

12-YEAR TRANSFORMATION: 300 LBS TO BODYBUILDER

Duane Allen

NPC Classic Physique Competitor

Age: 38

Weight loss: From 300 lbs to 170 lbs

Resides in: Rochester, Minnesota

Occupation: Personal Training,
@the_daily_disciplined_dad

Competition Highlights:

2025 Iowa State Championships

Classic Physique Novice Masters 35+ - 1st place

Classic Physique Open Class C - 5th Place

Sponsorships:

Take A Chance Apparel

Alovéa



Marilyn "Mama Rayz" Spatola met 1st time NPC Classic Physique competitor, Duane Allen, at a recent bodybuilding show and knew his fitness journey was a perfect fit for a Liquid Sun Rayz Inspirational Story. Duane's personal fitness journey deeply shaped his career as a personal trainer. After overcoming significant health challenges, including obesity and CTE symptoms from football, he transformed his life through consistent gym attendance, clean eating, and discipline. His 10-year transformation from 300 pounds to a bodybuilder inspired him to help others. Duane now uses his personal experiences to coach clients, emphasizing the importance of showing up consistently, even on difficult days, and teaching that fitness could enhance one's lifestyle, not just be a temporary fix. His struggles and ultimate success have become his primary motivation for becoming a personal trainer, allowing him to help others overcome their own health and fitness obstacles. Duane's journey was transformative mentally as well, crediting natural stem cell therapy, which he has used for over 12 years, for significant improvements in his cognitive function, memory, and mood. He emphasizes the importance of personal development and helping others overcome similar challenges. Duane's future aspirations include opening a sports science facility for children, becoming a motivational speaker, and writing a book to inspire others.

Duane Allen's Background and Transition to Personal Training

Minnesota is a nice place to raise a family. I have a 15-year-old boy and 8-year-old twin girls. The weather is respectable for at least a handful of months out of the year, but it does get cold and snowy.

I'm a full-time personal trainer. I have spent the last 12 years getting to this point and it is my dream come true. Twelve years ago, I began my fitness journey and I envisioned changing people's lives with my story, being around fitness, and doing what truly makes me happy. It was the driving force that helped me turn my life around. Two and a half months ago, I walked into an opportunity at the gym that I've been training at for a couple years now. Once I made the transition to full-time trainer, it didn't take long to get a good clientele and my online coaching business is thriving as well. Reflecting on the challenges of being an older bodybuilder and the impact of my dedication and consistency on my clients has opened a lot of eyes. For me it was validation of a belief in myself and that this is where I'm supposed to be and what I have been trying to achieve.

Turning Point and Transformation

Growing up, I played football for 19 years. The last 12 years I played quarterback. During that time, I developed an eating disorder after spending the summer after sixth grade at my grandma's house and put on 40 pounds. I had a real love for processed foods, sweets, and goodies. By ninth grade, I stood five feet tall, 240 pounds, and not feeling very good about myself. I had a ten-inch growth spurt in my sophomore year and felt a little better, but because I was playing football, my weight stayed between 225 to 260 pounds. I never worked out and even hated the thought of it, but I could throw the ball. My body ached in the off season. I played until my body broke down. At 25 years old, I suffered my ninth concussion.



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The impact of those concussions and CTE symptoms, and the subsequent decline in my health and weight left me in the worst place in my life. After football, I ballooned up to 300 pounds and about 45% body fat. I couldn't really play with my son who was two and a half years old at that time. The turning point for me was when my partner left me, leading to a period of depression and self-reflection. I hated myself. I was angry and defensive all the time. I began working to change what I could. I started eating better and I lost 40 pounds and worked hard to keep it off.

Like many people, it took a traumatic event to begin this fitness journey and I haven't looked back. I made a promise to myself to lose 20 pounds every year for 10 years. At about eight years, I got down to 170 pounds, the lowest weight I've been. During this time, I also went to the gym. For the first six months, I never worked out. I taught myself the power of consistency and the power of showing up, which is what I teach my clients now. Show up even on the days that you don't want to, the days you don't think you can, and the days you don't think it's possible. I showed up every single day. I didn't work out because I didn't know how to, I was afraid, and I was embarrassed, but I was there. I spent a half hour in there chatting with people, just getting myself acclimated to the gym. After about six months, I started lifting some weights, I started researching and most importantly, I got myself out of that scared, uncomfortable zone. As the weight started coming off, I discovered a newfound passion. I would never miss the gym if I could help it. I worked out when I could, it didn't matter what time it was. I tried getting in the military, which really fueled me for two years. While I didn't get into the military, my wife and I were thrilled to find out we were having twin daughters.



That became my new fire. I gave up drinking alcohol, not because I was a huge drinker, but because I believe in the importance of not using gym time to justify unhealthy habits. I also believe if there's something I can do to better my life, then I want to make that effort. It's a testament to the value and appreciation I place on my health and my fitness. I see it as a new beginning. Over the past 12 years I have pursued a lot of different avenues and one thing I never let go of was my vision for my fitness. I believe that fitness has led my entire life to be at this point and to begin this new business venture. 99% of people don't get to from A to B without some sort of help, whether that be a coach or personal trainer. Now that I've taken that first step, if I want to get to that next level, I need a team and I need to continue to learn and grow.

