

Gynura Procumbens- Longevity Spinach and The Road to Better Health

By
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You might wonder - why am I doing this? I don't plan on a career as a vlogger or influencer. The reason is for my future career. I'm trying to become a traditionally **published** writer of middle-grade and YA books. It is hard to get an agent and even harder to get a publisher/editor. But if I have a social media presence, then I will become a more marketable writer. Although in our former careers, we were programmers and rather computer savvy, this is a whole new field for me! I've been learning how to make videos and post them on YouTube, and I hope the quality (especially the sound) will improve as I continue to post more videos.

Learn more – <https://www.youtube.com/sandijerome>
<https://www.sandijerome.com/>

Gynura Procumbens - Longevity Spinach

- Helps lower blood sugar; aids in the treatment of diabetes
- Reduces blood pressure and cholesterol
- Aids in weight loss, and protects against cancer

Please don't think of this guide as medical advice, I'm a hobby gardener and not a doctor. I only know what has worked for us. We have been growing and consuming this plant for over 2 years and we've lost weight, lowered our cholesterol and blood pressure. This guide tells you how we did that and how to start growing and consuming longevity spinach.

This easy to grow plant (just take a clipping and stick in the ground) can help lower the levels of "bad" cholesterol, blood pressure, and triglycerides in the body. Research shows that along with lowering sugar levels, the ethanol extract of the plant's leaves has anti-hyperlipidemic effects as well. Another benefit is weight loss, considering the plants fat lowering properties.

Longevity spinach has also become famous for its anti-inflammatory effects. It contains many bioactive constituents, alkaloids and steroids. These steroids and alkaloids found in the plant play a vital role in warding off inflammation. Its leaves have a mild taste so they can be crushed and put in smoothies, soups, or teas. I use it as my lettuce in sandwiches or in salads. I am also trying to grow its cousin, Okinawa Spinach, (*Gynura crepioides*) but the squirrels seem to like that. I bought both plants as little 4" starters on Etsy, but now I have plenty around the yard.



Each serving contains about 4.5 grams of protein in a 3.5 ounce serving.

Longevity Spinach is not related to the dreaded spinach at all. Gynura has a few different names expressing its character: Longevity Spinach, Cholesterol Spinach, Leaves of God. It is growing in abundance on the fertile and rich soils of the sunny Mediterranean island of Cyprus but native to the more tropical regions.

This unique plant has been used for generations to fight kidney disease, hypertension, diabetes and eruptive fever, rashes and other types of illnesses related to diet and lifestyle. Holistic practitioners recommend eating a few leaves before a meal, and in some tests, this has reduced the need for insulin (**do not consider this as medical advice – ask your doctor first.**) Apart from lowering blood sugar, the plant reputedly protects the kidneys and liver from blood sugar-related damage. My husband has

dropped his cholesterol and blood pressure by 10 points and is really losing weight (almost 100 pounds!) For me, it helps me avoid that weak, shaky feeling between meals and I have lost 40 pounds and reduced the inflammation that causes my psoriasis and arthritis. Our stories are later in this e-book.

How to use - To be taken in the morning before breakfast to curb appetite. Take 3-5 mature leaves and wash thoroughly, chew in your mouth until they turn into a thick paste. Swallow, then drink a glass of warm water. As your plant grows and you start growing more plants, you can also cook it like any “greens” – there are many recipes online - along with using it in salads.

We have hundreds of plants in our yard, so we dry it and put in capsules or make a tea out of the powder. To learn how we do that, watch these videos.

How to Harvest and Eat

<https://youtu.be/B52o8LTTJio>

Where to Plant

<https://youtu.be/5MKaAJAiQ44>

This plant grows like a weed in our sandy soil of Florida and in planting bags, pots, and flower beds. It does well indoors, in our birdcage, and in full sun. I haven't found anywhere where that it doesn't grow well. It looked like it died during our last bad frost, but it came right back. I spray it with a mixture of vegetable oil and lemon dish soap (1 tbsp to 2 gallons of water) to prevent the aphids, leaf mold and black/white flies that are abundant in our humid Florida plants.

NOTE: *Do not let pond water spray on the plant. Irrigation water can be toxic!*

Road to Better Health

Sandi's Story – Drinks it as a Tea

A Martian Garden

I inherited two autoimmune diseases; from my dad's side arthritis, and from my mom's side psoriasis. Treatment for these over the years included lots of drugs including tranquilizers, steroids, and photochemotherapy drugs. I also took dozens of supplements to try and get healthy.

