



**BIOGRAPHY Debra Mazda, BS, M.Ed.  
Founder, President, *Debra Mazda's ShapelyGirl Fitness™***

Debra Mazda laughs when people call her, “skinny.” At 165 pounds, she bears little external resemblance to the 300+ pound, 21-year old who would regularly wolf down a rack of ribs for breakfast. Yet 25 years later and a stable size 12, she is fully cognizant of the negative, internal voices that cause so many women to fill the voids in their life with excess food. That awareness – what Mazda calls being a fat girl in a skinny body -- is what caused her to create ShapelyGirl Fitness™, a motivational fitness program which includes workout DVD’s, inspirational CD’s, and access to an online community ([www.debramazda.com](http://www.debramazda.com)).

“I like to keep my before pictures close at hand to remind me that I never want to go back there,” says Mazda. “My mission is to share my story to help women learn the skills they need to win the battle with food and self esteem.”

At the age of 21, locked into an abusive relationship and struggling with chronic depression and high blood pressure, Mazda took one simple, but daring, step that changed her life. She walked in the door of her neighborhood gym. Her first workout exhausted her so completely that two bodybuilders had to carry her off the gym floor. But a call from the gym manager encouraged Mazda to come back the next day, and a habit was born. A habit that is at the heart of Mazda’s primary message to other ShapelyGirls, to “get moving.”

As Mazda began to feel the impact of moving her body, she cut her portions, and improved what she was eating. Along the way, she also gained the self-confidence to end her relationship. Realizing she could inspire other women, Mazda sought the credentials to become a teacher and trainer. She earned a BS in Human Movement and a M.Ed in Sports Psychology at Temple University.

In the late 80's, Mazda captured the attention of celebrity fitness guru Richard Simmons, one of the only fitness advocates who has shared her “move first, diet second” approach to helping others gain control of their bodies. Mazda quickly became a leader in Simmons' organization, working for with him at his Anatomy Asylum health clubs. When Simmons moved his entire operation to the West Coast, Mazda opened her own health club in her native South Philadelphia. Seeing the impact her program made on the lives of her clients inspired Mazda to branch out and deliver her positive message to women nationwide.

Mazda differentiates herself from workout gurus who women have difficulty relating to or whose rigid rules make failure a given. Her message speaks to real women: *Fitness comes in many sizes. Get off the couch, start moving and feel better, today.* In 1998, ABC's Diane Sawyer profiled Mazda on *Prime Time*, focusing on her long-term weight loss success and her sensible philosophy.

Mazda's ShapelyGirl Fitness DVD's are currently sold on QVC, Exercise TV On Demand, Walmart.com, Amazon.com (US and Canada) and Netflix.com. She has also been featured on numerous regional television and radio programs, and podcasts. She has written a column about weight loss, body image and diet for Philly Health & Fitness Magazine, and is a regular contributor to The South Philadelphia Review. She is also the fitness editor for *The Women's File* on Philadelphia's B101 FM. She regularly conducts corporate, motivational workshops and seminars. Mazda lives in Philadelphia with her therapy dog, Hannah, and cats Cody and Sarah.



Debra Mazda, Before



After