Commitment to Fitness and Health

I have committed my life to fitness and health because it has made a positive impact. I train six days a week. I meal prep. I eat clean. My son has seen the difference it's made and is now also meal prepping and in the gym. My mission is to use my journey as motivation to become a positive influence and problem-solver for others. No doubt I have struggled throughout my life and have had many aches and pains to show for it, but I didn't want to be the guy that always complained. I wanted to arm myself with the knowledge to help others, so I have tried numerous physical therapy exercises and holistic healing methods over the years.

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Influences and Future Goals

I remember growing up as a child, I watched American Gladiators; one guy in particular, Nitro, was the coolest dude on the show. I wanted to look like that one day. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone also became idols I wanted to emulate. I hired coaches to teach me how to use nutrition to help increase muscle mass in a healthy way. One of the biggest challenges most people face is staying on point with your fitness goals through the holiday season. I've seen so many people at the new year who can't believe how many extra pounds they've put on not realizing that extra weight started with bad habits long before the holidays. I really feel you have to walk the walk, so I did a 90-day transformation for myself from September through the end of the year. My results were noticeably good and when people started suggesting I should do a bodybuilding show, I looked into it.

Emotional Transformation and Self-Validation

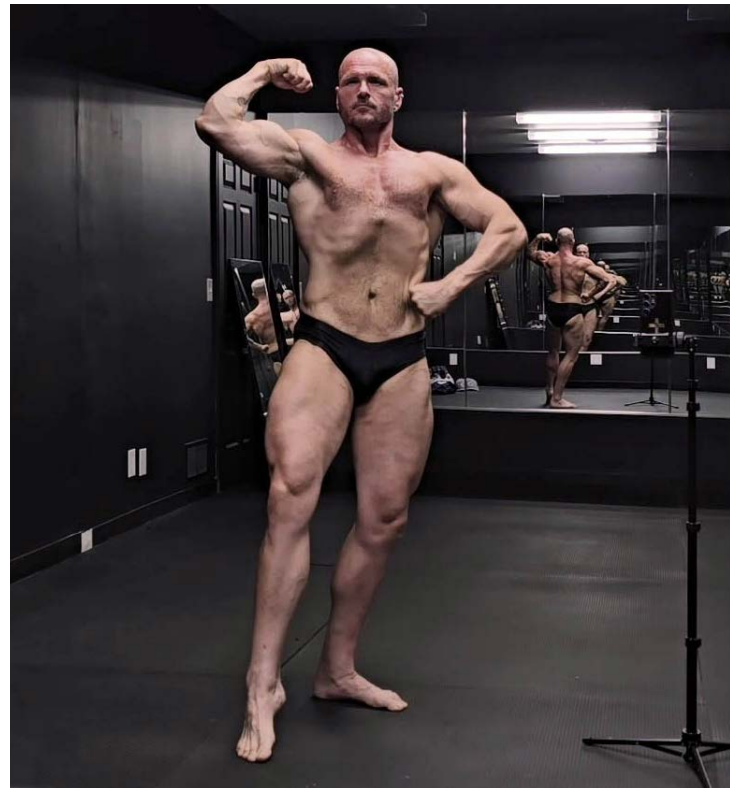
I did a 16-week prep and entered the 2025 NPC Iowa State Championships; it was one of the greatest experiences I have ever had. I placed 1st in Classic Physique Novice Masters 35+ and 5th in Open Class C. It was when I was standing backstage that the impact of going from feeling deeply ashamed to confident and belonging hit me. I can't tell you the emotions that I felt as I remembered the pain of people making fun of me growing up and the bad relationship I had with food. Doing this show changed so much about how I felt about myself, beyond being proud, it took me to a new level that I wish everybody who struggles with their body image or wonders if they can reach their goal, could feel. There's nothing like self-validation. I know I have some work to do and am setting new goals as we speak. Over the years, I've helped change a lot of people's lives. I've helped a lot of people with their transformations, but putting myself through the competition experience took a grind, grit, and determination, I didn't know I had. My purpose for stepping on stage was personal growth and validation and it was humbling. I couldn't imagine going through the whole process alone, I had such tremendous support from my family, my gym family, friends, all pushing me and cheering for me. I think that's what made it such an incredible experience. Just watching some of the other competitors on stage was inspiring to me. I'm motivated to continue competing with the ultimate goal of earning a Pro card.



Client Relationships and Personal Growth

I coach clients of various ages and fitness levels, currently from 24-72 years old, with different goals and workout styles incorporating a variety of training techniques and methods to help them achieve their desired results. For me, this career is a dream come true. While my own journey inspires my clients by demonstrating that significant life changes are possible through dedication and hard work, I've learned that effective coaching goes beyond just workout plans - it's about building emotional connections and tailoring programs to individual needs. My weight loss and bodybuilding experience allow me to authentically show my clients that major lifestyle changes are achievable with commitment and the right support. Seeing my clients' progress, being able to relate to where they are and helping them achieve fitness success is rewarding for both them and me. You don't realize the connection and friendships you have with clients that are a part of your life every week for months and years until that client moves on. I just want to continue offering the best service and share my knowledge to help others become strong, confident and the best versions of themselves. If I do that, then I feel my business will continue to thrive.

