

# Reinventing Herself

LORI WEISBROD took control of her health – and found a new career.



After years of feeling like a victim of her disease, Lori Weisbrod, now 52, sees obstacles as opportunities. That includes her arthritis, the driving force behind her finding effective ways to stay fit and help others do the same.

At 18, Lori was diagnosed with psoriatic arthritis after unexplained swelling in her knees and jaw prompted a doctor's visit. The prognosis: She would be wheelchair-bound within a decade.

She wasn't. Lori, who lives in Canada, worked as a makeup artist for Christian Dior cosmetics – despite pain, fatigue and surgeries. When she was 35, a rheumatologist predicted once again that she would be wheelchair-bound – this time, within the year. "His words that day were the final straw for me," says Lori, who over the years has tried many medications – from gold shots to biologics – with little success.

She knew she needed to do more to improve her health. She began researching and finding doctors and alternative

therapies, including meditation. But she had neglected her physical fitness. Earlier attempts at aerobics, cycling and weight classes more often than not had triggered a flare. But her doctor confronted her with an eye-opening notion: Having arthritis was no excuse for not exercising.

She tried Pilates at a local gym, modifying the positions to suit her ability – and it became the springboard for a new career. She earned credentials and became a Pilates instructor, and runs her own business teaching classes with modified moves for people with limited mobility.

Now Lori has a career she feels great about in every way, and through a combination of meds, exercise, proper nutrition and meditation, she's found a treatment plan that works for her.

"Today I am in the best shape of my life," says Lori. "Even though my arthritis is just as severe as ever, being physically fit [makes] daily challenges tolerable." —JUDY ALEXANDRA DIEDWARDO