



About this Blog

Would you accept a year of free training, nutrition counseling and life coaching—in exchange for having your "before" picture published in a magazine? Lisa took Fitness magazine up on that offer. Here, a behind-the-scenes look at her year-long effort to lose 20 pounds.



About the Author

Lisa Renwick, 37, is the subject of the 2006 FITNESS Makeover. A technical recruiter by day, she lives in New Jersey with her husband and two children, ages 1 and 3.

JUN-8

Happiness = a life coach and a trainer

I'm going from one frustrating week to another. My feet are still hurting, which throws off the rest of my body, including my knees, back, and an old chronic neck/shoulder thing.

I was feeling pretty irritable and snappy, and would have rather stayed buried under my covers, but I dragged myself out to see Lois Barth, my life coach. Thank goodness for her intuitiveness; she seemed to sense my emotional roller coaster from the moment I stepped into her office. Instead of our usual session, she shook things up a bit to accommodate my state of mind.

She asked me to close my eyes and begin taking deep breaths. To try to get me to relax and get in touch with my feelings, she asked a series of questions, like, "what does the part of you that's upset need right now?" I answered, "to not feel so overwhelmed," and out of nowhere tears just started streaming down my face uncontrollably. I was slightly embarrassed, but I think I was secretly thankful for the opportunity. (A good cry always makes me feel better). After about 20 minutes, we chatted about some things that were going on in my life, and then she offered to massage my feet. (Lois is also a massage therapist.) Of course, I was thrilled! I left her office feeling both emotionally and physically relaxed. Sometimes you just need to slow down and take care of yourself, rather than rushing around to fulfill all your commitments.

Two days went by and my mood subsided, but I was still feeling quite down and depressed about my foot problems. I went to the gym to do my usual pre-session warm up, working a bit harder to vent my built-up frustrations, which in the end only made my feet hurt more. Leslie, my trainer, recognized that I was uncomfortable and unhappy and, in her gracious and easygoing manner, she adjusted our usual routine, coming up with clever alternatives to accommodate my aches and pains. She sat me on the floor, got me an ice pack, and had me doing bicep curls and a series of sit-ups while the ice pack stayed in place on my feet—killing two birds with one stone and ultimately, relieving some of my stress. A true healer indeed. It felt so much better to think up a way to work around my pain rather than throw my hands in the air and give up altogether.

Thanks “Team Lisa” for the support you provide to me in ALL ways.

MAY-25

Living la vida loca

I thought I’d describe a typical week in my life. Most of the time, it’s pretty hectic, and this week was no exception.

Mon: This is usually my training day, but today was my photo shoot for FITNESS instead. I felt so glamorous! Even though this was the third in a series of photo shoots to record my progress in the magazine, it was the first time I got to model real clothes—black pants and a button down top—instead of *just* a bathing suit. I also got my hair and make up done. The whole experience was actually a lot of fun despite having to wait around for the right bathing suit to arrive—via cab—because they originally sent the wrong one to the studio. I looked so great after the shoot that I felt like I should have been going out on the town, but sadly I work late on Mondays to make up for the time I miss because of all my FITNESS stuff. At least my husband thought I looked glam when I got home.

Tues: I’m supposed to meet with my trainer, Leslie, today to make up for missing yesterday’s session. So, I went to the gym at 11am and began my 10-minute warm up as usual. 10 minutes passed and there was no sign of Leslie. No biggie, I figured she was probably just running late. So I go for another 5 minutes, and I still don’t see her, which is unusual. I decide to go for another 5, when the light bulb finally goes off in my head: We changed the time to 2:45! Ugh. Oh well, another example of “life happens” right? No need to stress. Instead I chose to look at the glass as half full...at least I got 20 minutes of cardio in.

After work every other tuesday, I get together with my friends play Mah Jongg. I must admit, I don’t love the game as much as my friend Adria (See A, you got your name in my blog!). For me, it’s the “girl time” that I love.

Wed: This is when I meet with my life coach, Lois, every other week for an hour or so. I enjoy it—it's very serene and therapeutic, and allows me to do a lot of self-reflection (and self-improvement). We could probably talk for hours, but I typically meet with her during my lunch break, so after our session, it's back to the grind. She usually gives me "homework," like reading a chapter each week from a book on empowerment. Finding the time to complete these assignments can be a challenge, but I've been able to fit them in by using my train ride home as productive time rather than for aimless gazing out the window.

My hubby and I alternate "kid duty" nights to give each other a break throughout the week. When the kids are in bed, Wednesday night is also my time to just chill out and watch my favorite show, *Lost*.

Thurs: Today is my monthly meeting with Cindy, my nutritionist. Each meeting typically consists of reviewing what I ate for the month, making some changes, and taking my weight and measurements. So far it has all been positive statistics (knock on wood). Right now she's helping me figure out how to avoid snacking on the kids' leftovers when I let myself get too hungry...She says it's like sharing a dresser with your husband: Just because his underwear is in there doesn't mean you wear it, right!?! The same goes for the kids' food in the cupboard.

Friday: Meet with my trainer, Leslie—a nice way to start the weekend. My husband and I typically stay in on Friday nights. Sometimes we watch a movie or just hit the sack by 9pm because we're exhausted.

Saturday/Sunday: I try to get to the gym at least once over the weekend to do cardio. But due to my crazy schedule during the week, I also have to spend my weekends running lots of errands, grocery shopping, doing laundry etc. Plus, I am undergoing treatment for my neuromas (pinched nerves in my feet)—every Saturday I go to the chiropractor for laser treatments.

Any leftover time I have is spent with my husband and kids...visiting family and friends, going to the park or hiking, or going out to breakfast. There's not too much downtime in my life; a nap or watching a movie is something I crave these days! Also, on the recommendation of my life coach, my husband and I have been making a date night at least 1-2x per month so we can spend quality alone time with together and enjoy each other's company without the kids around, which has been really nice.

That's it! Monday it starts all over again!

APR-27

A case of mistaken cookie identity

Last weekend, I was away with family celebrating my father in laws bday...so of course, there were lots of treats and cake all around me. Needless to say, I decided that I wasn't going to eat cake and that I would make a VERY conscious effort not to snack on cookies, chips and candy. Ah, to no avail. I saw this package of cookies that were labeled fat free oatmeal raisin . . . well, I figured that can't be so bad, oats (fiber), raisins . . . and fat free . . . so I dug in and ate a couple . . . boy did they taste good. I even felt that I tasted chocolate chips and was all confused. Come to find out, they were home made cookies...not AT ALL fat free but were put in this container, which later by the way, some one had crossed off. I laughed about this, but started feeling badly that I had eaten them and ended up feeling guilty.

My life coach told me: "Chocolate isn't fattening, self hatred is". What a great expression to live by. I have to remember that it is okay to indulge every now and again, as long as you can put it into perspective and not beat yourself up about it. Note to self: It IS okay to give into temptation and not feel guilty about it!!