



# HEALTH JOURNEYS ARE RARELY TRAVELED ALONE

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# HEALTH JOURNEYS ARE RARELY TRAVELED ALONE

Whether we recognize it or not, we are all on a journey of some type as we navigate time. Journeys come in many different themes and timeframes and are leading us to somewhere either by definite decisions or by default (decision not made). Journeys with a purpose are often challenging and involve the backbone of motivation to change a stubborn condition. Many of our journeys can relate to overcoming a non-optimal health issue problem.

Our feature article is about one of our PTs, Jeremy Decker, DPT, who set a goal several years ago to pursue a higher degree of fitness. He started his health journey with definite but reachable goals, and from his small successes he advanced his reach to what occurred last September when he achieved a significant accomplishment, a bucket list kind of milestone. So, please give his article a read.

I asked Jeremy to write up the highpoints of his health journey as I know there are many readers who stand at the threshold of a health challenge and have some hesitancy on where or how to begin. They want to overcome a painful condition, lose weight, tone up, or control some problem

like cholesterol, arthritis, or diabetes and part of the reservation to beginning is the possibility of not succeeding in this challenge; perhaps one has tried and not succeeded before. And so, to avoid future failure once more one just never confronts it again. This is unfortunate as sometimes failure is the result of trying to travel an unknown road without the right map, without the right guide.

I have been a part of many patients' journeys back to feeling healthy and able. One common theme to their lack of success is trying to do it alone or without the right guidance and often it is the preparation step that does not get enough attention. Improving cardiovascular fitness, losing weight, addressing metabolic issues related to cholesterol, triglycerides, and diabetes will require repetitive activities like walking, jogging, hiking or swimming to burn calories and normalize metabolism.

People will often comment that they tried to engage in a program and then some part of their body, a knee, foot or hip for example, started to get sore and it affected their ability to move and they had to stop exercising and rest it.

*(Continued Inside)*

*Here is where there are two losses – not improving their condition and the emotional loss of being stopped.*

Without diving too deep on how we can fail in such an endeavor, there are at least two variables that need to be given some attention for those whose body is not able to adapt to a new physical challenge.

The first is what mechanical condition is your body in before you start? A body whose muscle and joint balance (tightness and weakness patterns in key muscle groups) is measurably lacking is going into a new physical challenge with their body not properly prepped for success. One usually would not take a trip in an older car without a check up at the car doctor, that is only common sense. Yet we may not have recognized the need to have a mechanical check up by a physical therapist who is trained to identify the weak links in the body's muscle and joint systems as a primary step to your health-creating journey.

*This early step can help avoid overuse injuries (bursitis, tendonitis, muscle pain) so common with repetitive activities.*

Scan the code to read our blog article on the muscle balance topic.



The second variable is the type and rate of application of the activity you are using to lose weight or improve your health. There is a relationship between the amount of stress applied and recovery. This relationship improves the more idea number one above is handled first and then, based on a number of variables such as age, body type, health and the activity of interest, a gradient of exercise is introduced and progressed as tolerated.

*If you would like to look your health barrier square in the eye and put your best foot forward in overcoming it, Full Potential is a teammate worth*

*partnering with to make this foray into your health quest a successful one.*

Getting things aligned and mechanically ready is a step that gets minimized so often and yet it can become the stumbling block where attitude and motivation are high to make a change. This is often where the greatest feeling of failure is felt, the mind is not only willing but it is sick and tired of being limited and unfortunately the body is the weak link in the system.

This is where we come in, we are the body experts for mechanical problems. We can help you identify and correct those mechanical issues which slow your progress and sometimes stop you all together. If you are well into your lifestyle change and your body starts to rebel, it is a strong indicator you have an imbalance in your muscle/joint system that is getting taxed at this higher demand. This is a definite time to act and get help to keep your momentum going. Medicating it is not addressing the basis of the problem, identifying the weak links would be.

The cornerstone of Jeremy's successful health journey was a gradient approach which was consistently applied over time. Whether you set your goals to run a full Ironman as he amazingly did, or you're working on being able to walk a mile, the fundamentals are the same. Get the right start with a mechanical checkup and guidance through your beginning phase by a Full Potential PT. Usually this is where someone gets derailed from their goals. As your body adapts and you're well on your way to a new you, our job is mostly done, yet your new life has now just begun. What a great way to prepare for a more active you in 2023. Like many things in life, health journeys are rarely traveled alone when successful. The new year is not far off, start the process today and get your body ready to tackle the body changes you want to create for the new year.

Success is rarely by chance; it is almost always planned. Call us and let's talk about your challenges and goals.

To the right start,

*Vincent Hauueken, PT*

# MY FITNESS JOURNEY

My fitness journey started five years ago. At the time, despite being a doctor of physical therapy and a specialist in helping others via exercise, I was not in a routine of exercising regularly myself. My friend and now co-worker, Luke Vander Zouwen, invited me over to his house for a workout. Eventually we started working out together weekly. One week Luke had me try to do a pull-up as part of our workout. Not to my surprise, I could not do a pull-up, not even one. No matter how hard I tried it just didn't happen, and at the time it felt like it would never happen.



