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A Marathon and a History Lesson

The Bataan Death March Memorial Marathon is held every March in commemoration of the original 5 day 60K event held in the Philippines during 1942. The event is held on the White Sands Missile Range and is a weekend long event with plenty of history and many of the original participants attending. The original was a test of survival, and in 1946, the race director was severely reprimanded for the lack of Gatorade stations along the course. For an unbiased quick reminder of the facts, go to Wikipedia.com and search on Bataan Death March. One thing that was very memorable was the number of veterans with Hispanic last names who were in the Philippines Army.

You fly into El Paso and drive about 40 miles to the base. The military base allows the runners to camp on the ground, in their cars and in the gymnasium for the entire weekend. Shirts, medals and certificates of completion were given out during the expo and we went to a \$10 pasta feed in the local officer's lounge, which was next to the start and finish. After that, we got a free movie commemorating the rescue of some of the original



participants.

Many of the surviving participants were there and it was fun to be with these energetic 85+ year olds.

We woke up at the crack of dawn and went to breakfast at the start pretty early. Around 6am, there was a long ceremony, followed by the start at 7am. There were 2500 runners in the individual category divided into male, female, military, civilian, light and heavy. Heavy meant that one carried a 35 pound backpack, and military meant you had to wear combat boots. There were also 215 5-person teams in many categories, plus 727 runners in the 15.2 mile short race. This meant a total of 4302 finishers with marathon times from 3 to 14 hours.

All categories had similar finish time distributions.

The course is barbell shaped. We left the starting area, and after one mile of paved road, we entered the trail area. It was rolling hills and light sand at this point. We did 7 miles while we went around half the bottom bell. This was the fast part of the course. We then got to the bar in the middle. There was a net gain of 1300 feet between miles 7 and 13, but the gross gain was probably around 1800. There was a short mile on a country highway, and we then entered the second bell. We would go around this bell from mile 9 to about 18. This was completely in a trail, and was one steep up hill followed by a steep downhill. At this point, the runners around me stopped running completely, and would never really start up again. The last 17 miles were pretty un-racewalkable due to the steepness of the hills.

The scenery got better and better as we got closer to the top. Finally around 13 miles, we got to the top which was about a mile above sea level.

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“Walking is one of the best exercise choices for people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities”

Coach Lon Wilson

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A Marathon and a History Lesson (continued)

There was a restaurant set up by volunteers where runners could buy hotdogs and cake if they brought money. (It was strongly suggested you bring money) There was some old vets who had been ATV'd up there and were slapping hands with everyone. Pretty impressive at that age!

At this point, I expected to be able to sail down the hill from 13 to 20, where we would lose 1300 feet. However, the trail continued to be rolling hills and they were all too steep to racewalk.

Things were getting hot and dusty by now, and everyone was pretty tired. When you thought you had seen the last hill, there was another in the distance. Finally, we got to the mat around 18.5 miles and finished the bell and got back on the road.'

After one mile on the paved road, we returned to the original bell and did the second half. Here is the famed sand pit where the sand is so thick that your feet dig in deep and you spray sand all over yourself when your feet pick up. This would be the slowest miles of my life. These last 6 miles were rolling hills with "nicer" sand pits here and there. We finally hit the wall at 24 miles. The wall is a 4 foot tall wall that separates the living part of the base from the wilderness. By this time, everyone was bored to death and tired and we were all just counting the steps to the finish line. Finally, we saw the 26 miles post, made a quick turn and got back on the road for the final quarter mile.

Why do this one? If you enjoy patriotic events, or if you need more than 8 hours to finish a marathon or if you want to establish a new personal worst, this is the one you got to do. The scenery alone is something you got to see.

The course is surrounded by beautiful mountains and you go through gorgeous views. The thought that keeps coming to you while you're doing it is how this sandy desert came to rest in such a high altitude.

Alexis Davidson

My Journal: Saturday is Not Just For Walking



Saturday, 4/25/09, the NYWC met Lon Wilson, our coach, for our regularly scheduled Saturday class. Lon, our coach, pulled out the foldaway "hoola-hoops", which always gets passersby to stop or eye us as they go by and see how "we do it", (see pictures). Besides, Lon being the "world class" of keeping the hoop twirling around his waist and doing walking stunts, singing and is having a ball doing this, a couple of the ladies can keep it up also!

We assembled to take a few pictures, (one of our walkers, Christian Gillette, is going home to Paris), thereafter, we walk to our spot which is near 97th St. by the park house and paddleball courts and we do our "normal stretches", (see pictures). Coach Lon, he always instructs us as if we are new walkers and some of us are.

"photographer", but I managed to do a few of the exercises.

After our stretches, we plan the course and we are off for the walk! The next day is the More Marathon; the course is, 26.2 miles and the half marathon, 13.1 miles...some of the women who were doing this event they took it easy. (The More Marathon-26.2 miles, was cancelled do to the hot weather.)

I am walking and enjoying the scenery, cherry blossoms, dog wood trees in bloom and the magnolia trees with their blossoms settling on the grass or walkway...to me the weather seemed perfect. I just love it. However, that is one of the beauties or pleasure of walking, you can smell the "roses" and leave your troubles behind and enjoy the time with nature! I just love it.

The "group" has been an enjoyable part of my life since I have joined it. Do not get me wrong, I have always enjoyed walking in Central Park, but now I know other walkers and when I walk by, and I am recognized and they may say, "Nereida, it good seeing you out here", or, just say hi or nod their head, it just gives me a good feeling. I just love it.

With being a part of the NYWC, I have met many wonderful people and have made many very good friends. I look forward to my Saturday walking class because of the people I have met. Of course, our goal is to get healthy, to feel better, to move better, but meeting new friends is a bonus. I just love it.

See you Saturday morning.

