

TODD & SHARON
JOHNSON

THE SUCCESS THAT WE SEE FROM JIU-JITSU CAN COME IN MANY FORMS. IN THIS COLUMN, WE TYPICALLY HIGHLIGHT PHYSICAL TRANSFORMATIONS. This month we have that and much more. Todd and Sharon Johnson both received their jiu-jitsu black belts recently, which on its own is an accomplishment worth saluting. What's special about the two of them is that they did it together. Both have seen tremendous life improvements thanks to jiu-jitsu. Their love for jiu-jitsu helped Todd lose 100lbs and has given them both something to share as a couple and reach twenty-one years of marriage together.



TODD JOHNSON

AGE: 44 | **HEIGHT:** 6'0
STARTING WEIGHT: 310
CURRENT WEIGHT: 210
HOMETOWN: Murrieta, California
HOME SCHOOL: Dan Henderson Athletic Fitness (Checkmat)
INSTRUCTOR: Ricardo Feliciano Pereira
BELT RANK: Black

How did you discover Jiu-Jitsu?

I was bullied as a kid and when I saw Royce go out and destroy everyone in UFC 1, I wanted to get my kids trained so they never had to feel threatened, so I enrolled them in jiu-jitsu. They were three and five at the time. One year later they asked, "Dad if we have to go, why don't you?" I said good point. So at 33, I started as a white belt weighing 310 pounds. I lost 100 pounds in a year from jiu-jitsu.

What motivates you to train?

I wanted to prove to my kids that sticking to something pays off; I also have become addicted to the sport and the physical results.

What else do you do for physical fitness?

I go to Dynamic Fitness, a kinesiologist to help with balance, cardio, and flexibility.

How have you changed your diet?

I strictly watch portions, I eat more old grains and healthier options, and I have become a vegetarian. I also drink more green tea. I should give beer up- it's my one vice.

What's been the biggest challenge so far?

Continuing the momentum with work, family and injuries which are inevitable. Jiu-jitsu has also taught me how to get through those injuries and still train even when not 100%. Additionally, I found out three years ago I have Crohn's disease. The impact on my cardio and joints have been severe, even with medication, and being able to keep focused and train even when I am hurting has been a challenge. A huge thanks to my coach Ricardo Feliciano for recognizing everyone has a different path to black belt with different challenges and different capabilities - he has encouraged me to continue to train even if I am not 100% and to just do my best. I couldn't ask for more support.



What's been the best benefit from the changes you've made?

Self-confidence and the physical changes to my body. I will never have a six pack, but after almost 11 years, my body is very muscular everywhere, toned not bulky.

What advice would you give to someone else looking to make the same sort of change?

Check your ego at the door, have an open mind, injury will come - how do you plan to deal with it when it does, mind over matter, and persistence. I have an MBA and getting my black belt was many times harder.