Today I only take 2 pills a day; a low dose aspirin in the morning to keep my blood thin to avoid strokes and at night melatonin, a hormone that decreases as we age. Instead of taking dozens of supplements, I decided to get healthy through diet and exercise instead. As a science buff, I do a lot of research on how to get the nutrients I need through food and grow a lot of that in my own organic garden. My latest additions are longevity spinach and Okinawa spinach, a cousin of longevity spinach. The name “Longevity” refers to its health benefits in lowering blood sugar, inflammation, and cholesterol.

In my 40s and 50s, I had packed on an extra 50 pounds from my lean high school weight. I was always slightly underweight growing up, so this was a puzzlement for me to be gaining weight. I first tried various diets; settling on vegan/pescatarian diet to try and avoid the cancer cursing our family. I bought a treadmill desk to try and walk off the pounds, and of course all those supplements. Then I started looking at the science of weight gain and weight loss. The weight gain was simple. I was under a lot of stress and the drug cortisol caused my body to start holding onto my fat. Cortisol in nature is essential for my body's fight or flight response; however, it caused fat storage in my abdomen. This belly fat accumulated and caused far more health issues including my weight gain and inflammation to trigger my autoimmune diseases.

Almost three years ago, I paid someone to tell me I was fat. No, actually, my insurance company paid for it via a benefit called Silver Sneakers. To be fair, she didn't actually call me fat. Instead, she said that I was mostly made up of fat instead of muscle. She put me on a program to build back the muscle that we all start losing after we turn 40. That program has worked, and I've created a more efficient body with a much higher muscle ratio, and now I burn calories better.

I found four things to lower my belly fat; eating good fats and drinking a longevity spinach tea, intermittent fasting, adjusting my metabolism and core strength training. Those extra pounds are gone; but it did take a few years. I started first with my core strength training since that is best when you have all the extra weight.

You might think that "I'll diet and lose some weight so that exercise will be easier" but this extra weight is like carrying around free dumbbells all day. Everything you do will be more effective in this phase. I worked with a physical trainer and have a daily routine of planks, chairs, tippy toes, etc. I combined this with yoga for a great core training routine. I lost 6 inches in my belly and became rather strong. It is great in my gardening to be able to dig and pick up things without getting a sore back. I like being strong. You can use your extra weight now to your advantage and let it help you lose weight as you work in your garden or walk.

One of things that I'm learning about living in Florida (along with alligators, hurricanes, and bugs) is that the same plants that I have grown for years, do not thrive in Florida. But other plants do. I tried and tried to grow the typical garden favorites; broccoli, corn, and spinach, but they do not do well in our hot humid climate.

I have been turning my tiny backyard into a botany experiment after watching the movie, The Martian with Matt Damon and realizing that you can learn to survive with a very small plot of land – even on Mars.

My backyard was a mess. First of all, there was sand, then on top of that a layer of white rocks, and then landscape fabric covered with rubber bark. It has taken me almost 4 years, but I finally have a Martian Garden.

Since the sprinkler system from HOA association uses pond water, I had to cap all the sprinklers in my garden and when it is dry, I hand water the garden. Fortunately, it rains a lot in Florida – so that isn't very often.

But Longevity spinach is among the few new things I have learned to grow and like to eat – and they are all good for me! The best food is the food that you grow yourself!

This plant that is not from the spinach family but rather the sunflower family is doing very well and we're truly seeing the results of my experiments on Keith. My darling husband of almost 50 years is my "lab rat" to see if this really reducing blood pressure, cholesterol, and curbs appetite.

At first, each morning, he would chew three leaves and drinks a cup of cup of water and repeated at night. It really started helping; in 30 days his blood pressure dropped from 163 down to less than 130. He was no longer starved during the day as he is still on his path to be under 160 pounds. I did the recommended morning leaf eating

routine, but I was already at my target weight so this is to help reduce inflammation due to inherited autoimmune diseases; psoriasis and arthritis.

You can't do anything about the genes we are born with; Keith's whole family suffered from high blood pressure and high cholesterol but years and years of medication never seemed to control either. This is the first thing that has worked and helped him lose weight. Eventually I had so much, that I could make a powder and put into capsules for him. My YouTube video explains that.

I didn't discover this wonder plant, but it doesn't seem to get much attention. I'm trying to get it out there so I've sent to family and friends in Oregon, Colorado, Minnesota, south Florida, and California. I give it out in my neighborhood. The only place where I find it grown commercially and marketed is in Cyprus but I'm experimenting on where is might grow as good as it grows here in central Florida.

