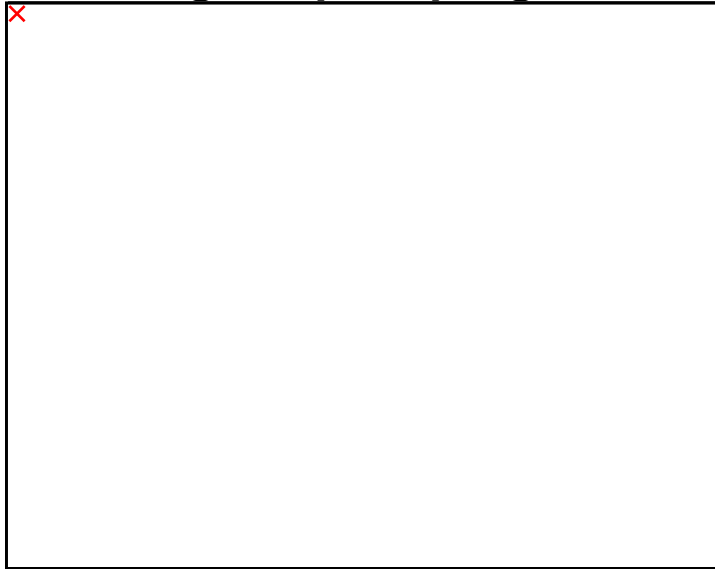


Weight loss story shows benefits of teamwork

Thomas Zimmerman, Army War College Public Affairs Office

Weight loss story shows benefits of teamwork, taking advantage of post programs



Before (left) and after (right) photos show the results from Air Force Col. Jeff Caton fitness and weight loss efforts. Working with APFRI and the fitness programs offered by MWR, he has been able to drop 16 percent body fat (from 31 percent to 15 percent) and 36 pounds in his first year. Courtesy photos.

Jan. 21, 2010 – While it's always fashionable to make a New Year's resolution to lose weight, it's important to remember that it's a marathon not a race and that there are many resources on Carlisle Barracks to help you meet your goals, just ask Air Force Col. Jeff Caton, Director, Research, Development, & Acquisition in the Department of Command Leadership and Management.

Caton has taken advantage of the program offered by the Army Physical Fitness Research Institute, Dunham Clinic, and the fitness programs offered by

MWR, and has been able to drop 16 percent body fat (from 31 percent to 15 percent) and 36 pounds in his first year.

Caton began his journey shortly after arriving at the Army War College in 2007 when he had his initial APFRI assessment.

"I realized that I don't have to approach 50 years with declining health," he said. "However, since genetics are working against me at this point, I need to put more effort into maintaining my health." In early 2009 he laid out his plans to drop weight and get in better shape, largely based on the programs advocated by APFRI. He set two goals -- to lose 40 pounds and compete in the Army 10-miler.

"I'm at what I consider the midpoint of a two-year program. I call it my glideslope to 50," he said. "In 2009, my focus was on weight loss, flexibility, and aerobics. My goals were to lose at least 40 pounds and I picked a specific fitness goal of completing the Army 10-miler. I was successful in both and had an Army 10-miler time of 1:21, not bad for a rookie." He said his blood work and blood pressure also showed significant improvements.

Caton said that starting out at APFRI helped prepare him for success.

"One of the strengths of the APFRI program is that they realize the age demographics of their target population, and present healthy recommendations appropriate for those in their 40's and 50's," he said.

The APFRI programs really help someone who is serious about making serious changes in their life according to Caton.

"By far their holistic approach to health and wellness really helps," he said. "They not only provide an assessment in key areas of fitness -- diet, body composition, strength, flexibility, endurance-- but also practical advice on how to recognize and mitigate health risks based on your personal profile."

He had advice for anyone who wanted to take control of their health and fitness.

"First, take the 'long-haul' approach to the process; and second, don't do it alone," he said. "Taking a long-term approach helped me deal with the inevitable minor tactical setbacks and concentrate on the larger trends. It also helped me develop a program that best matched my lifestyle, making it easier to stick with."

Caton said it's not just the experts who can have the most influence on the process.

"The most valuable member was my wife, Linda, who also lost over 40 pounds during the last year," he said. "She was my main 'dietary coach' and we kept each other honest on eating and exercise."

He said it's also important to remember that fitness is at times a team process.

"The Carlisle Barracks community provides awesome support if you want to get healthy," he said. "I'm very impressed by and thankful for the staffs not only at APFRI, but also at Dunham Clinic, and MWR, especially the Thorpe Gym team. Together, they provided all the tools I needed to put together a program I can stick to."

Caton said that he also found support and "teammates" among his fellow faculty members.

"There are a group of us that do individual PT at Thorpe Gym at about the same time during the week, and we provide each other informal accountability to keep with the program."

He said that plans and programs are fine, but it's really the people who helped make him achieve his success.

"All this is done with a positive attitude and true willingness to help--and it's all available for free."