

*What I Learned  
from Having to*  
**LOSE WEIGHT**  
*for My Mission*

*As I focused on my physical health,  
I discovered some surprising things.*

By Jillian Pierson

I had just finished breakfast when my stake president called to tell me that my mission application had been denied. My heart sank as he told me why—I needed to lose a certain amount of weight before I would be able to serve. Missionaries have weight guidelines because of the physical endurance required of daily missionary service.

As he explained to me what I would need to do in order to resubmit my papers, the only thing I wanted to do was climb into my bed and hide.

After the shock wore off, I called my dad at work and explained what had happened. He paused and then asked, “Well, what are you going to do?” Would I give up? Let go of my dream to serve a mission? No.

“I’m going to go for it,” I replied. “I’m going to try to lose the weight.”

**STEADY PROGRESS—  
AND SURPRISES**

Within a week, I had a solid plan of action. I learned as much as I could about nutrition and exercise and, after setting some goals, I was ready to get started. I felt so much love and support from my Heavenly Father. I knew that I was doing the right thing and that He would help me every step of the way.

As I worked hard every day, I began to see progress! It was exciting to notice



the physical effects of diet and exercise, but what surprised me most was the spiritual health I was gaining. I became more confident and self-aware as I developed into the person Heavenly Father wanted me to be.

I realized that as my spiritual health increased, it actually became easier for me to improve my physical health. The sacrament was so important in helping me stay focused on my goals. It became a sacred time of reflection for me as I thought about my Savior and how much He had helped me on this journey. I knew that He would stay by my side no matter what.

Prayer also made a big difference. There were so many times when I was running on the treadmill and would just start crying because I was so tired and my lungs hurt and I just wanted to go on a mission. I would say a prayer because I knew that someone in the mission field needed me, and I knew that I needed help to get there. After every workout, I thanked Heavenly Father for giving me the strength to go on.

## BODY AND SPIRIT

The gospel teaches us that our bodies and our spirits are one, but until this experience, I had never thought about how directly the health of my body could affect the health of my spirit. As I thought about my body as a temple, this connection between body and spirit began to make more sense. I knew that one reason we keep the temple so clean and beautiful is because it helps the Spirit to be there. So it makes sense that as I began to eat healthy and exercise more, I began to feel the Spirit even more.

I also noticed that I felt more energized and more willing to talk to and serve the people around me. I could feel the Spirit guide me as I put my trust in the Lord, and I discovered that I could turn to Him for help with any trial or hardship I might face.

## MOVING FORWARD

After months of hard work, I finally received my mission call! I was so excited I could hardly wait. And when I entered the Missionary Training Center, I felt prepared both physically *and* spiritually.

I feel so blessed to have had the opportunity to learn how to take care of both my body and my spirit. Working toward a meaningful goal gave me the motivation I needed to become a better version of myself. I learned that if I rely on the Lord as I try to accomplish my goals, He will help me every step of the way. **NE**

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*



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