<http://www.gynuraonline.com/en/>

Since it is a bother to go outside and get the leaves twice a day, I've created a powder that I discuss in my YouTube videos.

<https://www.youtube.com/sandijerome>

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Where to Plant

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Japanese Diet

Of course, eating only longevity spinach isn't a very good plan toward better health. When I lived to Hawaii, I found it one of the happiest places on earth. Our first house was on Hauoli Street in Kailua town - Hau'oli means happy in Hawaiian. Keith recently remarked that his happiest times in Hawaii were walking with me along Lanikai Beach that was a block away. The song, White Sandy Beach of Hawai'i by Israel Kamakawiwo'ole still pulls us back to those times.

Why is Hawaii a happy place? Maybe it is because so many people are there on vacation or maybe it is the spirit of Aloha. One of the things that delighted me in

Hawaii was the Asian cuisine. I worked for Mike McKenna who was one of the first investors of Roy's Restaurants and friends with the founder, Roy Yamaguchi. We'd eat often at the original Roy's in Hawaii Kai where there is a tribute to Mike on the wall as you walk in. Whenever we would dine there, Roy would come to the table wearing a McKenna Windward Ford baseball cap and prepare some special new dish for us to try. Roy's blend of Asian and Hawaiian cuisine helped me discover the Japanese diet.

The Japanese word for happiness is Kōfuku which means; euphoria, bliss, blessedness, satisfaction, beatitude. The Japanese diet is a focus on satisfaction. The Japanese Diet is the reason that Japan has some of the longest life expectancies in the world. But what is less well known is that Japanese women have the lowest rates of obesity (only 2.9%) in modern cultures. Naomi Moriyama writes in her book, Japanese Women Don't Get Old or Fat that the basic elements of the Japanese approach to eating is "not a diet plan but a whole new way of falling in love with food". The emphasis is on small portions of fresh seasonal food. We need to value quality over quantity and to eat slowly to appreciate the flavors of the food and reach a feeling of satisfaction with less food. I like to call my plan the ELF plan - or eat less food. I eat whatever I want, but less of it.

The Japanese put a great deal of emphasis on visual presentation and making the food look beautiful and appealing to the eye. I recently made a new dish called frushi



that I discovered at the Epcot Flower and Garden Festival. It is sort of a cantaloupe/pineapple sushi.

Fish - salmon. I prepare a nice salmon filet for our Sunday brunch and then use fresh wild canned salmon to make "tuna salad" with vegan mayo, mustard, celery, and pickles.

Vegetables – I like the frozen California mix and of course, lots greens that I grow organically in my yard. Along with longevity spinach, I grow Okinawa spinach, Jewels of Opar, and Red Leaf Hibiscus (there is a YouTube about this.)

Rice (preferably brown) but I also like sticky rice and risotto.

Soy (tofu, miso soup, soy sauce) and frozen vegan Gardein products made from soy, but I try to stick to more unprocessed food.

Fruit such as papayas and mango from my yard, apples, grapes, pineapple, banana and watermelon. I use the pineapple and bananas to freeze then make my own Dole Whip.

Green tea. It is hot in Florida, so each morning I brew 2 cups of green tea and some other favorable tea like Orange Cinnamon, add stevia, then pour into 6 Rubbermaid-BPA free 16 oz water bottles filled 90% with water, then put in the refrigerator to give me an all-day source of water and green tea.

The Japanese diet also recommends noodles, but I haven't figure that out yet, but plan to add it later since I know it has lots of carbs and I'm still trying to burn fat to keep my weight in check. I avoid the 8 bad fats and use only olive, coconut, and avocado oil.

Dairy and bread are not part of my diet and when I do eat pork, beef and chicken they are regarded more as a special treat rather than the main focus of the meal. Fresh fruit is my preferred dessert however if a richer dessert is eaten it is in very small quantities. I often get the latest cupcake at Disney World to sample it, but I cut it open, then eat a few bites.

I am truly happy; probably the happiest I have been in my life. I run/walk each day, do yoga, and strength building exercises. I rarely gain weight and eat as much as I want.



I think my diet and health are a big part of this, but more importantly, I have found my own bliss. I no longer look to others to make me happy for the day, I keep myself happy.

The good news is that today both my arthritis and psoriasis are completely gone – not one spot on me and a free moving neck! I remember having psoriasis so bad that I couldn't sleep at night (itching so much that I would have to wear socks on my hands) and once it was covering so much of my body that my dermatologist said I would need to be hospitalized to avoid infection. But today I am sore free, no itching. I wish I had figured out the cure when I was younger,

but some of the cure wasn't possible. I worked in high stress jobs and later traveled so much that I couldn't control what I ate.

