



A few months ago, I implemented a weight loss contest called "EarthFIT's Fat-to-Fit Battle". I created this contest not only to help people lose weight, but also to push them past their mental constraints. Simply put, I wanted to get people on the path toward "fitness freedom". Newton's first law of motion states that an object at rest stays at rest and an object in motion stays in motion. At rest, a typical day involves eating, watching television and sitting in front of the computer. The Fat-to-Fit Battle is the vehicle to get people in motion by combating physically inactive lifestyles and motivating people into a consistent, quality fitness regimen.

I was pleasantly surprised by the variety of people who signed up for the contest. Contestants range from a 23-year-old professional dancer to retirees in their sixties. All have experienced physical and mental challenges throughout the competition, many discovering and overcoming barriers they didn't even know they had. In addition to the physical demands of each session, contestants must follow a program where they track calories and are weighing in on a weekly basis - a scientifically proven technique for successful long-term weight loss.

Among some of the physical challenges my contestants face are pre-existing aches, pains and a general lack of energy. Chronic or pre-existing pain can sometimes be a setback because they prevent participants from utilizing their full body and burning the maximum amount of calories in a training session. I am very proud of so many of the contestants who 'battle' through these conditions (under close watch) and continuously strive toward optimal health.

One of the highlights of leading a contest like this is being able to educate people on the TRUTH about fitness. It's amazing how deceptive marketing and advertising of fad diets and programs can brainwash people into truly believing that real fitness can come in the form of a pill or happen overnight with little to no effort. Although at EarthFIT we can achieve weight and fat loss at a rapid pace, there is no magic potion or "super pill" – only real fitness solutions that permanently change metabolisms. Sure people can change their image on the outside pretty quickly by doing a cleanse or taking a pill, but what they are doing is losing muscle mass, which

is the fundamental driver of metabolism. Understanding this can be one of the first hurdles people must overcome in the journey toward fitness freedom.

One of my participants, Elsie Mufuka, a professional dancer and owner of Mufuka Works in Beaufort, has changed her body immensely. Though she hasn't lost a large amount of weight, she's lost fat and gained a lot of muscle. In fact, she lost 10.4lbs and dropped 5 dress sizes in just seven weeks! When she steps on the scale it looks like only 10lbs were shed, but in reality she gained 2 lbs of muscle and burned 13lbs of fat – hence the rapid change in dress size. And to all the ladies out there, no, she doesn't look bulky! The added muscle will now allow Elsie to burn more calories *at rest* - eating, watching television and sitting in front the computer - throughout the day. Now who doesn't want that?

Every contestant has shown that they can push through the physical and mental trials and for that, I'm truly proud. I feel sure that they now have the tools to navigate through false promises and programs and continue to invest in themselves in effective and healthy ways. They now have a true understanding of what it takes to be fit and stay it... fitness freedom.