form of Fusion, Phifer's personal training program. Personal trainers aren't just for the elite athletes or the very rich. They are for anyone who needs help in exercising efficiently, using correct form to avoid injuries and to give an additional push when needed.

Shea Flowers, one of five certified personal trainers at Phifer, worked with Collins his first visit.

Sessions last an hour, although Collins first session lasted only 20 minutes.

"It was supposed to go an hour, but I couldn't go that long," he said. "We talked about proper nutrition and hydration needed for exercise the rest of the time."

"We built up to where he could do 30 minutes," Flowers said. "And we did that for a few months. Now he can do an hour. He could go longer."

Initially, Flowers conducted a functional movement screen and dynamic movement assessment on Collins. "That shows me any muscle imbalances so I'll know the areas we need to strengthen and the areas we need to stretch," she said. "It's not only about helping him lose weight, it's about correctively exercising him so he'll feel good."

"We want everything in balance and his joints will be safe, his muscles will be safe, everything will be safe," she said.

THE WORKOUT

During any given session,



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Phifer personal trainer Shea Flowers works with Marc Collins using resistance bands. Flowers uses various techniques and equipment during the one-hour session.

Collins will row or walk on the treadmill to warm up. He does pushups using the stability ball. (When he first started, he could do six pushups. Now he's up to 15 per set.)

Flowers has Collins wear a heart rate monitor and to keep his heart rate up, the pair constantly move around Phifer's exercise gym using the weight bench, free weights, weight machine, stability ball and wobble boards.

As he works out, Flowers watches his technique. She'll tell him to keep his rear end down, pull in his elbows, straighten his arm. She'll ask him where he's burning, where he's feeling the pull, if he's hurting. After each set, she asks his heart rate. This is to make sure he is in his target heart rate zone.

He rests for 30 seconds to two minutes between each set - which are repeated three times

before moving on to the next.

She'll make the smallest adjustment in form and asks, "Can you feel the difference?"

"All the personal trainers are creative in our techniques and how we use the equipment," Flowers said.

This keeps the clients from becoming bored with the routine, and to work various muscle groups.

"The personal trainer writes your entire program," she said. "All you have to do is show up. Show up and work hard. I give him the weights. I tell him the repetitions, everything. But, she adds, the exercises Collins learns here can be applied to his life outside the gym.

"I'm not just telling him what to do, I'm educating him," she said. "I tell him we're working this muscle group so when he gets up in the morning he won't have low back pain. Or

when he goes to lift a box to put it on the shelf, he'll have better balance."

Flowers is a firm believer in personal trainers. "Everybody needs a personal trainer," she said. "I need one. It gives you accountability for one thing. If you have an appointment, you're more likely to come."

And for Collins, that's what he needed.

"It's also about form," he said. "I have a lot of old injuries from when I played sports in high school. I needed that professional guidance so I wouldn't hurt myself."

THE CHOICE

The fee for a personal trainer is in addition to Phifer membership.

"I told Shea when I first started coming here that she was my car payment," Collins said. "I need a new car, but I told her that I'm going to train

as long as my car keeps running or I meet my goal. I had to make a choice of what is important in my life - driving a nice car or paying thousands in hospital bills later on."

Collins' story has served to inspire others. "One of my co-workers is training with Shea now," he said. "It really hit him when I was suddenly wearing the same pant size as he was and now I'm a smaller size."

With county government emphasizing wellness for its employees, Assistant County Manager Collins also encouraged employees to participate in Phifer's Steppin' Out program in April where participants were asked to wear a pedometer for seven days and try to walk 10,000 steps a day.

Eighteen county employees participated and seven made the 70,000-step mark. One employee lost six pounds hitting that mark and now he's work-

ing out on a regular basis, Collins said.

"Just for signing up, employees became eligible for a \$100 gift certificate to Phifer," he said. "If you completed the 70,000 steps, you had a chance to win \$100."

Collins and County Manager Ron Lewis put up the money for the prizes.

"For me, this was a personal decision that's being reinforced at work," he said. "Your body is just like a car. If you don't take care of your car, it falls apart. If you don't take care of your body, it falls apart."

IF YOU ARE interested in learning more about the Fusion Personal Training Program, call 580-6600 to set up an appointment for a free consultation.

ANNA WILSON is a writer and graphic artist in Blue Ridge Health-Care's Marketing and Public Relations Department.

BEFORE



Nine months ago, Marc Collins weighed 313 pounds. He has lost 100 pounds in the nine months since he completely changed his lifestyle and started working out with a personal trainer.

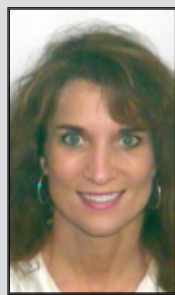
'I told Shea when I first started coming here that she was my car payment. I need a new car, but I told her that I'm going to train as long as my car keeps running or I meet my goal.'

MARC COLLINS

PHIFER WELLNESS CENTER MEMBER

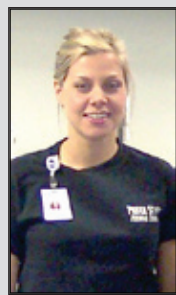


The Fusion Personal Training Program at Phifer Wellness Center ensures your workouts are safe and effective. With Fusion, you get a one-on-one approach to wellness. Personal trainers develop personalized programs based on individual needs. Working with a trainer means increased motivation, accelerated results, accountability, progressive and challenging training, decreased risk of injury and emphasis on proper technique.



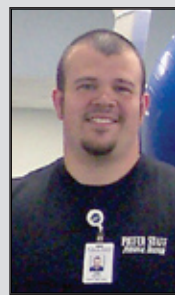
DEBBIE CROUCH

BS degree in Commercial Recreation Management
American Council on Exercise (ACE) Group Fitness Instructor
American Council on Exercise (ACE) Personal Trainer
Polestar Pilates Certification



SHEA FLOWERS

B.S. Health and Exercise Science
National Council of Strength and Fitness (NCSF) Certified Personal Trainer
CIAR (Cooper Institute) Biomechanics of Resistance Training



SAM MACKEY

BS in Exercise Science with minor in physical education
American Council of Exercise Certified Personal Trainer



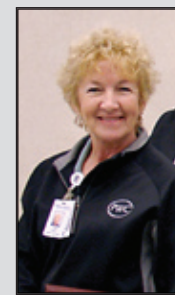
JOHNNIE MORRISON

BS in Sport Management with a concentration in Exercise Science
ACE Certified Personal Trainer



PAT RANDALL

Associate degree in Business
ESA-Exercise Safety Association:
Personal Trainer, Water Instructor, Group Fitness, Yoga/Pilates Certified



TONI REECE

Certified Personal Trainer by American Council on Exercise (ACE)
Currently working on B.S.H.S as Health Educator
Associate degree in accounting