

Changed

I was in my second semester of my sophomore year of college when COVID-19 struck us all into a pandemic. At this point, all of our classes became virtual and I packed my bags and headed home to my parents' house. At first, we all celebrated since we had 2 extra weeks of spring break. Looking back, that was not something to celebrate. Tons of people drank Coronas with a lime and belted out "Corona-cation". It was quite the sight to witness friends and classmates on social media posting about all of their grand vacation spots, as the rest of us were locked down trying to keep ourselves and the people around us in peak safety.

I found ways to relax and enjoy this sense of free time I had never experienced before. There were things to be happy about among all of the fright that existed in the air. I got to spend extra time with my family, my boyfriend and his family, and everyone else was shifted to zoom. Some days it'd be nice to talk and catch up with friends, other days it seemed like a hassle that couldn't be explained. Cooking became the largest event in a day, and once it got nicer, going outside to move my body was a huge advantage. Thank goodness my dad's Para body machine purchased in 2004 was in our basement. I found new ways to train my muscles and realized that there are so many things you can do without access to a gym. I ran, loved on my dog, and viewed nature in a way I never had before.

At first, no one thought that all of our new habits would have to last more than a few months. Flash forward over a year and we are still figuring it all out. Among the pools of vaccinations and amount of cases decreasing, it seems like there is slowly a light at the end of the tunnel approaching us. There is hope in the air towards less scary days, but I can't ever say that we will ever get the "normal" back that everyone always talked about getting back to. Our lives are forever changed by this pandemic along with the way we operate on a daily basis. There are many beneficial lessons that companies have been able to take advantage of to better their processes and there have also been many downfalls that businesses have had to configure. None of this has been easy, though I can say we are all stronger in some way because of it. It is our job to determine how we are changed and power through the rest of our lives with an extra inspiration to be powerful and hardworking people.

Rachel Jackson