



# A HUNDRED- POUND JOURNEY

*How I Took Control of My Life*

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*Can we help you  
with your pain?*

Give us a call at  
**616-537-2864**  
to book your appointment!

## *How I Took Control of My Life:* **A Hundred-Pound Journey**

*Are you in pain? Have you felt fear or lack of confidence when it comes to increasing your activity? Do you feel powerless when it comes to overcoming your obstacles or reaching your wellness goals?*

*Laura did, too.*

*Laura is a Full Potential graduate who found a way to take back control of her life – a life she felt was passing her by. After reaching her physical therapy goals, she continued to press on and achieve more than she ever imagined. Read her story below.*

*On September 1, 2022 I completed my last visit with Luke at Full Potential Physical Therapy. I had ridden my brand-new mountain bike to the appointment, and as I left I told Luke that the next time he sees me I will have lost a ton of weight. Little did I know that by September of the following year I would be down over 100 pounds and feeling my best ever.*

### **HERE IS MY STORY**

I was never a thin person growing up, but didn't realize how bad my weight truly was until I started to feel the physical pain throughout my body. The more pain I felt, the more excuses I had to live a sedentary life. I was in complete denial that my weight was the problem. I was not only unhealthy, but also mentally, physically, and emotionally exhausted.

Mountain biking was something I always enjoyed, but had stopped 15 years ago when the weight I carried restricted my ability to do so. I decided to buy a hybrid bicycle in hopes to bring something I enjoyed back into my life.

After a month or so, I used the motor less and less and reached the point where I stopped using it altogether. I then added kayaking to my life and found a love that I never knew existed. **The key to my success was finding ways to exercise that I enjoyed rather than looking at exercise as a chore.**

By October I had lost about 30 pounds with little to no effort. That's when I kicked things up a notch. I personally am not a believer in fad diets. They are too restricting and...

*...one slip-up would leave me losing focus, and I would gain the weight right back.*

I knew it was going to have its challenges at my age, but I was determined. I decided that instead of a diet I would "eat with a purpose." I ate to fuel my body. I listened to my body and gave it what it needed, rather than what I wanted.

February 27, 2023, I joined a local gym. I had never stepped foot into a gym prior to that day. I was intimidated by gyms. Almost one year later, I am still going strong at the same gym. I found a love for exercise that I NEVER in a million years expected to find. I started off slowly, doing only what I knew how to do. Day by day I would step out of my comfort zone and try something new. I eventually added more and more to my workout routine by watching others, asking questions, and lots of YouTube videos.

In one year I was able to lose 100+ pounds. Not only that, but I was able to add muscle and toning. When I say I knew nothing about being in a gym, I mean it. I knew nothing! I did this on my own with patience, grace, and a whole lot of determination.

Losing this weight has changed my life. It has opened the door to new hobbies, new friends, confidence, and a love for life that I once had forgotten. **I got my life back.** I am no longer in physical pain and my mental health has significantly improved. It is a slow process and I still struggle, but the confidence I have within myself helps me stay motivated to live each day to the fullest and to never give up.

I urge everyone to step out of their comfort zone. **Take control of your life and don't feel guilty for taking time for yourself.** In order to be able to take care of those around us, we must first take care of ourselves.



### TIPS TO SUCCESS THAT I HAVE LEARNED

- **Start small.** It's okay to have a goal in mind, but understand that it may change over the course of your journey. Set goals that are attainable; you can always add more later.
- **Find an exercise you ENJOY.** Walking, hiking, bike riding, swimming – there are so many options. Step out of your comfort zone and try new things. When you enjoy what you do, it doesn't feel like a chore, it becomes a hobby.
- **Don't follow fad diets.** Eat healthy, listen to what your body needs and wants.

*Continue to eat what you enjoy, but in a healthy way.*

- **Eat with a purpose** – to fuel your body. If you deprive yourself of what you desire, when you do mess up, you quit. Allow yourself to make mistakes. Nobody is perfect and no diet is perfect, either.
- **Keep a log or journal. Take pictures of your progress.** This is something I regret not doing. I have very few pictures of my “before” because I couldn't stand seeing myself the way I looked.

*I tracked my progress through a weekly log of my weight loss.*

- **Be patient.** The results WILL come in time. Understand we are all unique, and finding what works for you is a process. It doesn't happen overnight.



