

"How I Gained and Lost 64 Pounds"

By Sandra Wilson



When I was a teen, I hated sports, gym class was torture and you couldn't catch me doing anything physical except maybe walking up and down the street with my girlfriends.

I had dreams of being a model in those days after attending modeling school. However, I found myself pregnant and married at the ripe age of 19.

Six weeks after my first was born, I was expecting my second! I went from 135 to 199 pounds. I gave up on the idea of ever modeling again. My hips felt so big that I actually ran in my backyard until I could drop enough weight to run in public.

After much hard work and many miles, I got back down to my normal weight. I kept running until I moved to the hills of southwestern Virginia. There, a friend of mine who was over 50 at the time, introduced me to triathlons.

I thought that if she could compete at her age, I should be able to do it as well. After competing in a couple of events, I started to have problems. My hair started falling out, my joints ached and I was in a great deal of pain. I couldn't even get out of bed. I was eventually diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis. I was only 38 years old. How could this happen to me?

The doctor assured me that he could help me. Two shots of steroids in my hips and prescription drugs and I should feel much better. My first reaction was that I didn't want to take drugs of any sort. My doctor bluntly asked, "Do you want to just exist and be miserable without the medication or do you want to have some quality of life?" I wanted quality! I wanted to get back on my bike. I wanted to be active!



Sandra Wilson celebrating a long ride.
Photo: Eddie Kiplinger, ME Photography

Now, over 12 years later and I am still going strong. I continue to take medication twice a day. I now ride anywhere from 35 to 60 miles at a time. My joints are strong and generally pain free. It has increased my energy level to allow me to work as a teacher and keep up with my grandchildren. I am often mistaken for their mother and I must admit it is a great boost to my confidence. I even returned to modeling at 46 and continue to do so at 52!

Life is too short to let the years control you...there is too much yet to accomplish. With a healthy lifestyle, you no longer have to sit on the sidelines. You can get back in the game regardless of your age!