Soon after I heard of a workout called "Murph" which consisted of a one-mile run, 100 pull-ups, 200 push-ups, and 300 squats, followed by another one-mile run. Seeing that I couldn't do even one pull-up I thought, "wow, I could never do that." The pull-ups didn't come quickly or miraculously but I kept working on them over time. I was eventually able to do a pull-up, then two, then five, and so on. About a year and a half after my first failed pull-up, I completed "Murph," the workout I mentioned above that I thought I would never be able to do. This experience taught me the valuable lesson that with training over time, the human body is able to adapt and do amazing things, even things that initially seem impossible.

Pull-ups were the most obvious example of this, but there were numerous other ways that I saw my body's abilities changing over time. I saw myself being able to complete workouts faster, lift more weight, and do movements that I didn't think I would be able to do when I started.

My interest in fitness eventually led me to triathlon. I was looking for a fitness goal to work towards that was achievable but also seemed out of reach. I decided that a half-Ironman triathlon would do both of these things. This consists of a 1.2-mile swim, 56-mile bike, and 13.1-mile run. Given my newfound confidence in my body's ability to

*(continues, see "My Journey")*

## Have You Met Your 2022 Deductible or Out-of-Pocket?

The year is about over but you have a final month to get ready for 2023 and do so with less out-of-pocket costs if you have met your deductible or out-of-pocket max.

We specialize in treating a variety of acute and chronic pain conditions and injuries and hold ourselves to high standards regarding our treatment methods and techniques.

Do you have a problem you want to address? Take a look at your fitness goals or read the article, "My Fitness Journey" and see if you would like to handle a body problem.

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## MY JOURNEY *continued*

adapt to training over time, I thought, "I could probably do that." Over the next nine months I learned to swim freestyle, bought a used bike and started training, and ran distances twice as far as I had ever run before. In the fall of 2020, I completed the half-Ironman triathlon.

I did another half-Ironman triathlon in 2021 and at the end of 2021 I wanted to set a new goal. I wanted to again find something that would be achievable but would push me beyond my expectations. After being around triathlon for a couple years and doing two half-Ironman races the next logical step would be a full Ironman. A full Ironman is twice the distance of the half; a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike, and 26.2-mile run.

Before I began working out I remember hearing of Ironman triathlons and seeing segments on TV highlighting the grueling nature of the race and impossibly long distances. "Wow, I could never do that," I thought at the time. The furthest I had run at that point was 6 miles and that was a miserable experience. I didn't think I could ever run a marathon, and especially not after swimming 2.4 miles and biking 112 miles.

However, now my mindset was different. I had seen, over the past two years, numerous examples of how my body was able to adapt to training and do more than I thought was possible. I had seen countless physically ordinary people complete Ironman triathlons. I again thought that if I could find the time to do the training and train well, "I could probably do that."

I registered for Ironman Chattanooga in the fall of 2021. The race would take place in September 2022. Over the next year I trained very consistently. I rarely took a day off. However, I also trained very moderately. The vast majority of my training was at an easy intensity. I listened to my body, I almost never felt burned out, exhausted, or excessively fatigued. I knew that consistent moderate training over time would yield good results. Extreme or heroic workouts fueled by temporary motivation are unnecessary and can even be detrimental.

On September 25, 2022, I completed Ironman Chattanooga. My time was 12:24:49 which exceeded my goal and expectation. I had so much fun during the race. I enjoyed the training process and race experience so much that I signed up for another Ironman in Lake Placid in 2023.

*To review, the main lesson that I learned from my fitness journey is that through training, the body is able to change over time and do things that can initially seem impossible.*

I learned this lesson through my experience and my body. However, this concept is obviously not limited to my body.

*I'm amazed not at my own body, but by the body. The human body. It is amazingly created and should be held in high regard.*

It has the capacity to do amazing things. It has the capacity to change. This certainly looks different for everyone depending on a multitude of factors including pre-existing medical conditions, age, and fitness experience. But if you're reading this I would encourage you to think about the thoughts you have about your body's abilities and limitations. Then challenge those thoughts and determine if they could be undermining the potential ability that you have.

Thank you for reading!

*Jeremy Decker PT, DPT, Cert. MDT*

**"SUCCESS IS NOT  
FINAL, FAILURE IS  
NOT FATAL:  
IT IS THE  
COURAGE  
TO CONTINUE  
THAT COUNTS."**

**—Winston Churchill**



# PATIENT *Success* STORY



## I CAN DO MY NORMAL ACTIVITIES NOW

I am able to resume physical activities including hiking and pickleball without experiencing pain during and after.

Katie was awesome with her encouragement and motivation. Visits were always on time and the exercise program was challenging but not too complicated. It was easy to follow at home.



— *Sandra N.*

*You can help someone else find THEIR Success Story  
— AND win a Meijer gift card!*

## PLAY THE REFERRAL GAME

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