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DO IT FOR A “GOOD CAUSE”!

by **Dr. Brian S. Seaman, DC, FCCSS(C), FICC**

Not only will it get you in better shape but it would be for a very worth while reason.

I am not just talking about making a pledge or donating money---I am referring to committing to walking or running a charity event.

WHERE DO I START?

Good question!

First and foremost be reasonable. If you have not been active for a long time, do not set your heart on running a marathon in three hours!!! No! No! No!

- Be realistic – maybe start by walking.
- Be regular – that means five or six times a week. Not just once or twice every seven days.
- Be consistent – week after week after week. Take lots of time to prepare.

WALK OR RUN?

Maybe do both. Try a bit of running with your brisk walks. Walk for 100 steps and try running for ten steps.

If running causes pain in your feet, ankles, knees, hips or lower back then get checked out by a health care professional who deals with sports injuries. Running might not be for you.

It could be as simple as needing new and properly fitted sneakers. Or you may need custom fitted arch supports (also referred to as orthotics).

Or you may have some osteoarthritic changes in your knees or hips which may make running too painful. Painful swollen joints do not make training fun.

So make your choice carefully. If running is your choice consider joining a running group. Many are formed a local running shoe stores like the Running Room (www.runningroom.com).

There are multiple benefits to running with a group:

- There is usually a trainer or leader of the group who has a lot of experience in formulating walking or running programs.
- Support of fellow runners can also be enjoyable, not only during training but during the actual run.
- Last but not least—it makes training fun!

TRAINING TIPS

- Warm up properly – an easy walk or slow jog is good.
- Get some tips on running – do not over stride as this can lead to injuries.
- Run with proper running shoes and if necessary get casted for orthotics.
- Dress for the weather – wear hats and use sunscreen in hot weather. Be sure to wear layers in cold weather.
- Avoid over-training – do not over do it! Running too far, too fast or increasing your distance too soon can cause over use injuries. Be cautious with hill training as well. This is one aspect of running which I often find causes injuries.
- Drink an adequate amount of fluid when you run. Dehydration can ‘short circuit’ your efforts in a very short time frame. You can cramp up and cause significant health issues.

- Cool down after you run. Take 15-20 minutes to walk a bit and stretch out before getting into the car or 'hitting the shower'.
- Stretch gently – do not push it! Hold each stretch for 30 seconds and do each side twice. Do not bounce - ballistic stretching can strain or tear a muscle.

INJURY?

Ice—ice—ice! Icing an injured or strained area 15-20 minutes to reduce swelling, inflammation and pain can be very beneficial. Do this several times a day. If the pain persists for more than a couple of days, or if the pain or swelling is significant then contact a sports chiropractor or health care professional who deals with these types of injuries all the time. Sports chiropractors can be located at www.ccssc.ca.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Walking or running can:

- Improve the health of your heart, lungs and circulation.
- Increase your energy levels.
- Decrease your stress levels.
- Increase the tone of your hip and leg muscles.
- Helps to increase and maintain your bone density—that means it reduces the chances of osteoporosis. Check the clinic website for more information about sports and osteoporosis at (www.halifaxchiropractic.ca).

SO WHEN WILL YOU START?

Start today, go for a walk and get some fresh air and enjoy yourself.

Running—or walking—for a cause is a great way to help your community. Choose one that has a special meaning for you:

- Arthritis
- Diabetes
- Breast cancer

Dr. Seaman has been on a Team Canada health care team on three occasions. He is a member of the Canadian Sports Centre Atlantic Sports Medicine Advisory Committee and is the First Vice President of the College of Chiropractic Sports Sciences (Canada). The clinic website is www.halifaxchiropractic.ca.

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The Seniors' Advocate. P.O. Box 5005, Waverly, Nova Scotia, B2R 1S2