Below, I've outlined all the things that I did on my Road to Better Health after I turned 65. I decided that I didn't want to spend the Third Act of my life going to doctors or taking medication.

Now, this is a lot to do and some of it is repeat in Keith's story later, so I have tried to list it in the order of easiest to most complicated. The thing you are fighting is inflammation. Inflammation is causing you to put on weight and more importantly, it can cause you to catch Covid 19 easier and increase your chance of death. Inflammation is your new enemy; weight gain and other ailments, food sensitivity, etc. are merely by-products. Ready to begin? Try this for just the next month and see if it makes a difference. You need to do this for a least a month to cure yourself.

1. **The outside you** – Organic Coconut oil and NO CHEMICALS. Buy the big tub of coconut oil at Costco or Walmart. It has a natural SPF of 4-5, so lather it on before you go into the sun or outside. Yup, it is messy when it is hot and totally liquid or cold and hard to spread; but I put it on over the area that has wood floors and then rub it into the floor! I have it in smaller plastic containers all around the house.

I rub it on after showers and into my hair too. That is the ONLY thing that goes on my skin. Everything else has chemicals that cause inflammation. Sunscreen is bad, bug spray is bad, hairspray is bad, most hand lotion is bad, anti-aging creams are bad and even the prescriptions that I had paid hundreds for over the years caused inflammation. They are all gone and no chemicals touch my skin, nor do I ingest them. More on that later. I also use a more natural detergent and products that we get on Amazon; Grab Green Natural 3 in 1 Laundry Detergent Pods, Free & Clear/Unscented, 60 Loads, Fragrance Free, Organic Enzyme-Powered, Plant & Mineral-Based. We don't use fabric sheets; instead, I use little wool dryer balls; Smart Sheep 6-Pack XL Premium 100% Wool Dryer Balls. Bounce fabric sheets are filled with chemicals that get on your sheets, towels and clothes, then irritate your skin. No Soap or Shampoo. I use PURA D'OR Scalp Therapy Shampoo – Hydrates & Nourishes Scalp – Scalp Care Shampoo For Itchy Flaky Scalp w/ Tea Tree, Peppermint, Patchouli, Cedarwood. It is my body wash and shampoo and conditioner. I don't color my hair anymore – that is a big inflammation for you that spreads through your body and causes cancer. Instead I use Light Mountain hair color that is time consuming and messy, but has no chemicals. I make my own deodorant and air freshener. Buy a set of plastic spray bottles and essential oils. There are lots of recipes online but deodorants, bug sprays and air

fresheners go right into you fast and cause inflammation. Yes, don't have to avoid going outside which you love – that is actually great therapy. We spend 15-20 minutes each day in the sun to get the Vitamin D that we both need, so make sure you do that every day; the earlier the better. We go out at 9:30AM while it is still cool in Florida and my coconut oil protects me.

2. The inside you – Good oils – Coconut oil, Avocado Oil and Olive Oil. Salmon. Now we need to fix what is going inside you that is causing inflammation. I eliminated two things; bad oils and sugar. I don't drink, but if you do, the alcohol must go for now. You might want to consider replacing it with medical marijuana (the kids have this right) – but make sure you don't smoke it. Any smoke (like your barbeque) causes inflammation. You might want to try CBD gummies first to calm yourself instead. Giving up alcohol wasn't hard for us, we did that in our 20's but if it is part of your lifestyle and culture, a little tough. If you do get medical marijuana, you can have that when you go out and have a few gummies and soda water with a lemon and still have a nice buzz. Giving up sugar was VERY hard, but I have replaced it with stevia. That is the only artificial sweetener that is okay. The rest are very, very bad, so no more diet sodas unless they are made with stevia. I drink Zevia Root Beer that I order from Amazon or often find it at the grocery store or Target. Removing bad oils is also hard. Most products have bad oil. Even “olive oil butter” or “olive oil chips” are really made with sunflower oil (bad) and have a little olive oil added. I have an air fryer and buy corn tortillas and make my own chips. I eat my own guacamole that I make. I make my own butter spread (start saving all plastic containers.) No animal products except salmon. Yup, becoming vegan was a little too hard, especially when you go out, but everyone always has salmon on the menu. Try to only eat wild cold water caught salmon – farmed salmon has chemicals. I buy it canned and make a sort of tuna salad every other day and on the other days, I eat a tofu burrito with lots of guacamole. The goal is to get the good oils in you and the bad oils out. I gained a little weight at first but eventually got to my target weight.