Personally, 299.8 lbs was the highest number I ever saw on the scale. I'll never forget, it was a Monday. I know I had Taco Bell twice that week. I was driving in a car all day and I wasn't working out so I'm pretty sure my weight went over 300 pounds by the end of the week. At the end of that week was when my wife left me and I decided I can't keep doing this. 170 lbs was the lowest weight I saw on the scale. I lost 130 lbs total. Since then, I've worked hard to put on muscle and find a good balance. I was overweight for a very long time and about two years ago I finally went to the doctor to have blood work done. The doctor discovered my testosterone was at a 75 out of 1300, completely shot and prescribed TRT. I currently stay about 200 pounds and 15% body fat and get my blood tested four times a year to make sure I stay in the proper ranges. I really had to become the right version of myself in order to be successful as a personal trainer.



Mental Health and Stem Cell Therapy

More than the weight loss, my transformative journey included a struggle with mental health issues. I credit natural stem cell therapy, which I have used for over 10 years, for significant improvements in my cognitive function, memory, and mood. I was originally introduced to Alovéa, by a friend and have partnered with them ever since. They provide a powerful immune-support supplement that can help stimulate stem cell development. Alovéa's mission to provide sustainable solutions to the world's most challenging health concerns by bringing comprehensive and convenient daily nutrition to everybody through their Buy 1, Nourish 1 program is designed to save children around the world. I feel it has helped change the chemical balance inside my body, starting with my gut biochemical balance and all the way up to my brain. As a result of the football concussions, I used to stutter, had memory loss, and mood triggers. I was frustrated because I wasn't able to figure out what I wanted to say, or I wanted to talk when another person was talking, or literally could not comprehend what the other person was saying because my brain just would not slow down. I work daily on articulation exercises and self-reflection. My motto is, "how you do one thing, is how you do everything." While I grew up in a very toxic home with an angry father, his military way of life drove the discipline in me that I didn't know was there until I needed it most in life.

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Similarly, my son experienced football concussions and gained a lot of weight. He began the Alovéa supplement and has seen tremendous improvements. My twin daughters, born with pharyngeal insufficiency, could not eat solid foods. When they were 5 years old, surgery for them was delayed due to COVID but they had incredible progress after beginning the Alovéa supplement and no longer require surgery. Instead, they received an injection. Now they are growing and learning, their speech is good; their lives are changed. Again, I believe God played a role in my partnership with this company knowing it would help my future and my children's future.

Inspiration and Personal Development

I turned to motivational and fitness icons like David Goggins, Andy Frisella, Tony Robbins, and CT Fletcher, to inspire me to want to become the best version of myself every single day. I listened to them and I felt like if I wasn't listening to them daily, I wasn't getting better. Combined with the physical release that pushing myself in bodybuilding provided, I really started seeing significant change in my mental health. I can't emphasize enough the importance of hard work and continuous self-improvement because I was so hard on myself for such a long time. It's taken time, patience and perseverance to help get me to a good place.

Future Aspirations and Public Speaking

I have aspirations to become a public speaker and motivate others through my story and feel I can do it through Alovéa. I feel it's God's divine intervention and his timing that will determine when it happens. Another dream of mine is to help build orphanages in a foreign country. I was in construction for many years so it would be awesome to put those talents to help the disadvantaged. I believe, over time I will continue to meet people that will help me bring these dreams to fruition. I have a book in the works that details my life experiences and trials in hopes of providing help to others experiencing similar situations including those suffering from PTSD, divorce, and mental disorders. In the future, I would like to open a sports science facility that helps kids learn, train, and improve fundamentally, physically, nutritionally, and with a positive mindset.

Sponsorship and Brand Partnerships

In addition to Alovéa, Take a Chance Clothing reached out to me about a year and a half ago to become a brand Ambassador. They believed our values aligned. Take A Chance Clothing provides natural, clean clothing, made from bamboo with a great look and fit. This opportunity has become a teaching experience for my son because I've been able to show him how values make a difference with partnerships and through my personal training business.

Duane's story is truly inspirational and transformative. From the powerful moment of standing nearly naked backstage at the bodybuilding show, realizing he had gone from being 300 pounds and deeply ashamed to feeling confident and belonging illustrates the emotional journey of how he used to look in the mirror and feel disgusted, but now feels proud and validated. The story isn't just about physical weight loss, but about overcoming mental barriers, rebuilding self-worth, and proving to himself that he could transform his life. Sharing vulnerable moments of self-reflection, commitment, personal development and growth makes Duane a winner every day. We look forward to seeing his personal training business and future ventures come to light. If you'd like to reach out to Duane, you can contact him at duane.evolve@gmail.com or 507.273.8707.

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