

# SixUntilMe

Diabetes doesn't define me, but it helps explain me.

## SixUntilMe Interviews Fitness4Diabetics

Just getting started can be the toughest part of an exercise program. (You want me to lift *what?* How many times?) How many times have you wanted a personal trainer, a coach, or even just a friend who knows what they're talking about? Well how about having access to all three?

[Fitness4Diabetics](#) is a service that provides personalized nutrition and exercise programs designed to meet your fitness goals. (I am currently in a trial membership. I'll have a full synopsis of the services after I return from vacation.) I had the pleasure of talking with David Weingard, founder and CEO of Fitness4Diabetics, at the [Divabetic event](#) in NYC and he agreed to an interview here on SUM. Let 'er rip!

**Kerri:** As the founder and CEO of Fitness4Diabetics, what inspired you to start this company?

David Weingard: I began running at age fifteen, raced my first marathon at age seventeen and about ten years ago started racing triathlons (swim/bike/run) as well. I always appreciated the positive mental and physical benefits of exercise. Seven years ago, I was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes and set about to rebuild my life. I thought that I would simply incorporate diabetes into my existing life. Little did I know!

I learned that putting that plan into action wasn't that simple. I had to find people to learn from (doctors, nurses, nutritionists, exercise physiologists and other people with diabetes) and make an effort to stay in contact with them on a regular basis. As committed as I was to the plan, I found it very challenging to pull it all off while balancing my diabetes, job, family and life in general.

I also wanted to find a way to help the diabetic community and the search for a cure. In 2003 and 2005, I raced Ironman triathlons (the big ones with a 2.4M swim, 112M bike and 26.2M run) and raised charity for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's (JDRF) New York City Chapter. I received tremendous media exposure and along the way learned from the hundreds of people with diabetes who contacted me from around the world how my efforts inspired and brought them positive energy in their lives.

I was humbled and then inspired by their messages to me and set out in search of a more significant way of helping the larger diabetes community cope with the disease. I knew that for the most impact -- any idea would need to scale to reach as many people as possible.

I also learned that many of the reasons that diabetics didn't exercise or work on their nutrition included a lack of a support system, knowledge/training, access to Certified Diabetes Educators (CDE) and often motivation issues.

I was actually in the Denver airport on the way to race my second Ironman triathlon -- when the idea of leveraging the internet to provide ease of access to CDE certified nutritionists, exercise physiologists and , nurses who were collaborating to provide people with diabetes the professional guidance and support that they needed -- clicked in my mind.

From that point on, my energies were focused on building a company with people as passionate about helping people with diabetes as I am. I am very fortunate to have a phenomenal team of people working with me in Fitness4Diabetics.com. I am also blessed with a terrific wife Andrea as well as three sons Steven, Daniel and Jacob who have given me constant support.

**Kerri: Can you tell me a little bit about what Fitness4Diabetics has to offer to potential clients?**

David Weingard: Fitness4Diabetics provides exercise and nutritional coaching to people with diabetes designed to meet their individual goals. Our coaching team is comprised of CDEs who are also nurses, exercise physiologists, registered dietitians and personal trainers. Working with our coaches gives people with diabetes the tools to pursue their fitness goals while minimizing the uncertainty and apprehension around balancing insulin, food intake, blood glucose (BG) levels and the exercise activity.

We also began offering bi-monthly web/phone seminars on key topics related to exercise and nutrition. The seminars are led by our CDE coaching team who present the content and then host an open question/answer discussion. Besides the educational benefits received - participants feel a sense of support and community on the call.

People interested in participating can go to our web site [www.fitness4diabetics.com](http://www.fitness4diabetics.com) and subscribe. Once they subscribe, we will e-mail them the dial-in number and web information for the seminars. The upcoming webinars include:

Wednesday, March 21 at 7 PM EST, *Strength Training and Diabetes*

Tuesday, April 3 at 7 PM EST, *Goal Setting/Achieving Our Goals*

Wednesday, April 18 at 7 PM EST, *Stress Management Techniques/Effect of Stress on Blood Sugar*

**Kerri: Fitness4Diabetics is a very unique approach to health management for diabetics. What do you think sets F4D apart from other similar services?**

David Weingard: While there are many web sites with exercise/nutrition-related tools and individual people providing services - Fitness4Diabetics is the first company to provide integrated nutrition and exercise coaching by a team of Certified Diabetes Educators leveraging the Internet. We are committed to providing the knowledge and support services for diabetics without them

needing to travel repeatedly to a hospital and clinic. We also work closely with their Doctors and medical team in order to provide the best guidance and coaching to our members.

**Kerri: You have a remarkable team assembled, including several people living with diabetes. Is it important for you to have the input of other on-staff diabetics in your development process?**

David Weingard: Actually, I completely rely on the Fitness4Diabetics.com team to provide the coaching services as they have the depth of knowledge in the fitness and nutrition disciplines --- as well as the practical experience working with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetics.

Delaine Wright and Jessica Dair are terrific Exercise Physiologists who work with people with diabetes all day. Susan Meeke is a phenomenal Registered Dietician and Laurie Anderson, nurse practitioner, do a great job integrating the programs all together and keeping in contact with our members and their Doctors. Kate Puddu, a leading Personal Trainer in New York, also provides input and depth to the personalized coaching programs.

The team members work together to remember that our higher purpose is to provide these critical services to the global diabetic community and to have empathy for the challenges that every person with diabetes faces 24 hours/day - seven days/week.

**Kerri: Okay, so people are interested now. How can they find out more about your program, and what does it take to sign up?**

David Weingard: As I previously mentioned, in order to participate on the phone/web seminars , people can go to [www.fitness4diabetics.com](http://www.fitness4diabetics.com) and subscribe. People can log on to Fitness4Diabetics.com for information on how to become a member and receive the personalized nutrition and exercise coaching services. They can also email [info@fitness4diabetics.com](mailto:info@fitness4diabetics.com) or call us at 866-411-0254.

You can meet us in person at our booths at the Boston and Connecticut American Diabetes Association Expos in March and April. Please stop by and say hello!

**Kerri: David - humor me on this last one - If given the chance to grab an aerial perspective of anywhere, what would you choose to fly over in your hot air balloon trip?**

David Weingard: The beginning of any Ironman race where 2000 people all jump into the water at the same time and try to swim in the same spot for the 2.4 miles. For that reason, that part of the Ironman race is also called "the washing machine". :)