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Role model: Terra Pernel, who wants to lose 140 pounds, says she is starting to exercise more, thanks to Bob Frick.

By Jay LaPrete, for USA TODAY

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Restaurateur on right fitness path after bypass

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By Nanci Hellmich, USA TODAY

Bob Frick, 60, of Columbus, Ohio, loves to cook, and he loves to eat.

His passion for food has served him well: In 1988, he and his wife, Corrine, opened a family restaurant called BC Roosters, which has since grown into a popular chain.

But he has paid a high price for his love affair with food: In 1988, he was overweight and had a heart attack, and in 1999 he was obese and had



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[Enlarge](#) By Jay LaPrete for USA TODAY

Tall order: Bob Frick, whose restaurants serve chicken wings, fries, sandwiches, pizza and salads, got serious about his health after triple bypass surgery. He lost 99 pounds by overhauling his diet and exercising more.

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triple bypass surgery. "It took the triple bypass to open my eyes and make me realize I had to change my lifestyle or die."

'BEFORE' PHOTO: [Meal plan and exercise routine that brought him down to size](#)

Since then, Frick has changed the ways he cooks and eats and has lost almost 100 pounds.

His story was selected by a panel of experts to be featured in the fifth annual USA TODAY Weight-Loss Challenge in the newspaper and at dietchallenge.usatoday.com. This year's challenge, which runs every Monday through mid-May, focuses on weight-loss champions who have inspired others to lose.

VIDEO: [Dietitian Edith Hogan tells you how to track the calories you drink](#)

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"The pathetic thing about it is that I have a bachelor's degree and master's degree in health education," he says. "It's so bad that someone who is so aware of health is destroying himself."

After the triple bypass, Frick worked for months to reformulate his recipes. "I don't eat or use butter or cream anymore. I use olive oil. I eat a kind of Mediterranean diet. I cook Greek recipes, Hungarian, Cajun. I make them low-fat and use tons of spices. I eat this way at home."

FRICK'S RECIPE: [Healthy creamy chicken curry](#)

He doesn't serve any of these recipes in his restaurants, but he's working on some heart- healthier items for them as well.

Frick and his wife often take cruises, but even the ever-present buffets don't throw him off course. "I am able to be consistent with my weight by making healthful choices and asking how things are prepared and the ingredients used in the preparation."

He is convinced that people have to be vigilant both at home and when dining out. "People have to educate themselves on

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food and know exactly what they are eating."

Frick has motivated Terra Pernell, 42, of Dayton, Ohio, to start losing weight. Terra's husband, Derrick, is a manager at one of Frick's restaurants. He has counseled her on what to eat and how to exercise.

"Bob sent me a heart monitor so I can make sure I am working at my right heart rate. He gave me the tools and the support to get me started," she says.

"I am at the beginning of my journey. It's not easy, but I have a plan I can live with."

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Bob Frick by the numbers

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A look at what he's lost, how he gained and whom he's helped:

Age: 60

Hometown: Columbus, Ohio

Occupation: Founded and owns numerous BC Roosters, a restaurant chain.

How he gained:

"Almost everything I ate was fried. I ate a lot of lunch meat. I ate tons of meat. I like to cook and bake. I used tons of butter for my cookies and cakes."

Key to loss:

"I took all my personal recipes, of which I have 150, and changed them to heart-healthy. I concentrated on eliminating saturated fat in my diet and substituted flavor in using a variety of spices, olive oil. I switched to fruits and vegetables, seafood, chicken (without skin), pastas with red sauces, soups, salads with my own homemade dressing."

Exercise routine

"I walk on the treadmill for 45 minutes at about 4 mph every single day. I lift weights twice a week. I exercise the major



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Family photo

muscle groups."

Bob Frick's "before" photo -- before he lost 99 pounds.

Height: 5-11	Pounds
Weight in August 1999	287
Current weight	188
Loss	99

Goal: 185

Eating plan:

Breakfast: Fresh fruit salad with fat-free cottage cheese sprinkled with All-Bran cereal, decaffeinated coffee

Midmorning snack: Homemade banana-nut bread

Lunch: Egg-white omelets, steamed vegetables, bowl of homemade soup

Afternoon snack: Apple or other seasonal fresh fruit and a handful of nuts

Dinner: Creamy chicken curry with rice, salad with homemade dressing, and steamed vegetables

Late snack: Angel food cake with fresh berries

Providing inspiration

Bob Frick has motivated Terra Pernell, 42, of Dayton, the wife of a colleague, to start losing weight. Recently, the Fricks treated the Pernells to a 10-day cruise.

Says Terra: "We started talking about lifestyle issues. Bob shared with me that he had his first heart attack when he was in his 40s. That got my attention. My family has a history of high blood pressure, diabetes."

At 5-foot-3, Terra weighs 286 pounds and wants to lose 140. "I have half of my body weight to lose," she says. "On the cruise, Bob and his wife worked out every day. I worked out with them, and I felt better. I actually lost weight (10 pounds) on the cruise. Who does that?"

"We ate dinner together every day. And we talked about changes we could make," she says. "Bob gave us the recipe book that he has put together. That's the guide we're using. My husband does the cooking, and he has changed the way we cook. We are eating more vegetables, using more olive oil."

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