



LESS PAIN, MORE GAIN

By Kristin Clark

Like many of my college-age peers, I grew up with the idea that any sort of legitimate exercise had to:

1. Hurt
2. Look like it hurt
3. Require vast amounts of time and energy

So you can imagine my surprise when I "discovered" walking. Having always been an avid runner, I was one of walking's biggest detractors. To me, walking was strictly a wimpy activity that anyone could do, whereas running was a macho activity that not everyone could do proficiently. Running separated the weak from the strong, so to speak.

After several years of running however, I realized that I had amassed far more injuries than trophies, and on top of that, I was just plain burned-out. I tend to be a compulsive type, and what was supposed to be an easy 3-miler often turned into a grueling 7-mile race against the clock. Clearly, it was time to change my ways before I began to hate exercise completely and stopped doing it altogether. Enter walking.

Once I decided to give it a fair shot, I real-

ized what a valuable and yes, legitimate, sport walking really is. It breathed new life into my exercise plan, and I found that it even toned more than running. What's more, I enjoyed it. You can too, if you are willing to expand your exercise repertoire and dispel the following walking myths:

1. "Walking isn't as good an aerobic workout as running." FALSE! Walking is every bit as good for you aerobically as running is — provided you keep a brisk pace. A stroll through the park isn't going to cut it just as jogging leisurely won't cut it. Many fitness walkers cover a mile in about 15 minutes (4 mph), burning roughly 365 calories per hour. But bump your speed up to a 12-minute mile (5 mph), and your calorie burn goes all the way to about 585 for the same hour.

Compare this to jogging an 11-minute mile, which burns approximately 535 calories with a much higher risk of injury. In general, most people can walk for a longer period of time than they can run. The longer you are in motion, the more calories you are going to burn. Also, your muscles will be under resistance longer.

2. "Walking isn't that much better for you than running with respect to injury." FALSE. When running, you leave the ground with every stride, only to land again with an impact of 3 to 4 times your body weight. Walking, however, requires that one foot be in constant contact with the ground at all times, which causes you to land with only 1 to 1 1/2 times your body weight. This can save a tremendous

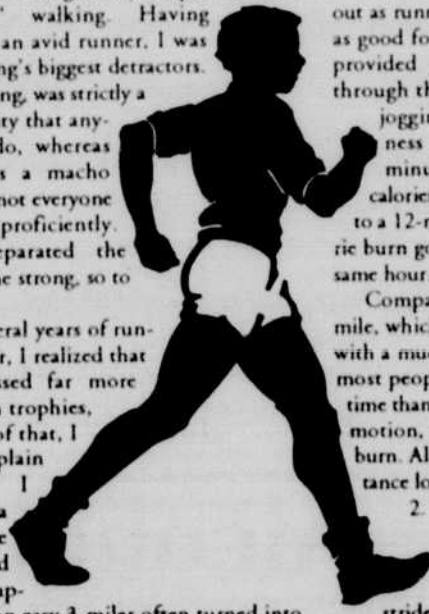
amount of wear and tear on your body.

3. "Walking is too simple and enjoyable to be effective." FALSE. Walking IS effective, and its toning benefits even surpass those of running. When walking, especially speed walking, you're using a less efficient method of getting somewhere at a certain speed than if you were to jog. Thus you're having to work harder and recruit more muscle groups in your effort. You end up toning your arms, buttocks, hips, shins, tightening your hip flexors, and on and on. I found that I actually lost a couple of inches and toned a couple of key places when I began my walking regimen. Not only that, but when I went back to running about 3 months later, I was able to pick right up where I left off.

4. "Walking is a great method of cross-training." TRUE. Alternating speed walking days with running days or with any other kind of activity is a great way to keep the interest up and still stay in great shape. In fact, it's been shown that people who incorporate walking into their fitness program tend to stick with exercise in the long run (pun intended).

But before you start walking, you will do well to invest in a good pair of walking shoes. Running or cross-training shoes can be used, but leave the flimsy dress tennis shoes and aerobic shoes at home. If the shoes you have are worn down and are causing your ankles to roll in or out, it is time for a new pair.

With these ideas in mind, hopefully you'll be less likely to overlook walking and see it instead as a truly legitimate, thoroughly enjoyable form of exercise that can benefit you for the rest of your life.



Addicted to Exercise?

By Aimee Gridley

Are you a person who feels the need to exercise every day? Do you feel guilt or anxiety if you do not get in a daily workout? Then you could be addicted to the "feel good" phenomenon often associated with exercise.

There is no question about it that exercise increases the feeling of being healthy. Evidence has shown that exercise can improve your self-concept and lower feelings of anxiety and depression. But sometimes this general feeling of well-being can cause a person to exercise excessively.

