

Barbara's Y Story

Barbara has spent a lifetime pursuing new challenges. She was a competitive runner for nearly 20 years. She rowed at the national and international level. She practiced more than 1,000 consecutive days of hot yoga and later taught over 1,000 studio hours before retiring.

Then, in her 70s, she discovered something entirely new. Weightlifting.

"I came to the gym for the first time with a yoga body," Barbara said. "I was stick thin, bendy, but no muscle definition at all."

After discovering strength training while living abroad, Barbara returned home determined to continue. When the gym she had been attending closed, she found the Mukilteo Family YMCA and personal trainer Cheryl.

"I knew I found the right trainer for me," Barbara reflects.

Together, they built strength one workout at a time. Then after undergoing two hip replacements, Barbara contracted sepsis and nearly lost her life. Months in the hospital and daily IV antibiotic treatments left her physically and emotionally exhausted. During her recovery, she happened to watch highlights from a powerlifting competition. A woman in her seventies had just set a world record in the deadlift.

"As soon as I saw it," Barbara remembers, "I thought, 'I'm going to beat that world record.'"

She was still recovering, but she signed up for a powerlifting competition anyway. Just four weeks after her final antibiotic treatment, Barbara stepped onto the platform for her first meet. She lifted 180 pounds.

"When I walked off the stage, I knew for sure that I could fully recover my health and vitality and go on to do whatever I set my mind to," Barbara said. "It was a reset, a second chance to dream big."

Today, at 75, Barbara is still training toward that world-record goal. She is stronger than she's ever been, but the biggest transformation isn't measured by the weight on the bar.

"At 75, I have more energy and confidence than I've ever had."

She credits Cheryl's coaching, consistent training, and the welcoming community at the Y for helping her get there.

"The members are friendly and supportive," she says. "It's easy to meet people and feel like I belong."

Barbara hopes her story encourages others to rethink what's possible.

"I began gym workouts at 71 and entered my first powerlifting meet at 74, Barbara said. "It's never too late, and you're never too old."

For Barbara, staying active isn't about defying age. It's about embracing every season of life with strength, confidence, and the courage to keep chasing the next goal.