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May 2010, I was assaulted by an inmate at work. I sustained a serious right shoulder injury from the assault which placed me on light duty for 1 year and 8 months. To make things worse I'm right handed. In August 2010, I had my first shoulder surgery. After this surgery, I was kept on light duty for a period of 1 year and 1 month while I tried to recover by participating in over 100 physical therapy sessions, exercising and stretching every day. The first shoulder surgery wasn't successful and the harder I tried to recover the more painful my shoulder became. I had to take medication to control the pain every day. The Doctor determined I had a 13% disability in my right shoulder. I was facing the possibility of losing my job since I must pass annual physical training (PPCT) to do my job. During my recovery time, I began feeling sorry for myself. My ability to exercise had been drastically reduced due to the right shoulder injury and needless to say I began eating foods I knew were not healthy just to make myself feel better. I gained 10 pounds! My weight gain didn't make me feel better it made me feel worse about my entire situation.

One year after the first surgery, I decided being disabled; losing my job, taking medication to control the pain the rest of my life, looking unhealthy and feeling sorry for me was not in my plans for my life. In September 2011, I took a chance with a second shoulder surgery. My Doctor said he could only promise pain reduction with the second surgery but I had my own goal in mind. I wanted to improve my 13% disability and return to my original job. After the surgery, I returned to work on light duty for another 3 months. During my recovery, I pushed myself with physical exercise and participated in another 48 physical therapy sessions. When I saw my Doctor for a follow up appointment, he was impressed. Not only did he reduce the pain with surgery and help me discontinue all pain medication, I was able to reduce my disability from 13% to 3% with physical therapy, daily exercise and stretching. My Doctor released me from light duty and said I could participate in my annual physical training. 1 year and 8 months after I had been assaulted, I passed my annual physical training in January 2012 and returned to my original job. I had a huge amount of stress lifted from my shoulders, especially my right shoulder.

Two weeks after I passed my physical training in January 2012, the Wellness Committee was signing up people for the "Biggest Loser" contest. I decided it was time to lose the weight I gained while on light duty and get back to a healthy life style. I signed up for the "Biggest Loser" with a goal in mind to lose 10 pounds. I made healthy food choices and ate fresh fruit, vegetables, lean meat, low-fat dairy and whole wheat. I started walking more and doing yoga along with my daily stretching and strength building routine. I won first place in the "Biggest Loser" contest in April 2012 by losing 26 ½ pounds. Funny, I don't feel like a big loser, I feel like a big winner.

I had my Biometric Screening done in June 2012. My results revealed from the previous year - I lost a total of 29 pounds, my BMI dropped 4.9, my blood pressure dropped from 120/70 to 90/58, and all my wellness results were in the low risk area. The only risk factor they listed on my Biometric Screening results was my age and I know I can't change my age although I feel 15 years younger than I did last year. Thank you Wellness Committee for giving me the motivation to push myself one more time to improve my overall health!

