

# Jacqueline Leotaud

Hometown: Olathe, KS

Age: 26

LOST  
**113**  
POUNDS

NOW  
**144**

WAS  
**257**

## Take us back to before your weight loss. What did your average day consist of, both nutritionally and physically?

Prior to beginning this transformation, I weighed in at an alarming 257 pounds and wore a size 22W. At 5'3 and 25 years of age, I placed zero emphasis on nutrition and being physically active. In contrast to those built like Barbie "goddesses" who spent hours perfecting the perfect push up and executing a nutritious masterpiece in the kitchen, I was a regular fast food junkie, reality TV watching, workaholic, who savored online shopping over tiring outdoor activities and whom without question never longed for physical activity/exercise. I put little emphasis on health and beauty, waking for work with minimal time to dress, often skipping breakfast, and putting in long hours at the office. On an average day, I consumed 8 to 9 cans of coke and grazed on a variety of sweet and salty snacks before leaving for a 1,830 calorie lunch (10 piece chicken nuggets, large french fry, large Coke, vanilla soft serve, and a three-pack of chocolate chip cookies). I threw myself into my work, the portion of my life I could easily control and was exceedingly successful at. Often spending 11+ hours in the office, I would return home to consume an equally high caloric dinner/dessert on the couch before heading to sleep, only to do it all over again less than six hours later.

## What was the catalyst that made you start your transformation? Who did you contact for help?

Stressing the value of a healthy lifestyle, Doug Smith, my company's President & CEO implemented an comprehensive Employee Wellness Program and subsequently encouraged each of us to accept his offer to enjoy a paid membership to a local fitness club for a mere eight visit monthly obligation in return. Having previously relocated to Kansas City from the west coast, I saw this as an excellent opportunity to socialize with new friends. I had no intention of participating in organized aerobic classes or utilizing any of the club's exercise equipment, my objective instead was to enjoy discounted spa services and participate in group dates in the café. In the fall of 2007 while I lunched over a buttered turkey pesto panini, two bags of potato chips, and Gatorade, I met Ellen Oberle. She was the flawless/energetic personal trainer that would not take no for an answer, would become a dear friend, and would ultimately change my life.

## What were your first steps?

Believing that a healthy orientation toward food is critical, Ellen Oberle, my personal trainer required an understanding of and commitment to the nutritional component of weight loss prior to my participation in any

exercise program. I agreed to participate in a body compensation analysis/assessment, attended her one-on-one and group nutrition education courses, and initially made a twice per week commitment to cardiovascular activity with a one-hour trainer led strength training routine.

## What was the most difficult part of your transformation?

By nature, I am a compulsive overeater who uses food to cope with a variety of internal and external issues. The most difficult part of my transformation was the struggle to find peace in replacing and limiting my once uncontrolled consumption of favorites in a way that still allowed me to socialize and enjoy gatherings, while overcoming personal and professional challenges.

## What advice do you have for someone who is figuring out where to start?

Create a support system and establish written personal obligations that you can review constantly. Connect with others who started in a position similar to yours; these are the individuals who will most intimately understand your current state and can relate to both your purpose and potential challenges. Success in weight loss is a personal choice; however, it is important to establish a network or supporting cast among those you interact with most frequently: co-workers/colleagues, family members, friends, personal trainers/counselors, etc.

## How has it affected your daily life? What are some of the biggest improvements?

My transformation has had a significant impact on my life. I have a much healthier body image and take increased pride in both my physical appearance and personal style. I am establishing a new relationship with food and continue to improve overall health and quality of life. I am encouraged by my accomplishments and continue to establish new physical objectives for myself. I wake less drained, consider myself to be more daring and less structured, have an increased desire to develop deeper relationships, display improved endurance, and most notably now fit comfortably in economy airplane seats (a former source of tremendous anxiety and apprehension).

## Does it change how you feel about yourself?

This transformation has forced me to confront and reveal emotions I had evaded for most of my adult life. It has provided me the opportunity to explore my true self and I have learned to be more comfortable with that person. I rely less on a need to please

all audiences and find more self-confidence in staying true to my own personal vision and values as opposed to supporting the opinions of the larger majority. I feel extremely positive and pleased with what I have and am capable of accomplishing, and am encouraged and excited about what the future holds.

## Does it change the way the outside world interacts with you?

To an extent I think people question less the physical stamina and drive I have. We can be healthy in all different shapes and sizes; however, as a society we place a great emphasis on appearance and use it, often unfairly, to assess the capability of a person in terms of work ethic, endurance, and determination. In my recent experiences, I have found the external world to be more supportive, encouraging, and accommodating; though, I do believe my perception and improved personal confidence play a major role in how I now perceive external factors.

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