A sports psychologist at the University of Massachusetts, Connie Chan, treats a lot of athletes who may be "addicted." Chan explains that "if someone is unable to function in their customary way on a near daily basis without exercise, and if that exercise is not an enhancement but a necessity, the person is likely to be addicted." She also says that if some athletes do not exercise for 2-3 days, they may feel less satisfied with themselves. If they go for more than 5-7 days, they may actually experience depression.

So exactly who is vulnerable to exercise addiction? Surprisingly, Chan believes that the highly disciplined, competitive recreational athlete is more likely to become addicted than the professional athlete. However, the addiction is usually only realized when the activity is interrupted, most often because of injuries.

Some psychologists do not like the term addiction because of the negative connotations often associated with it. They agree that dependency is a better description of the behavior. They also feel that just because you want to exercise everyday does not necessarily mean you are addicted or dependent. Ordinarily, there only seem to be problems if you start compromising your life and daily schedule so you can exercise.

Exercise has many physical and psychological benefits for an individual. But, if you think you are becoming too dependent on exercise, take a break and use that time to let your body relax. Possibly evaluate the reasons why you exercise and then set up a program to fit those needs. Try substituting relaxation or meditation techniques occasionally to fill the space in your life. Most likely your body will feel better and perform more efficiently.

PLAY: A new approach to physical and mental fitness



By Carla Borovicka

Your days are structured. The agenda is set by classes, meetings, office and building hours, due dates, meal times and homework. It is no wonder you dread "the workout." It has become just another structured discipline offering little room for deviation from the rules without scrutiny.

I challenge you to abandon the gym, track or aerobics room once a week and complement your structured "workouts" with spontaneous playful activities such as Frisbee football, hacky sack, paddle ball, dorm Nerf basketball, juggling, rollerblading, skateboarding, hiking, lake swimming, windsurfing, snowshoeing or just a good old game of kick-the-can.

The addition of play in our daily lives awakens our spontaneous side and offers a new approach to physical and mental fitness. This spontaneous fitness can be acquired by choosing to make drill activities more enjoyable and replacing your old ways with variety.

Start by turning up the volume and listening to your favorite music

while washing the dishes. Push in a comedy tape while you are driving. Make a moving meditation out of folding your clothes, at the time practicing the art of mindfulness. Stage a grocery shopping scavenger hunt with your roommates. Run up the stairs, taking two steps at a time. Let loose and sing out your rock star fantasies while taking a shower.

Challenge your habits by sitting in a different part of the room each time you go to class. Choose a different restaurant or break spot at least once a week. Buy one unfamiliar fruit, vegetable or other food product each time you go shopping. Alter your route to school and between classes. Add a variety of recreational and fitness activities to your schedule. Dare yourself to seek entertainment away from the T.V. and videos. Take off on a weekend adventure without intense planning.

Playful activities sharpen your senses and allow you to stay in the moment. It is hard to plan for the future or dwell on the past when your spirit is playing in the now!

STRENGTH TRAINING FOR EVERYONE

Adapted from the U.C. Berkeley Wellness letter November 1991

By Tom Bayer

In years past strengthening muscles was something that concerned only bodybuilders and was done out of vanity. But recently more and more fitness experts have been recommending strength training for health reasons — for women as well as men, the elderly as well as younger people. In 1990 the influential American College of Sports Medicine altered its exercise guidelines for the first time in 12 years, recommending a "well-rounded" program that includes strength training along with aerobic workouts.

Strength training can help work against the aging processes that are partly a consequence of inactivity. Strength training can also increase bone density, strengthen muscles, help prevent injury, reduce back pain, improve athletic performance and help make a well-balanced fitness program.

Strength training isn't bodybuilding; it doesn't necessarily mean lifting massive weights in order to build bulging muscles. Strength training, as generally recommended, calls for working out against moderate resistance in order to tone muscles and build muscle endurance. The resistance can be provided by free weights (dumbbells or barbells) or weight machines — but also thick elastic bands or even

cans of tomatoes. You can also use your body weight as resistance, as in calisthenics such as push-ups, pull-ups or step-ups.

Strength training is not just for men. In the past many women neglected strength training because they did not want to look muscle-bound. They needn't worry. A moderate training program won't create obvious muscle bulk in men or women, but instead a firmer, trimmer physique. Women have even more to gain from strength training because they are more prone to osteoporosis than men, and weight-bearing exercise may help delay this disease.

It is not only a myth that moderate weight training causes muscle bulk, but also that weight training causes body fat to turn to muscle, and that when you stop training for a while the muscle turns back to fat.

Muscle and fat cells are completely different, structurally and functionally. However, weight training can help you lose fat by burning calories: A nonstop half-hour workout burns about 200 calories. In addition, by building muscles you increase the rate at which your body burns calories (metabolic rate). Muscle is active tissue that requires energy to function.

So what are you waiting for? The addition of strength training is the ideal way to create a balanced fitness program.