

# "Martial Arts Helped Me Reshape My Body"



Kimmarie before



Kimmarie after.

**Cheese-aholic Kimmarie Barrett changed her fat-filled diet, joined tae kwon do with her daughter, and finally met her weight and fitness goals.**

*By Charlotte Latvala*

## "I Did It!"

**Name:** Kimmarie Barrett

**Age:** 37

**Height:** 5'5"

**Her Weight Before:** 198

**Her Weight After:** 136

**Pounds Lost:** 62

**At Current Weight:** 12 months

For Kimmarie Barrett, inspiration to start exercising came from an unusual source: her 9-year-old daughter. "She was taking tae kwon do classes and I decided to join her," says the systems administrator from Mims, Florida. "I thought, We'll spend time together and I'll [lose weight](#)," she says. But it took a few years for the scale to budge. "I had to commit to working out more consistently and change my fatty diet to see results."

## Cheese Cravings, Weight Gains

Cheese-aholic Kimmarie weighed about 160 through her 20s. "I loved anything with melted cheese -- pizza, burritos, calzones," she says. "I tried low-carb dieting so I could still eat cheese, but it didn't work." By her early 30s, she was up to 198. "The amount of [exercise](#) I was doing wasn't enough to control my weight, and my blood pressure was high," she says. "My doctor prescribed medication. That woke me up; I felt way too young to be taking pills and worrying about having a stroke."

## The 25% Rule

First, she eliminated foods that got more than 25 percent of their calories from fat. Fried food, cheese, and chips were out; grilled chicken, fish, and yogurt were in. Then she increased her tae kwon do classes to three a week and added daily [yoga](#) and [walking](#). The first month, she lost 10 pounds. Soon, Kimmarie replaced walking with [running](#). Within six months, she had lost 62 pounds and was off blood-pressure drugs. Now Kim is a black belt, tae kwon do instructor, and owner of a martial arts studio. "I posted before and after photos of myself to show my students what you can accomplish if you try."

**The Diet:** Breakfast is a rice cake with reduced-fat peanut butter and honey. Lunch: plain tuna, whole-grain crackers, and a green vegetable. Dinner: chicken or fish and a salad. Snacks: fruit, grape tomatoes, and trail-mix bars.

**The Workout:** Kimmarie does two hours of tae kwon do four times a week and runs three and a half miles three days a week. She also does 30 to 60 minutes of [yoga](#) each day.

**Biggest Temptation:** Cheesy Mexican food. "When I need a fix, I'll order a lower-fat alternative like fajitas and dip my chips in salsa instead of guacamole."

**What She Couldn't Wait to Wear:** Flat-front pants. "I used to wear pleats or elastic-waist pants to give my [belly](#) room. Now I look great in snug-fitting styles."