



## The First Step is the Hardest

When I started this journey, I was out of shape and unhappy. I was 44 and feeling old. Not in my mind, but my body. It was at that time I mentioned to my wife, that I saw an ad for Farrell's eXtreme Bodyshaping. Soon, I talked her into trying it. Incidentally, right before the classes were to begin, I was having second thoughts. I doubted myself, and I told her that I didn't think I could do it. However, she said she was committed to trying it, and she really hoped I would stick with it, too. She was well aware of my short-lived attempts at "fad" fitness in the past like P90 X; I lasted only a short time. She wanted me to give this a chance.

I guess without guidance, accountability, and motivation, it is easier to quit something. My wife hoped that this would give me what I was missing all of those other times. It's like joining a gym and never going. You feel you are paying a monthly fee to a gym, so you must be getting in shape...Even though you aren't working out.

At that point, I thought about my father. He passed away from cancer at only 58 years old. He had several health problems from an unhealthy, inactive lifestyle that made his ability to fight this disease that much harder. Fifty-eight, that's only 14 years older than I am now! I began to think about my two young, beautiful daughters. What would their life be like if I was gone— if I was not there to guide them through life? I couldn't imagine not being there to walk them down the aisle when they married someday? Would I miss out on holding my grandchildren? I suddenly realized there are so many people that count on me that I *need* to be here, and I *want* to be here. At that point, I felt I had no choice, I told my wife I would do it...not just for me, but also for my family.

As the old adage says, "*The first step is the hardest.*" Going into this, I hadn't done anything; I was totally unprepared and out of shape. It had been a long time since I had done any real cardio work, but I thought, "*Could this really work for me?*" To be honest, I had my doubts.

The first step: It was much tougher than I expected— I knew I was out of shape, but wow! This was intense. But, the instructors talked me through the first class and kept me motivated. If they believed in me this much, I guess I owed it to myself to also. As expected I was pretty sore, I wondered if I could handle these workouts. Could I keep going for weeks like this? I found the encouragement of my coach and instructors to be a source of strength; strength to push through those intense workouts. Gradually I adjusted to the intensity and began to relish the chance to get in there and work! I was beginning to notice a *change in myself*. Not just in my physical body, but mentally. I was

transforming into a different person. I was becoming more focused, and I realized I could do better—push harder. For the first time in quite awhile, I felt good about myself, *proud* of myself. Proud not only that I was getting leaner and stronger, but also that I was choosing to live my life, be a part of my daughters' lives today and in the future.

A definite change was happening. Friends and family began to notice a difference in me. They said they had never seen me happier or more outgoing. I started to do things I hadn't done. 5 K runs, biking and outdoor adventure hikes, and I was enjoying them! However, I think the best part of this transformation is that I am doing all I can be to be healthy, and in the process, I am able to provide an example to my two daughters about the value of fitness.

Finally, I'd like to give a sincere note of appreciation to the dedicated instructors as well as Farrell's for their guidance and support in helping me become the better, healthier person I was meant to be. Thank you for helping me to make the changes I needed to assure a healthier future for my family and me!

*Paul Wagner, Farrell's eXtreme Bodyshaping 2011 National Challenge Winner*