

## Running and Walking can set the world in motion - Getting in shape

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December 18, 2023



Running or walking can set the world in motion. As a seven-month-old infant, I set myself in motion and started to walk. Initially I had a shaky start but in time, I got rather good at walking. My desire to move kept increasing and soon my walking got quicker. I often started walks meandering but then found a purpose and direction and quickened into a jog. I was frequently off and walking to visit a friend and would try to speed up the journey by jogging. Sometimes I ran simply to 'keep up with myself'; perhaps I was trying to make my life into an everyday adventure.

While I was never the fastest runner for my age, I did have strength and endurance and a body that enjoyed challenges. The thrill of covering a distance on foot with wind blowing through my hair (I used to have hair) and racing others in attempting to finish a little bit ahead was a way to spice up a day.

Time can give us opportunities along with challenges. I was a gawky 5'11" tall when I was 12 years old. Our junior high school was having an annual track meet and I decided to run the 800-yard race. I was not a sprinter and the 800 was the longest race of the event. I did enjoy stretching out my legs on the track and running at a good clip till the end. I had a valuable mentor in senior Jimmy Stein. Jimmy took me under his wing and helped train me to understand how to run the race. Each event has some different way to approach it and, with some training and experience, it can save the runner from going too fast or too slow at a critical time in a race. Jimmy taught me how to race the 800 yards at a pace where we were able to break the school's 8th grade record. Wow, he dreamed big and it was really inspiring to have someone believe in me. When I finished the race I had a real big lead and, in addition to having happy feet for a couple of weeks, I gained a new sense of confidence.

I ran cross country for three years in high school. Cross country is long distance running with some exciting venues. We often ran 5-Kilometer races on wide open, hilly, grass fields. One of my first races stands out among many. Let me explain. Being a city boy, I had never seen sheep roaming on grass fields. On the gloriously sunny afternoon of the event day, my team took a bus to a rather rich community on the North Shore of Long Island. On one side of the winding roads was a bucolic field filled with dozens of grazing sheep. Sheep! What a special treat. My running took me to that piece of heaven. That day my feet were once again happy feet.

### The Middle Age Sag

I have grown older and passed through various stages of life. My life adventure has taken me to many countries with long stretches where I was rarely at home. When at home, I was often driving several of our five children to school, activities, lessons, choir, and various sports. Driving can be convenient, but it rarely offers the freedom and independence provided through the joy of walking and running.

### Getting back in Shape

The week after my mom died, I decided to get healthier through running. I did an extreme act but it helped me improve my health and increase my vitality. I ran two miles a day for seven years. Wow! Seven years and 3,620 miles later, I completed this challenge. Fortunately, I rediscovered my happy feet! Unfortunately, I developed seriously arthritic knees and would never have happy running feet again.

### Walking around the World

Walking in recent years is mostly with my wife and partner Yoshiko. At this stage in our life, Yoshiko often walks faster ... but we are not in any big rush. For our couple, walking remains a great way to see, smell and sense the life and life forms found in our communities. We have been active walking together and we have walked in more than 60 nations in Asia, Africa, South and North America, Australia, Europe, Japan, and Korea.



For the curious, one hiking highlight since we made it to the West Coast is rainbow chasing. We catch them rather frequently nowadays. No pots of gold yet.

