

OFF 'N' RUNNING

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE JPL RUNNING CLUB

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(whenever all the news to print just fits)

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For those of us who would like to run, but our bodies won't let us, maybe the answer is....

"Striding: Treading New Ground (Walking is a way to workout and a way of life.)"

(Adapted from City Sports Magazine, July 1985)

(Part I)

We've all heard about walking for physical fitness, but never as something we'd want to do. It's for old people, we think, people for whom running would be too much exertion, or for people rehabilitating from some leg or foot injury. But let's look for a moment at one of the major causes of athletic injuries - running. You'd be hard pressed to find a runner who has not at one time or another sustained either shin splints, stress fractures, knee injuries, tendonitis, back problems, or any combination thereof. And the list goes on.

Out of the 31,000,000 people in this country who say they run, more than 60% have complained of some sort of physical damage. And when we learn that each time runners take a step they are burdening their joints with three to three-and-a-half times their body weight, it seems amazing there aren't even more injuries.

Obviously, millions of runners feel that the pleasure, fitness and exhilaration their sport gives them is worth the occasional layup. Certainly if it came down to a choice between running and no exercise at all, you'd have to wonder about somebody who picked the latter. Running happens to be an eminently convenient and cheap way to stay fit.

But, oh, those injuries.

Walking is like breathing. If the comparison seems facile, think about breathing for a while. Respiration is clearly something that operates on the most basic level. But beyond that there is deep breathing. Deep breathing is a learned process that can be wielded for many purposes. Some people use it to meditate, some to get them through a crisis; women deep breathe during labor so they can be around for the birth. Talk to someone who practices yoga and you'll find out that the breath is the mirror of the soul and it's possible to completely balance the body and mind through deep breathing.

The point here is that, as with breathing, there's a lot more to walking than meets the eye, and a lot of people are beginning to realize it. When you walk you can get a better overall workout-from the standpoints of cardiovascular fitness, strength building, flexibility and avoidance of injury-than when you run. Of course, the kind of walking we do to get us from the taxi to the restaurant is not going to bring us total fitness.

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The kind of walking that makes us fit takes exertion, speed and duration. The goal, for aerobic purposes, is to get the heart rate up to 70 to 85 percent of its maximum and keep it there for at least 20 minutes. There are a number of ways to accomplish this goal, but first, let's get the terminology straight.

As fitness walking makes greater strides toward the public consciousness, the sport is engendering a host of names, all of which are more or less appropriate. The first book to be written on the subject, titled Power Walking, came out in 1982 and was authored by none other than Steve Reeves the bearded muscleman who played Hercules in all those schlocky Italian epics from the '60s. Reeves wrote the book after developing a walking program that enabled him to retain his Mr. Universe physique, and the name has caught on.

The term exercisewalking was coined by Gary Yanker in a more detailed, scientific tone called Rockport's Complete Book of Exercisewalking that hit the stands a year after the Reeves book. Backed by the Rockport Shoe company, Yanker comes with a briefcase full of degrees and is generally recognized as the sport's number-one authority and mouthpiece. Rockport, meanwhile, has lately decided the sport should be referred to as fitness walking.

Other terms have been bandied about, such as health walking, aerobic walking, brisk walking, fast walking, dynamic walking - but the word City Sports prefers is striding. We feel striding, with its connotations of long, stretched steps most concisely captures the spirit of the sport.

(To be continued.)

OF INTEREST...

(Call Valerie Pickett, x2731 for details)

- February 15 Heartthrob 5K, 10K and 1-Mile Fun Run, Legg Lake Park
16 Sixth Annual Wilshire Police Council Run Against Crime 5K & 10K
Thirty-Fourth Annual Sand and Strand 2.5 and 5 Mile Runs, Hermosa Beach
Sweatin' Sweethearts Ten Mile Twosome, Mason Park, Irvine
Senior Masters Old Fashion Four Mile Run, Yucaipa
Sixth Annual Valentine's Day 10K, Valencia
17 Aztlan 8K Hill Cross-Country Challenge and 3K Children's Race
22 The Great American Adventure 2-and 5-mile Cross Country Run, Huntington Beach
23 SPATAC 5k Women's & Men's District Championship, Westlake Village
- March 1 Antelope Valley Hospital Benefit 5K & 10K, Lancaster
Tenth Annual 6 and 10 Mile Winter Road Runs, Santa Barbara
2 American Spirit of Leadership 5K and 10K Runs, Long Beach
L.A. Dietitians 10K-Fun Run, Playa Del Rey
9 Titan Road Classic 2K, 5K, and 10K, Cal State Fullerton
Los Angeles International Marathon