

HEALTHLINES

May/June 1999 Volume 3, Issue 3

Chad's Corner

Consistency of effort has to be the second most powerful force known to mankind. What is the most powerful force you ask, compound interest. At least Einstein thought so anyway, and he certainly had a good head on his shoulders. I guess you could also call it persistence. You know all of those old proverbs your parents used to quote, "Fall down 7 times, stand up 8", or "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again", etc... That brings to mind an interesting event I recently witnessed that I'm quite certain I will never forget.

My youngest son, Riley, who will be 4 later this month, played on a YMCA soccer team. This was his first year. Technically, he was too young to play in the league (I snuck into my first year of little league). However, because his big brother, Quinn, played soccer for the last couple of years, he would not be denied his opportunity to kick the ball around for yet another year, regardless of his age. As luck would have it, Riley, being the youngest on the team, also happened to be the smallest. Nevertheless, what he lacked in playing experience and size, he more than made up for it in consistency of effort. No matter what, he always did his best. Throughout the entire year (8 games), he probably fell down at least 80 times, and yes, stood up 81. There were a couple of times that he was actually airborne. He certainly didn't get his toughness from his "big-baby" father. From the very first game he said, "Daddy, I'm going to score a goal for you". Game after game, he tried and tried again, to no avail. Finally, it was the last game of the season. Again, he told me he was going to score. Sure enough, during the last period, Riley got a hold of the ball at mid-field and dribbled all the way over to the south sidelines where the regulation, "big kids" soccer goal happened to be. He shoots, he scores! The crowd

went wild with cheers, especially me! Riley ran straight over to me and jumped into my arms and said, "See Daddy, I told you I would score a goal for you". He had just about the biggest smile that I had ever seen on his face. However, I didn't have the heart, nor did anyone else, to tell him that he needed to shoot the ball through the orange cones on the east side of the playing field (where the goalie was) in order to "technically" score. Who could be that cruel to a 3 year-old. After all, he had the right idea. In his mind, he scored and that's really all that matters.

The same goes for your fitness program. Your consistency of effort will pay dividends. You may not see it in the mirror on a weekly basis, but non-the-less, the fruits of your labor will appear sooner or later. Maybe your cholesterol, triglycerides or blood pressure will improve. Maybe you will lower your golf handicap from 25 to 22 in a given year. What about the long term benefits? Perhaps you will ward off certain types of cancers or maybe prevent a heart

attack. Those types of benefits are difficult to determine. I can, however, guarantee one thing for sure, without you persistently pursuing a healthy lifestyle you certainly will never reap some of the aforementioned positive benefits. Don't make things too difficult. It's o.k. if you shoot for something, and don't actually score. The most important thing to remember is to do your best and the rest will fall into place.

Yours in Health, Chad Marschik

Success is a decision.

Fitness for a Reason by Sara Bateman, M.S.

At some point in our lives we have all wished that we could change something about our appearance or the shape of our bodies. How many times have you or someone you know said, "If only I had " or "if only I could lose x amount in the next couple of months."? These kind of phrases are expressed by all kinds of people all of the time. Both men and women spend a great deal of time and energy worrying about their physical shape and size. It is no wonder that we experience discontent with our bodies when you consider how often the "perfect" shapes and physiques are impressed on the general public through advertising and the glamorizing of movie stars and super-models. Even the fitness industry relies on the slim and trim to sell their products. How many times have you seen a TV commercial or magazine ad claiming that in just 10 days or 3 months you too can have a body like this? Does all of this really matter? Have we all become too concerned about how we look and forgotten that there is more to being fit than the perfectly sculpted body or the ideal body weight?

Chronic body dissatisfaction, as Barbara Brehm, Ed.D. discusses in her article *Positive Body Image: Focus on Fitness*, can be exhausting and demoralizing and in many cases, especially for women, can lead to more serious problems such as eating disorders or depression. Even mild cases of body dissatisfaction can result in low self-esteem and can interfere with good intentions to exercise and eat nutritiously. Granted, we should be concerned with our health, but in many cases you can do things to make yourself feel better about your body and yourself so that you can get on with your life and do the best you can with what you've got.

The purpose of this article is to impress upon you the importance of placing your focus on fitness rather than fatness. The first step is to improve your lifestyle rather than set stringent weight loss goals. Many other factors contribute to the way you look and the only thing you have sole control of is your lifestyle. Gradually change particular aspects of your daily activities that might be healthier than what you are currently used to. Adopting a healthy lifestyle is the safest and most effective way to achieve your fitness goals. Avoid being too restrictive, this only leads to failure and disappointment.

You also want to start or continue exercising for the right reasons. You should view exercise as a means to be healthy and to feel good about yourself. Through physical activity and exercise you learn to appreciate your own body's abilities and not worry about what others can do better than you. Choose activities that you enjoy. This will help you succeed in your goals as well. Don't engage in an activity just because it is the newest craze or everyone in your office is doing it. Choose programs that are right for you and allow you to enjoy what you are doing and allow you to feel good about your life. You will find that the right kind of activities will assist you in relaxation, stress management, weight control and changes in your body composition.

Another key to improving your body image is to reject negative thoughts about yourself. Turn your negative thoughts into something positive. Instead of thinking about how you would still like to lose 10 more pounds think about how strong you have become and how this allows you to do all of the things you like to do. Many times, mass media leads us to think negatively about ourselves. Simply limit your exposure to these influences. Choose carefully what you decide to view or read about. Focus on what you have done through lifestyle changes such as exercise and nutritious eating. This is what will make you feel good about your accomplishments and not revert back to wishing and wanting something that you may not have control over.

It is also important to be a good role model. Don't get caught up in conversations about the latest diet craze or the newest abdominal trimmer on the market. Discuss ways in which you have changed your lifestyle and encourage others to do the same. Make lifestyle changes for yourself as well as encourage other members of your family to join you in your activities or find other activities they might otherwise enjoy. Compliment yourself and others on something besides how they look. Feel good about yourself when you accomplish something of value. Always remember it is not how you look, but how you feel. Healthy living should be the priority and many times the other things that we worry about will fall into place.