

SCOTT SEGAL: a new body, a new life

by Elizabeth Eisenstadt-Evans

Imagine looking at your old driver's license and not recognizing yourself. "I don't even remember that person," says Richboro, PA, resident Scott Segal, a forty-year-old Internet ticket brokerage manager. Segal experiences that kind of disorientation when he looks at pictures taken more than three years ago—but it's a happy kind of vertigo.

Three years ago, as chronicled in the January/February '06 edition of PhillyFIT, Scott weighed 512 pounds. Seven years before that, Segal had "won" a WMMR contest as the "fattest Philadelphian," weighing in at 497 pounds. Now the 6' 2" Scott weighs 228 pounds (the weight he has put back on is muscle), and his percentage of body fat has gone from 44 to 23 percent. His resting heart rate is in the upper 40's-low 50's, that of a runner or athlete.

What motivated him to shed 310 pounds and his old life? In 2003, he failed a cardiac stress test, a real wake-up call to a man in his prime. Scott also had diabetes and sleep apnea. When he began to see Yardley chiropractor Dr. Richard Berkowitz, Scott also had degenerative joint disease, says the doctor, who says he was treating him for muscular and skeletal ailments caused by years of being overweight. But it was a practical event that motivated him to change—not being able to buy a car he wanted. "It wasn't what I could afford, it was what I could fit into," says Scott.

Enough was enough.

His old ways were replaced by a new regimen. While losing weight on the Herbalife diet, Scott also began to work out five days a week at LA Fitness with trainer Keri Kiefer. "I hadn't been in a gym for 16-17 years" says Scott, who had battled weight gain and loss his entire life. "Initially our goal was to drop his weight so that he felt more comfortable in his own skin," says Keri. With that in mind, Scott did lots of repetitions at a lighter weight, with a focus on cardiovascular work.

As he lost weight and wanted to be more effective at burning fat, Scott began to work out with heavier weights. He also incorporated kickboxing and swimming into his workouts. "Our regimen changes quite often. It has to in order to stick with our goals," says Keri. "If you stick to the same regimen, your body will get used to it, and not notice it anymore."

One effect of his huge weight loss was an unsightly amount of loose skin and fat. Wanting to look as fabulous as he was beginning to feel, Scott went to see Dr. Robert Skalicky, a board certified plastic and reconstructive surgeon. Dr. Skalicky specializes in all aspects of facial, breast, and body contouring surgery. He has seen a definite rise in the number of weight loss patients in his practice. "Because of the variety of diet programs, exercise regimens, and surgical weight loss procedures performed today, body and facial contouring surgeries have risen dramatically in my practice" said Dr. Skalicky.

Scott was evaluated by Dr. Skalicky at Bucks County Plastic Surgery Center. A multi-stage surgical plan was devised. The first stage involved a procedure called abdominoplasty, better known as "tummy tuck." This procedure was performed to remove the excess hanging skin on Scott's lower abdomen and sides. Stages two and three involved skin removal from other regions of Scott's body including his chest, back, thighs, and arms.

"Weight loss patients have a skin covering that is equivalent to wearing oversized clothing on all aspects of their body. My job is to lift, tighten,



and tailor the skin covering to fit the patients new frame" explains Dr. Skalicky. Scott's surgeries were performed at The Aesthetic Institute at DSI Bucks County hospital in Bensalem, PA, where Dr. Skalicky serves as Medical Director. (The Aesthetic Institute was developed as a multi-specialty plastic surgery hospital for all aspects of face, breast, and body contouring procedures.) "It was designed to provide patients with the highest level of plastic surgery care in a 5 star "hotel-like" setting, the first hospital of this type in the country" said Dr. Skalicky.

Scott spent several days at the Institute during his first stage of recovery, where, Dr. Skalicky said, the relaxed and nurturing atmosphere is beneficial as patients start on the road to a new life. In all, he has had 75 inches and 35 pounds of skin and fat removed. Over the summer Scott has recovered from the second surgery. This fall, he is returning to work out with Keri, this time with the goal of doing some serious bodybuilding. Scott is no longer a borderline diabetic. His episodes of sleep apnea are past. Asked if he was startled by the transformation, Dr. Berkowitz said: "I was extremely surprised. The dedication it takes to go from a sedentary to a rigorous routine, without a gastric bypass is very rare."

As challenging as it is to lose such large amounts of weight, both Dr. Berkowitz and Scott are saying that changing one's diet and exercise habits has the potential to be a much longer-lasting lifestyle change than a bypass alone. "We are very proud of him," said Dr. Berkowitz, who says he says Scott only once or twice a month now.

Scott is saving money to buy his own home and dating again with the goal (listen up, all you Bucks County ladies) of finding a marriage partner in the next few years. And, oh, that car? He's driving a Buick Ranier SUV. Months after he made the choice to find the new Scott, he had slimmed down enough to fit into it.

For Scott Segal, life is now about making choices—to be healthy, strong and in charge—instead of having them made, as they once were, for him.



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