

Member in Motion: Thor Slaughter

By Elissa Gavette

Born and raised in Eugene, Thor grew up idolizing the superheroes he saw in comic books and cartoons. With a name like Thor Slaughter, he could have easily fit into the Marvel universe but instead of being a source of superpowers, his name was a source of insecurity. “My legal name is Thor Slaughter but for most of my life, I didn’t feel like a Thor Slaughter. I felt more like the blob.”

With two parents working 60+ hours a week to provide for their kids, there weren’t a lot of home cooked meals growing up. “My mom is Italian and the way they show love is through lots of food, so when she cooked it was really special and really awesome. But that wasn’t often and the other meals would be fast food,” he says, “so when I grew up and went out on my own, the bad habits were already there.”

By the time Thor was 21, the number on the scale had hit its peak. “On a good day, I was 337 and on a bad day, I could be 345.” He was getting serious about bartending at Party Downtown but working 40 hours a week was taking a serious toll on his body. Long nights behind the bar, working eight hours at a time on his feet, leaving with a sore back -- the last thing he wanted to do was go home and cook a healthy meal. “I was just living and hanging out. All everyone wanted to do was sit on their porch and drink PBR, and I just had this moment of clarity.”

If Thor was going to be serious about pursuing bartending, the life he was living wasn’t sustainable. “It made me reevaluate how I treat my body and how I treat myself.” He had tried all the fad diets in the past -- “21 secrets to lose weight tomorrow,” or “This is the move that will turn you from flab to fit” -- but it always failed. “I wasn’t going all in,” he explains, “I wasn’t giving 110%, instead I was looking for the easy way.”

Thor realized he needed to completely change the way he thought about exercise and fitness. Instead of shaming himself into working out, which is how a lot of people end up at the gym after a Netflix binge complete with ice cream, he wanted it to be a positive experience. “I didn’t want to be sad or depressed about my weight, I wanted to be happy about the work I was doing and excited to be doing it. It seems like a simple concept now, but it was a total change.”

Insecure about being seen working out, Thor started out on a set of weights in his parent’s backyard before graduating to a 24 hour gym where he worked out in the dead of the night. “I hated being around others because I didn’t know what I was doing and I felt like I didn’t belong there. I looked like I didn’t belong there.”

Working out in the abandoned weight room gave Thor the freedom and comfort to find his way, but it brought unique challenges too. There was no one to ask questions, no one to spot him when lifting. “I would read the descriptions on every machines. I had to Google them to

find out what they did. It was so much trial and error. I was always reading about the proper ways to do things and trying to find the safest ways possible to avoid injuries.”

After six months of slowly building his confidence and starting to see results, Thor eventually joined the DAC. “A lot of people, especially customers, are surprised to hear that I go to the DAC and they ask why. I always say, because I take it seriously. It’s the nicest facility in town. Paying more is me investing in myself and my future.”

With more options available at the DAC, Thor expanded his routine to things he never imagined would be possible. He bought his first pair of running shoes and hit the indoor track. “I used to run at night because when people saw me running they would laugh at me. Now when I run around the block a couple times, people get out of the way and apologize. It’s weird. It’s a totally different experience.”

It’s been two years and 100 pounds since Thor decided to get serious about his health. You can find him at the DAC six days a week for an hour and a half before heading down the street to work. Cooking right, prepping for the gym and then of course actually doing the workout takes most of Thor’s free time, but for him the sacrifice is worth it. “You can regret that 45 minutes you spent watching TV, but I’ve never regretted time I spent at the gym. I will never say, I really regret those six miles I ran.”

Thor continues his weight loss journey with the mind-set that there is no “end goal,” only next goals. With a solid foundation of the fitness fundamentals, weight equipment and workouts, the next step is learning the science of diet and nutrition. If all goes well, Thor has even entertained the idea of entering body building shows. “It’s a strange world, but it would mean something to say I was once 340 pounds but I did the diet, I did the exercise and now I’m on this stage. It would be full circle.”

Whether he makes it to the stage or not, it’s clear that Thor will continue to push himself further, giving 110% of himself to whatever he is doing. “People make millions of dollars trying to convince you that there is something out there to make it easy -- whatever you want to do, they can make it easy. But I finally realized there is no secret. There is no easy path. You get to start whenever you want and end whenever you want. It’s about committing to yourself. You don’t need secrets, you need time and work.”