*If you are like Laura was – in pain, discouraged, and ready to make a change – physical therapy could be for you. Our team at Full Potential is ready to help you get started on your journey to reaching your goals. As her story shows, when you make the time to take care of yourself, big things can happen!*

# Weight Loss and Physical Therapy

What is the relationship between a weight loss program that extends over a year's time like Laura's and physical therapy? She brings up some excellent points on patience, goals and diet. As is well known, extra weight adds stress to joints, muscles and tendons – the common tissues that make up our musculoskeletal system. As we add more stress by increasing our activity level, it is not unusual to develop overuse injuries. Overuse injuries often involve adding too much stress too fast before those tissues can adjust to greater demands. Such injuries affect the tissues listed above and can certainly derail the best intentions of losing weight and committing to a program.

Laura preceded her weight loss journey with a program at Full Potential PT and set the stage for a successful journey culminating a year later in feeling liberated from not only the extra weight but also the lifestyle that supported her weight issues. Getting a therapist to help you address the weak links in your system, provide guidance on exercise and progressions can in effect

be a type of coach during the early phase of the journey. This can really improve the odds of helping your body adapt properly to the increased stress from more activity.

There is a right way to start this process and that is setting the stage for a good launch and avoiding one of the key factors that can emerge with more demands – pain. We would like to help you succeed if you have a desire to improve your ability to live a fuller or more active life. You can always call our office if you have questions, or we offer a free consult to discuss how we can help you and this could even be over the phone.

Also, if you have friends or family who are struggling with extra weight and have a desire to make lifestyle changes, then share this article with them. Show them someone who had a successful weight loss journey and how it came to be. For either you or them, a phone call could open the door to a whole new life.

— *The Full Potential Team*



## Look Who It Is!

**We've got a familiar face back at the front desk...  
Diane VanderPloeg has returned!**

*Diane has worked in the administration area of the medical field since 2003, and in the physical therapy field since 2008. Diane was a part of our admin team in years past, and loves the many aspects of office work— from scheduling, to insurance questions, to paperwork. She is back to continue her work helping our patients with their administrative needs!*

*She enjoys seeing patients progress from high pain levels and low functionality to pain-free and living life with no limitations, and loves interacting with patients.*

*Diane has lived in Holland since 2002 with her husband, two children and their cat and dog. They enjoy hiking, camping, indoor water parks, gardening, and landscaping. She is also a homeschool mom and loves to watch her children discover a love for learning.*



**Has your pain come back? We can help! Call us at 616-537-2864 to book your appointment today!  
Book online at FullPotentialPT.com**

# PATIENT *Success* STORIES



“As a result of physical therapy at Full Potential, my condition went from a pain level of about a 8 or 9 to none! I loved how important Dr. Alisha made me feel, and how she really did everything she could to help me. Very friendly and professional environment.”

— Dawn B.



“After physical therapy with Dr. Alisha, I feel much more confident with engaging in hiking uneven surfaces/terrain, and I feel stronger in my lower extremity! The clinic's strengths are personalized care, engaged, knowledgeable physical therapists, and lots of different exercise modalities.”

— Lisa H.

## WE WANT TO HELP YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY!

Sometimes the biggest impediment for people in pain is to know where to get help. You can be a trusted advocate for our services, and give your friends and family the confidence to take the first step towards getting assistance. Your recommendation could be the beginning of good things to come for them!

Simply fill out the form, return to us and we will send them information on how we can help. To submit online, go to <https://fullpotentialpt.com/patient-information/refer-a-friend/>

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Your Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Your Friend's Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Your Friend's Email



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# Clinic News



## DR. LUKE VANDER ZOUWEN

Dr. Luke Vander Zouwen recently completed a course titled “Running Resiliency: Injury Management for the Endurance Athlete,” and is now ready to serve the competitive or recreational runners in the area.

“Running is a complex form of locomotion, and very unique to a given individual. The course overviewed the most common running-related painful issues, and provided extensive research into what can help with easing them. Some of them are worthy of concern and others can be trained through with the expectation that the body will adapt. This course gave me insight into assessing and treating the painful runner so they can keep doing what they love – RUNNING!”



## DR. KATIE TSCHIRHART

Dr. Katie Tschirhart is also continuing to build her treatment methods, and completed a course titled “A Manual Therapy Approach to the Treatment of Headaches.” If you have headaches, neck pain, or TMD/TMJ, she is equipped to get you feeling better!

“The information and techniques we covered will help me more effectively treat patients struggling with headaches, and will even be useful for those with jaw or neck pain. I gained a better understanding of identification of the characteristics of musculoskeletal headaches. That understanding will help me more quickly determine if PT can help or if a referral to another provider is needed. It also broadened my manual therapy and exercise treatment options to target joint and muscle restrictions that are often the source of the pain or headaches. I’m excited to put into practice what I’ve learned in order to help my patients find relief from headaches, neck pain, or jaw pain!”

**Nagging pain that won't go away? Call us at 616-537-2864 to book your appointment today!  
Book online at [FullPotentialPT.com](http://FullPotentialPT.com)**