

reZOOM Atlanta

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Mettle to the Pedal

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ReZoom Contributor



One way Chris Andrus keeps in shape is by regularly competing in triathlons.

"Today, I ride 100 miles without even thinking about it," says Atlantan Chris Andrus about hopping on his bike and taking a not-so-leisurely spin. But that certainly wasn't the case eight years ago, when he smoked too much, drank too much and weighed 100 pounds more than he does now.

"Then one day I was at a family reunion, and I saw one of my favorite uncles," Andrus says. "He had basically eaten and drunken himself into a wheelchair by age 60. It was like seeing the ghost of Christmas future." At that exact moment Andrus

dedicated himself to lose weight, live a healthier and fitter lifestyle and to ride in a century (100-mile) bike ride before his fortieth birthday.

Andrus reached his goal seven months ahead of schedule. Unfortunately, by the time he turned 40, he had attended his favorite uncle's funeral.

A former information technologist for Arthur Andersen, Andrus now works full-time as a coach and trainer, helping clients young and old, pro and novice, achieve their own athletic goals -- specifically, for cycling events, triathlons and other fitness competitions. He competes in two or three major events himself each year, such as the notoriously grueling Ironman (a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike, and 26.2-mile run). He enters four or five other events just for fun or because they're good tune-ups for the more serious races.

Andrus reshaped his body and his life by cycling the weight off. He had already been riding despite his 285-pound frame but just kept pedaling longer and longer distances. "Plus, I stopped drinking," he says.

"I measure everything I do now," Andrus admits. "I'm meticulous about keeping a food and exercise log." His food journal includes things like fish and fruit instead of the potatoes, rice and the red meat he once favored.

I was traveling a lot for Arthur Andersen when I first started, and it was hard," Andrus says. "We'd go to Morton's and everyone else would be having these big 16- to 30-ounce slabs of meat, and I'd be grilling the waiter about how the fish was prepared. I became known as the high-maintenance guy to go out to dinner with."

Although Andrus remains low-key about his new lean and mean body, his story serves as an inspiration for so many, including his clients.

One such client was a 68-year-old who fared poorly on stress tests and was on medication for high blood pressure. Following Andrus' recommended regimen of



Chris Andrus lost 100 pounds and became a fitness coach.

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biking and strength training, the man now routinely rides 130 miles on weekends and is medication free.

Andrus also had great success at the AARP Triathlon in 2003. He was hired to coach a group of first-time triathlons, all over the age of 50. Every single one of them crossed the finish line, and several of them took home ribbons for top spots in their age division.

But Andrus isn't content to rest on his laurels. He has new goals. He wants to lose another 15 pounds, do well at the Florida Half Ironman and knock another 40 minutes off his Ironman time. Judging by where Andrus has come from and where he is now, there is little doubt he'll accomplish his objectives.

To learn about Andrus' coaching services, log on to www.mycoachchris.com.

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