

Genevieve's Story

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Doctor of Philosophy – Human Performance, 2024
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I grew up on a self-sustaining farm, where almost everything we ate was homegrown. I took for granted the health and physical performance I had during those years. When I left the farm, my weight increased. I was confused and frustrated; however, did not “just want to lose weight,” I wanted to understand why I gained it in the first place. This launched my “me-search.” What started as an interest to regain health, transformed into my passion and career.

My path was an unusual one. I started taking night classes at the local community college since I had three children under four at the time. I transferred into Purdue’s double major program in Dietetics & Nutrition, Fitness & Health while I was pregnant with my fourth baby. While at Purdue, I threw myself into every opportunity I could. I did two study abroad programs, two nutritional epigenetic research internships, and then found my calling in sports dietetics interning with Purdue Athletics’ Nutrition Department. From there, I met a Tactical Dietitian, and it was then I knew I needed to serve a military population.

I completed my dietetic internship and Master’s degree at Ball State University, centering many projects around the Warfighter Athlete. Upon completion, I applied with the U.S. Army. It took two years before I was selected for commission and left for training. In between that time, I worked at Franciscan Health hospital, Livongo Health, and started my own private practice, Fuel Forward Nutrition (www.fuelforwardnutrition.com).

As a Registered Dietitian for the Army, I run the outpatient clinic at Ft. Bliss. We focus on optimizing tactical performance with our Soldiers and offer medical nutrition therapy for their families. I use my knowledge and understanding of nutrition communication daily. Whether I am meeting a patient one-on-one, offering a quick nutrition brief after unit physical training, or teaching a body composition class, I always need to consider: ‘who am I teaching to?’, ‘what do they already know?’, ‘what do they need to know?’, and ‘what is important to them?’. In this fast-paced environment, you only get one shot at capturing your audience, so your communication skills need to be on point!

Because Warrior athletes face many nutritional challenges in the field and during deployments, I am working on a PhD in Human Performance through Concordia University Chicago to further aid soldiers in overcoming these barriers.

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