The hateful eight industrial seed oils are Canola, Corn, Cottonseed Soy, Sunflower, Safflower, Grapeseed, and Rice bran. Look at the ingredients of your “healthy foods.” They most likely have these and they are causing inflammation and belly fat.

3. The Mental you. Exercise is the cure. I wish everyone could get rid of the stress in their life. I live a truly stress-free life. We sold our software company and retired. We didn't make a ton of money, but we now have a monthly income and reduced lifestyle that requires less income. I have no real human contact with clients anymore who

were a real stress builder. If you are a high stress job and probably can't retire – your goal is to fix this. Consider downsizing your lifestyle to live with less (what you need instead of what you want) and retire. Use a treadmill desk. Start doing Yoga. When the TV is on, I am normally exercising. It is hard, because towards the end of the day when we sit down to watch TV, I can be exhausted, but it is just for a month to see what a difference it makes. I went to a personal trainer and got this routine below.

Right now, in your 60s your body is mostly fat. It is merely a part of aging. After 30, we lose our muscle and convert to fat to prepare us for the “winter” of our lives. This fat, especially the belly fat, means elevated cortisol hormone which means elevated blood sugar, which then raises insulin – the fat storage hormone. So even if you're still eating the same, your body will hold onto more fat – especially at your waistline. So, getting rid of sugar (alcohol) and exercise are cortisol (the stress hormone) fighters. Every time you are angry, take a walk (if it is hot, jog around in a pool or the kitchen) or start exercising. It works! It gets you away from the stress and has the added benefit of your long-term plan to convert yourself into a lean, mean, fighting machine! Here is the exercise plan designed by the personal training who told me I was fat!

The goal is to convert fat to muscle so your body burns more calories per day and then you can either eat more (which I like) or lose weight (almost done with that.) Do not diet – under any circumstances. You need to instead convert fat to muscle and slowly burn the weight off. A 3” square of muscle weighs more than fat so you can gain weight at first, but then after 30 days, you normally turn the corner and start losing about 1-2 pounds a month. It is a VERY slow process of weight loss, but it has worked for me and I have very little belly fat left and 30 pounds lighter! I massaged my belly every night to make sure my skin tightened back up. I eat a lot – a whole lot. I often go off the “vegan” plan and have a cupcake, fish and chips, steak, or fried chicken, but that is now rare, but I do not diet. Last Sunday I had a pepperoni pizza! But now I really, really enjoy it rather than it being just dinner. When a friend makes something special – it is double special for me to eat!

Exercise plan

Note: This is not intended as medical advice, always consult with your doctor before making any changes to your diet or exercise routine.

A. On the couch or chair, sit down and stand up. It is harder than you think. Don't use your arms and start with 12 reps and increase to 20. Then do it many times a day.

B. Using 10-pound barbells, I do 3 different arm strengthening routines; 12 reps each, then increase to 20.

C. I lay flat ahhh.... resting and then doing toe touches where I lift my toe up and then touch it down; 20 for each leg/toe and then 20 together.

D. 20 pointer dogs. Yoga Balance Table, then bring your right hand to touch your left knee. Reverse.



Yoga Balance Table

E. 5 minutes of stepper. Sunny Health & Fitness Mini Stepper with Resistance Bands – from Amazon

F. I also garden for 1 hours and do 1 hour on the treadmill, but you might not have room or finances for the treadmill right now. If you can find a corner in the front room for these – the stepper and treadmill, great. We use a treadmill desk, so it's easier. I have been on the treadmill while writing this, checking Facebook, and handling my email, so I'm almost at my 1 hour and it is almost breakfast time, then gardening. Ah... the life of the retired.

G. WiiFit – I do the yoga and balance game and now I am adding more real yoga into my life. I like the games, they are fun!

This is a lot to do, but it works. It also helps that it is hot and humid in Florida. Our house is pretty humid; we keep it hotter than most; 80 degrees in the summer since it is 90-100 outside. Running the air and heat dries out the house and you. Our indoor humidity is between 45-50%. You might not be able to do this, but works for us. I am now allergy, psoriasis, and arthritis free and lighter. All were caused by inflammation. We mediate twice a day for 20 minutes (you might call them senior naps) and that is a

great time to chat. You and your spouse or significant other might try this; going into the bedroom, shutting the door, and meditating for 20 minutes. Sometimes we just talk, but being in that cool, dark room together and away from the noise can be helpful. We do it at 10AM and 2pm every day. You might just start at 10AM on Sunday. This means de-scheduling your life. Start saying “no” to events. Covid 19 has taught us that lesson; we no longer need to fill our weekends with travel, eating out, and attending events, so try to continue this. It is hard when you have family still, but we moved away from all that. When you are at a restaurant, mall, lake or park with friends and family; ask yourself this, “would I rather be home in my dark bedroom, having a nap – or even in my own chair by the TV or pool floating around peacefully or be here – trying to look pretty and be witty?”

