

WELLNESS Champion

Matthew Baker

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Client Services



We are excited to highlight Matt Baker as this month's nominee for Wellness Champion! Matt has been with ARUP since 2008, and currently works as a Group Manager in Client Services. Matt loves all things outdoors—hiking, camping, snowboarding, and traveling—and is also an avid sports fan (go Cougars!). In a former life, he was a white water river guide!

At the beginning of 2020, Matt was struggling with his health. His A1c levels were nearing the point of diabetes and needing medication. His stress

levels were also at an all-time high, he wasn't sleeping well or being active, and as a result, his weight was the most it had been in over a decade. When the pandemic hit, all of life's challenges, health included, felt magnified.

With much of life feeling out of his control, Matt decided to reach out to a Wellness Coach, Raven, to help him focus on just one or two small things he could control and start improving. Matt's initial focuses were movement and soda consumption. In the last year, Matt has experienced a positive domino effect that the initial changes in these two areas started, resulting in significantly improved A1c levels, dropping six pant sizes, and losing over 60 pounds!

Both the Wellness Center and the Family Health Clinic were integral to helping Matt get started with his health changes. In his own words, Matt shares, "Raven has been the very best for me. When he started suggesting little things to break my bad habits, I really thought he was crazy. [However], Raven provided the encouragement and support I needed to help me introduce change gradually and to improve my standard of living. I never would have



dreamed I could have made the changes I have, but Raven provides weekly hope and a friendship that I'll forever appreciate." In addition to wellness coaching, Matt found great support in his provider, Darrin. He appreciated Darrin's compassionate realness in discussing various treatment options, which really helped Matt to understand the severity of his situation and provided needed motivation to change.

Matt's wife has also been an important part of his change process. She has always enjoyed exercise so she has provided integral support, and they have been able to encourage each other and set goals together.

One year later, Matt's daily and weekly routines look very different, in great ways! He now chooses to exercise at least five days each week. He has a weekly goal to run at least 10 miles, and has stayed consistent for nearly a year (including vacations)! He also chose to give up soda completely. Those who know him know this was a

monumental decision; he has not had a drop since March 15, 2020! Matt and his wife choose to eat out primarily on weekends, and during the week they like to meal plan, meal prep, and shop together. Being more invested in the food management process has been an important aspect to improving his eating choices. Hiking and playing with his kids, as well as jogging with their new puppy are other fun ways he likes to exercise.

When Matt learned that he had been nominated to receive this spotlight, he shared some insightful words of advice when making a lifestyle change:

“1. Have a reason or two for change. My “whys” were diabetes and control over something when things were so out of control!

2. Find a health buddy. Go on this journey with someone who can push you and to whom you can be accountable.

3. Get a Wellness Center coach! I felt lost regarding where to start, but Raven really helped me identify a clear, attainable path.”

**Keep up the
great progress,
Matt!**

