

Marcia Pettersen: A Gift that Keeps on Giving

By Dianne Cumberland

At age 82, Joan MacDonald was trying something new – working out with weights. She kept it a secret from her family for fear they would think she was being silly. After several months of training twice a week at our studio Joan was amazed at how this “weight lifting stuff” was really working – she was getting stronger, her flexibility was improving, she was climbing stairs with greater ease, the arthritis pain in her hips had subsided and best of all, she was having a great golf season! Joan talked about her family a lot, of all the athletic endeavors her grandchildren undertook and their busy life, but she was worried about her daughter Marcia’s weight. That year for Marcia’s birthday, Joan surprised her with a gift certificate for one year’s worth of personal training.

When Marcia came in for her fitness assessment she was both excited and nervous. She described her current physical condition as “bad” and went on to say that in her 30’s she was very fit, went to aerobics classes 6 days a week and weighed 130 lbs. As the years progressed, life became a busy combination of teaching school full time, shuttling her three kids to and from swim practices and meets, and being involved in all the activities they did as a family. Her way of relaxing after a busy day soon developed into a nightly quiet time accompanied by a bowl of ice cream – as a “reward” to herself.

By age 52 Marcia’s weight had climbed to 228lbs., her body fat was an unhealthy 45% and she was easily winded. She remembers thinking, “It was a real push just to finish the step test!” All those years of no exercise and unwise food choices had taken their toll. We knew we had a lot of work to do but she was up for the challenge.

During that first year Marcia made great strides. Her strength and endurance were steadily improving, she lost 25 lbs. and she was reducing her body fat. In January of 2003 things took a turn, Joan was diagnosed with colon cancer and sadly lost her battle 19 months later. Just two months later Marcia herself was diagnosed with breast cancer. During this extremely stressful time of her mother’s illness and through her own chemo therapy treatments she kept up her workouts the best she could but eventually had to stop as she faced recovery from surgery and additional chemo treatments.

In July 2005 after being away from workouts for 8 months Marcia was able to return. At first she was very weak and was only able to handle a low intensity training session once a week, but soon started to regain her strength and soon returned to her twice a week workouts and eventually added in doing extra cardio time on her own.

To date, Marcia has lost 62 lbs., her body fat is down to a healthy 24% and she has lost 44 inches overall. In fact, her new waist measurement is the same as her old thigh measurement! Marcia has changed her dietary habits and exercise is now a regular part of her daily routine. She likes the way she feels and looks and is committed to her new lifestyle. Marcia says, “If my mother were here today, she would be pleased with the results of her investment. I know she would be proud of me and grateful to PTT. My mother was able to give me many wonderful gifts throughout my life, but this is the best gift I ever got!”



Marcia before...



Marcia now!