Keith's Story – 100 Pounds

30 Months to a New You



Keith is only a few pounds away from reaching his goal of losing 100 pounds. He didn't do it quickly; it has been a slow process of changing his lifestyle instead of dieting. He has struggled with his weight since he as a child. After years of stress, travel, eating double bacon cheeseburgers, and Big Gulp Dr. Peppers, he truly packed on some serious weight.

Above picture of Keith at BMI 24.5 (above and normal) instead of 39.4 - (below and obese and close to morbidly obese at 40.0)



A few years ago, he got his wake-up call; first with heart attack and triple bypass heart surgery, and then three years later he had a hemorrhagic stroke. He has always had high cholesterol and blood pressure but today, they are both normal without the medications he took for years and years. I didn't need a wake-up call after packing on an extra 40 pounds after I turned fifty. I took one look at that huge scar running down his chest and the pain that he was going through after open heart surgery and decided; it is time for a change.

You might have noticed the subtitle – 30 Months to a New You and think – 30 months? Are you serious? Most of us want a 30-day quick weight loss diet.

Let's talk about fat cells and water first. With most quick loss diets, you end up losing water; not fat. We are born with about the same amount of fat cells as we have today. The problem is that those cells have fat in them and some water. If you eat a lot of salty foods; your body has a lot of water. No problem with that (other than salt is bad for you!) What you want is for those evil fat cells to "give up" that fat it is holding onto. It is a slow process to start burning fat, but it will happen and you have the perfect tool

to do this; your extra weight. That is why Keith always loses faster than I do and more – he has more extra weight. So, for once you're going to use that to your advantage. If you are willing to commit 30 months to this plan; you should be 30 pounds lighter or more (without those daily fluctuations of water) in 2 and half years. You might think, "I can't wait this long!" But for most of us, we spent 30 years piling this on - so what is 30 months to take it off slowly and permanently?

Keto and other diets can starve your body of energy to do this and make you weak - so try not dieting for once. Don't try to live from a 1200 a day no carb diet when you have a body demanding 2000 calories to function. You'll get weak and sick. Use that weight to your advantage to reshape your body into more muscle and less fat. At first you might even gain weight, but the long-term goal is to make yourself into a lean, mean, fighting machine!

Remember when you were young and didn't worry about your weight? The reason why is that you had a high metabolism and a high percentage of muscle. Just walking around burned more calories with your young firm and trim body.

That is your goal; to convert the fat filled body that you have today into a lean, firm muscular body with great core strength that burns calories better so that you can eat freely without gaining weight for the next 30 years. You will have better balance and prevent falls that might break your hip. You'll be healthier, stronger and have less inflammation. You'll be less susceptible to catching colds and the flu. If you have leg, shoulder, and knee problems like me - they will all get better. But don't overdo it - start slowly so that you don't cause an injury. I went overboard and decided to run a Disney 5K and ended up injuring my hip joint. It took months to heal and in the meantime, I had to alter my daily routine. So be careful and this blog is not intended to provide any medical advice; rather it is a blog of what worked for us.

Here are your steps, many are the same that I covered above in "Sandi's Story" but it never hurts to repeat good health!

Step 1 – Become vegan. Okay, this might be a tough one that will make you stop right here. But converting to a plant-based lifestyle is easier today than ever. If you want to be fully convinced read The China Study and its analysis of the cancer risk of meat. I will admit we are not 100% vegan, but close. Today's plant-based food is tasty and easy.

Look for the brand, Gardein in the frozen grocery section. But a word of warning; vegan food does not have fewer calories than lean meat, but here is the real reason why we follow a plant-based diet; it doesn't taste as good as real beef, chicken, turkey and pork. I love KFC chicken and can eat a whole bucket! Would I eat a bucket of Gardein's chicken patties? No Way! So being vegan means you'll end up eating less and reducing inflammation. Aim for high protein and high fiber choices to make you strong.

