

My Fitness Journey

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One month into my doctoral program, I was stressed out, anxious, not sleeping well, and gaining weight. I expressed these concerns to my daughter, who is a professional bodybuilder and fitness coach; she offered to help me get healthy and fit while earning my doctorate from Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions in Provo, Utah. Over the next two years, I lost 35 pounds and 12 inches of fat from my belly and became more muscular than ever before! I even decided to participate in my first bodybuilding show, “Debut at 62,” on November 19th in Providence, Rhode Island.

I was honored to be the student commencement speaker and recipient of the Student Service Award for my contributions to the NP profession—but what I’m most proud of is adopting a healthy and fit lifestyle in the midst of the most stressful two years of my life. In fact, I believe learning to cope with extreme stress helped me perform more effectively in my doctoral program. I had more energy and concentration, better sleep, and very few physical complaints.

Certainly, I realize that it can be difficult for us to walk our talk and be role models for our patients. When faced with extreme stress we often “crash and burn.” We gain weight, get depressed, sleep poorly, stop having sex, drink excessively, you name it! We know what we *should* do but lack the energy, time, and motivation to implement and maintain healthy habits. In order to effectively deal with the stress in our lives, we must practice self-care. This approach may seem counter-intuitive, as our natural reaction to stress is usually to abandon healthy habits and resort to eating junk food, drinking alcohol, watching TV, and not exercising. It requires conscious effort, development of new habits (and breaking of old ones!), practice, consistency, and a lot of support to cope with stress in a positive way. Mind control, meditation, and paced breathing are other cognitive-based techniques that can be used to help combat the negative effects of stress and anxiety.



In April 2014 (left), the author weighed 170 lb and was stressed. By April 2016 (right), she was down to 135 lb and feeling better overall.

As a result of my experience and transformation, my daughter and I decided to team up to help other NPs and PAs make positive changes in their lives. Under the names Coach Kat and Doctor Mimi, we developed The Secor Initiative—an intensive, one-year, online program for NPs or PAs who are seriously committed to becoming healthy, happy, and fit. Upon completion of the program, participants achieve the esteemed title of “Top NP” or “Top PA,” enabling them to be role models for their peers and patients.

The Secor Initiative helps NPs and PAs gain insight into all the sources of stress in their lives and then go on to learn how to cope with these stressors. Our program includes five (10-week) courses, with topics such as nutrition, exercise, money/wealth, stress management, and advanced women’s health; for more information, visit www.MimiSecor.com and click on The Secor Initiative or check out our Facebook page, Coach Kat and Dr. Mimi.

Let’s step up to the plate and become healthy (and happy) role models for our patients.

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