

SPIN

PEOPLE, PLACES, VIBES AND THINGS

ACTION FIGURE

Lifestyle 2.0

A hard-driving career woman dropped 40 pounds and rode into a new life.

Lorri Lee Lown obsesses. As a two-year-old in Elmira, New York, it was baton twirling; she competed for 10 years and won more trophies than she can remember. As an adult in San Francisco, she became so fixated on her career as a human resources professional that she sacrificed her health with a two-pack-a-day smoking habit and added an extra 50 pounds to her 5-foot-10-inch frame.

Then, true to her obsessive nature, Lown decided in 1999 to get in shape for a 575-mile San Francisco to Los Angeles AIDS ride. She hadn't ridden her Specialized Stumpjumper in a decade, and her first training ride was humbling—she had difficulty pedaling on a flat, 10-mile bike path and had to walk up the only hill, a freeway overpass. Yet nine months later, Lown had stopped smoking, dropped more than 40 pounds and rode every mile of the fund-raiser.

Now a licensed personal trainer, she founded the Bay Area Velo Girls, a 173-member women's cycling club (velogirls.com), which helps women of all ages and VO₂ maxes discover the joys of cycling. Her next goal: "I regret that I wasn't healthy and riding in my 20s, so I'd like to help people that age stay fit," says the 38-year-old. Gen Y, look out.

—Mark Riedy

Lown no longer walks the hills and smokes only the competition.