

BRAD BENJAMIN

Faculty - Math

Inspiration for change: Turning 40, and not being in the shape he wanted to be, was the catalyst for Brad Benjamin to make some healthy changes. Brad started these changes in March of 2013 when he participated in a fitness challenge put on by student government. This introduced Brad to Cross-fit and he's been "mostly consistent" ever since.

With a starting weight at 210 pounds, Brad's goal was to get down to 180 within a year. Though, he notes, he didn't take into account any muscle weight he might gain, his current weight 2 years later is down to 176!

Current work-out & eating plan: Brad works out 6-7 times per week. He works out at Cross-fit during the week and takes a Boot Camp class on weekends. These classes incorporate both cardio and strength. He also walks his dogs every day for 30 minutes.

Benjamin has also made some serious changes to his diet. He eats "a lot of veggies" – some from his own garden - and he limits his grains (flour, rice, bread, pasta, oats). Brad's diet is similar to paleo or Atkins, with a focus on high protein with limited carbs (from grains) and a lot of vegetables.

What's in that smoothie you see Brad carrying around campus? The smoothie consists of: coconut water, almond milk, 1/3 cucumber, ½ apple, pineapple and 2 cups of greens (kale, spinach, chard, lettuce). He admits, "It doesn't taste great," however, he has noticed an improved mood, mental alertness, more energy and even better skin health since taking on the green smoothie daily.

Sticking with it: The exercise "feel good" endorphins give Brad a sense of exercise addiction that keeps him going. Knowing that he is improving his health and that he feels better when working out also boosts motivation. At his Cross-fit gym and also Boot Camp class, Benjamin feels a sense of community and accountability from others that keep him coming back for more. Once the momentum is going, there's no reason to stop.

His next goal? Running a 5k in 25 minutes, getting down to 170 pounds and maybe running some type of obstacle race.

Words of wisdom: Brad suggests that initially, everyone needs some type of external motivation. He advises people to talk to each other and get ideas from what works for them. Ultimately, though, everyone needs to find their "own thing" that works for feeling good and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Exercise and diet should be something each person enjoys and something they can stick with. He understands that for most people, the goal is to lose weight. He reminds people that working out is about 20% of the battle and eating habits are 80%. His recommendation for others is to take a fitness class at LCC. They should find a class that works for them whether it be group exercise, weight training, for credit or through continuing education. Brad recommends finding something people can incorporate into their day because finding time before and after work can be tough.

Results:

Weight lost:	34 lbs.	Body Fat % lost: 6%
Pounds of fat lost:	15 lbs.	Metabolic age lost: 19 years (from 57 to 38)