Step 2 – Start Walking. For Keith, he started walking. Being vegan and walking is how he lost the first 50 pounds. But he still had a heart attack and stroke. I think walking and being a little bit lighter saved his life. If these life-ending events had happened before he lost that first 50 pounds, I'd be a widow today. His type of stroke has an 80% death rate. He is part of the lucky 20% - or was it luck? It isn't easy walking in the Florida heat, so we eventually got treadmill desks so both of us could walk and work, Internet browse, do email, etc. at the same time. Our brand of treadmill is LifeSpan and Amazon has lots of desks designed to go up and down above a treadmill. For me, I lost my first 20 pounds this way, but we were stuck. Still overweight but no longer obese. Walking helps, but you need more.

Step 3 – Add Yoga for Strength and Brush your Teeth. Walking can be a good aerobic exercise and even build some muscles; but they are the same muscles. With all that extra weight, you have the perfect body to build strength if you're careful. I became a certified yoga instructor and added some of those poses to my daily routine. I do many of my daily yoga poses while watching TV, so not very spiritual. If you want to get started, here is your first lesson; stand on one leg while you brush your teeth. I have a Sonicare toothbrush that goes for 2 minutes with a little beep every 30 seconds. Each 30 seconds I stand on one leg, then change to the other; keeping a hand close to the counter to steady myself. Building this leg and core strength will help you later with the Warrior pose.

Step 4 – Eat good oils to reduce body fat and inflammation. We started replacing our oils and butter with the good oils; coconut, avocado, and olive oil. The other "bad 8" oils cause inflammation and increase your belly fat and make stress worse. It is hard to switch to these since food companies often label something as olive oil butter or avocado chips, but if you read the ingredients, they normally start with one of the 8 bad

oils; Soybean, Corn, Cottonseed, Canola, Rapeseed, Sunflower, Sesame and Grapeseed oil. These oils make you fat, cause inflammation, and increase the fat in your fat cells. The good oils "trick" your fat cells to not hoard the fat.

Step 5 – Get a Personal Trainer and Stand Up. This is something that I did that Keith did not. I found that the treadmill and yoga alone wasn't doing enough to get me in shape. The personal trainer set up a series of weight and strength training that I follow every day while I watch TV. I use exercise bands and 10 pound weights. Covid hit and I didn't get to go back to the trainer; but I still follow that routine she made for me. If you want to get started, here is your first exercise. Every hour stand up and sit down 12 times. My iWatch reminds me to do this every hour and by doing this (it is harder than you think) you start building other muscles that walking doesn't get for you. It also increases your metabolism.

Step 6 – Drink water. I drink 12 cups a day. If you study the body here is a simple lesson on how it works; food goes from your stomach to your intestines. While it is in your intestines; your body releases hormones that converts food to nutrients. It uses the carbs to create energy to fuel your day, protein to make you strong and it stores that extra fat in your belly where your anxious fat cells are waiting for it. This is one problem with being overweight; your body is not only waiting for that food – it is demanding it to maintain that extra weight. It not only wants that food – it needs it. So, the goal is to send that all that massive food you ate quickly through the intestines before it gets processed too much. Sure, you could take laxatives; but that will make you look old and dehydrated. It is also very dangerous. Instead flood your system with water; and some good belly fat oil like avocado, olive, and coconut to keep things lubricated and moving. If you switch to vegan, you'll be getting more fiber and things will go easier and give fat less time to get out and over to your fat cells for storage. I don't like drinking water, so I brew one bag of decaf green tea and one bag of caffeine-free orange cinnamon spice tea. I add 6 drops of stevia and then put into 6 Rubbermaid plastic 16oz containers and add water. I drink them until they are gone daily and make 6 more the next day.

Step 7 - ELF – Eat less food and Intermittent Fasting. We often go "off the plan." I did that for Christmas and cooked a lobster pie from Harry and David. This must be one of the worse things in the world you can eat other than tablespoons of butter! It has high calories and fat (saturated) – but it tastes so good. But in the end, "***nothing tastes as good as feeling good feels.***" But I wanted it and it was amazing! I only

had one serving and then threw the rest away. ELF – Eat less food. Keith was able to resist it. I didn't feel guilty, but I made up for it by eating Cheerios for dinner that night. It is VERY hard to throw away food! I was raised by two depression era parents that did the whole "children starving in China" and "finish your dinner" routine. I'm trained to save and hoard food. But now I merely bury it deep in my sandy Florida soil to slowly transform my body and backyard into a better place. I started growing Gynura procumbens or Longevity Spinach which Keith takes a few capsules a day and then drinks a cup of warm water to curb his appetite. I drink a tea from the powder in the morning, just for health reasons and control my blood sugar. I also used intermittent fasting to maintain my weight. I stopped eating after 4pm and didn't eat again until 9AM for my 30 months. Keith didn't do this but I did and it worked for me. Everyone is different and part of this 30-month plan is experimenting on what works for you. Some or all these steps might work for you.

Step 8 – Go Slow. Keith and I have been losing weight for over 3 years. Our goal was 1 pound a month. Yes, that is all we aimed for. It is obtainable, easy to reach, and works. The science of it all is; to lose 1 pound; you need to reduce your calories by 3500 a month. That works out to just a little more than 100 per day. Look at a daily food log (try to do one for a week) and see how you can reduce your intake today by 100 calories. Eat less, substitute vegan for something else, eat only one bacon cheeseburger instead of 2, drink one less soda.

Start with the French fries – get the apple slices instead. It isn't hard. Giving up my end of the day treat did it for me. We had little 100 calories low fat snack packs and I didn't eat one and stopped ordering them. It really helps not to have this stuff in the house; so, we don't order it – or do what Keith does- he has me hide it and asks for it only when he really "wants it." We put our start weight (minus 1) on the top of the calendar in the bathroom and weigh ourselves each day; looking to hit our goal. We might only hit it once, but that is enough. The next month it is that weight minus 1.

Somehow it works. Yes, our weight goes up and down with water gain/loss and whether or not we got a good poop that day, but over all we're 1 pound lighter each month. I'm currently done; which means I've achieved my goal weight, have a lean strong body and burn calories all day long. So, I eat according to the "plan" and plenty of good food during the week and get down to 135 – my target weight. On the weekend, I go crazy and snack and eat shrimp, pizza, steak or whatever bad stuff I crave and normally end up at 137 or 138. Then I spend the next week back on the plan and back to 135. I'm not dieting, I always eat a lot of food - it is merely either good food; thinking of the food as making me strong - or bad food that is the treats I crave. I found my set point is 135 pounds for someone who is 5'6" (I shrunk an inch)

and my built, but when you get to your set point, you'll know and you might like my little fun "maintenance plan." I treadmill, yoga, and weight train every day – regardless of weekend or not.

Step 9 – Eliminate Stress. This was hard; both of had high-stress jobs that meant lots of travel. When you travel do you tend to hoard food like me? I would even save and eat the peanuts and pretzels from the plane because I didn't know when I would get my next meal. Then when I did get to eat; there was an attitude of "I deserve this" because I was so far from home and lonely – or I was eating and drinking with clients and who can turn down lobster and steak, followed by chocolate mousse? There were also all the employee birthday cakes, free cookies at the hotel, and free breakfast buffet. We stopped traveling except maybe one vacation a year. It was hard, but traveling causes stress and overeating. I sold our company and started a retirement plan.

I won't get into the science; but if you experience stress, the elevated cortisol levels caused by your belly fat and stress promotes overeating and weight gain - along with belly fat storage. You are probably reading this because you are my friend and most of my friends are either retired or considering it soon. If you're already retired and experience stress from certain people or events; why are you around them or doing that? Rethink your life until you are better. If you are obese, you're very sick and in danger. Time to get you well again. Feel free to email me when you start and your monthly progress at the end of the month. I save my emails forever, so I'll give you little mile marker congratulations and promise to NEVER share your personal info like I did with poor Keith – but I will add you to my free Quarterly Newsletter.

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Step 10 – Sleep More and add Meditation to your Day. This is also hard if you're still pulling down a 9-5 job, but we faithfully meditate each day at 10am and 2pm. Since we're not very deep or spiritual folks, it might be more like a "senior nap." I do lots of yoga deep breathing during that time and often fall asleep (Keith always does.) I also sleep like a farmer; I go to bed at sundown. That means heading to bed at about 7pm and I'm fast asleep by 8pm. If I stay up late, I'll snack, so easier to go to bed. This means that I get to wake up every morning naturally at 3:30 - 4AM. No alarm clock jarring me awake! I go to the bathroom, then back to bed for some wake-up yoga in bed (quietly not to disturb Keith who sleeps from 11pm to 7AM.) Again, this might not work for you, but it is 6AM now and I've already done a 5K (3.1 miles) on the treadmill

while writing this blog and Internet surfing. I remember when it was hard to do the treadmill at this speed for more than 15 minutes. When was that? About 30 months ago....

I have a YouTube playlist of **Gardening** to help you get started growing healthy food.

Learn more – <https://www.youtube.com/sandijerome>



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Links to research

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4791373/>

https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/BMI/bmicalc.htm