Nereida Muñoz

A Star Spangled Goofy



There are two marathons in October which recently have been scheduled on the Saturday before the Staten Island Half Marathon. They are the Baltimore Under-Armor and the ING Hartford Marathons. Both have half marathons, so they're an opportunity to do either a cheap goofy (marathon and half on the same weekend) or a half marathon double.

I left early Friday morning from the Port Authority Bus Terminal on a Greyhound Bus. The trip was about 4 hours. Once I got there, it was a half mile walk to the Baltimore Raven's (football) stadium where the expo was held. I picked up my number and explored the area between the Raven's stadium and the Oriole's (baseball) Camden Yards, which is where the start and finish lines were.

I walked around the Baltimore inner harbor, had something to eat and walked up to the Youth Hostel just north of downtown.

I woke up early the next morning and discovered that there were three additional runners sleeping in my dormroom. We walked out together to the light rail system and took the train down to the start line.

The Raven's stadium was still open before the race, so there were real bathrooms at the start area! This meant that the porta-potts were pretty empty and that was convenient. As far as I know, the stadium stayed open until the half marathoners started.

The marathoners and relay team first legs started at 8 am. The course was basically in the shape of two out and back loops followed by a 3x3 mile square with an additional mile lake loop in the far corner. We ran through the sports and downtown areas for a mile and then went northwest up McCulloh. McCulloh was one of the uglier miles on the course and the only spectators seemed to be panhandlers who were awakened by the noise. This only lasted until mile 2.5 where we came to beautiful Druid Hill Park. We turned right for a mile and then turned south back to the starting area through an historic area. The first 3.5 miles were pretty hilly with a nice net gain and the rest of this out and back was rolling hills with a net elevation loss.

We reached the start area around 6.5 and the relay teams exchanged. We were now next to the inner harbor area. We started a 6.5 mile southeasterly out and

back that turned around at Fort McHenry of Star Spangled Banner fame. This loop was fairly flat with only a few slight hills. We went through an upscale condo area near the harbor and then this slowly turned more middle class and light industrial. Around 9.5 miles, we reached the park around Fort McHenry where we saw a huge statue, the ruins of the fort and plenty of cannon. As we got out of the park, there was a real bathroom with little waiting. This was really appreciated by the runners and is one of the bragging points of this marathon. We then returned to the inner harbor and got there around 13 miles.

The relay teams exchanged again, and we started the final square. We went east along the southern border of downtown for about 3 flat miles. The course then turned north for another 3 miles. The half marathoners had started at 9:45 am in three waves and we met around our 16 mile and their 3 mile point. I got there around 10:55 and immediately ran into the 20 minute/mile cohort. By the time I finished, I would be hanging with the 13 min/mile group. Therefore, the marathoners around me had to really bear down and focus on our own pace and not let the slower runners psych us into slowing down.

The course went north for 3.5 miles and slowly gained 225 feet in a rolling hill fashion.

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A Star Spangled Goofy (continued)

Miles 16.5 through 19 were the dreariest miles of the marathon. It was definitely a poor neighborhood with few people on the streets. Half of them cheered for us while the rest ignored us.

At 19, we reached the beautiful Clifton Park where there was quite a party going on and the relay teams had their final exchange. We left the park and reached Lake Montebello at 19.5. We went around this beautiful lake for 1.3 miles and exited on 33rd street and headed west from miles 21 to 23. The neighborhoods began to improve markedly and the course went through some small rolling hills.

At mile 23, we turned south and we would enjoy a net altitude loss of 225 feet during the remainder of the course.

We ran through the historical district again and at 24 miles, there was a very fast altitude gain of about 30 feet as the roadway bridged over a freeway. After that, I could see the skyscraper that contained the host hotel. I knew it was about the 26 mile mark and I just concentrated on getting there. Once there, it was through the Oriole's Camden Yard area and I reached the finish line.

The finish area was very good. There was clam chowder and other good stuff to eat. There were male and female changing tents right next to the baggage area and I got to change before walking back to the bus station. I met up with some other runners

there and we went home together on the bus.

The race director promised that the half marathoners would have a five wave start next year and that there would be a real effort to get the two races to merge in such a way that everyone is going at the same pace. They had given all of us stickers to put on our backs so that we would be identified as full, half or relay runners, but these had fallen off the high tech shirts, and they promised they would figure out a better method.

The entire effort cost \$164 which is only \$28 more than the NYC entry fee. There were 3130 marathon finishers, 690 4-person relay teams and 6254 half marathon finishers. The official time limit was 7 hours, with the last official finisher coming in with a clock time of about 7:40. The half marathon had a 5:15 time limit with the last finisher coming in at 4:50 gun time. I would definitely recommend this one as a cheap local marathon.

Alexis Davidson

A Life Saver

Previously, I wrote about a 1998 debilitating injury, my recovery and my migration from running to race walking. From early 2004 to mid 2007 I mainly race walked. From mid 2007 I continued to train in both disciplines, but primarily ran in most of my races.

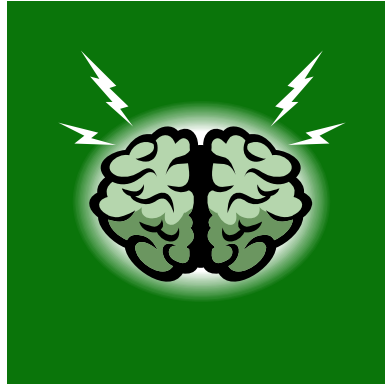
Well, after achieving a high level of running fitness for the 2008 NYC Marathon I suffered the same injury (quadriceps tendon tear from the patella) to the other leg a month before NY. A blood clot also led to a pulmonary embolism. Though all of this has been quite depressing my knowledge and awareness of the benefits of race walking has given me much hope.

After my injury in 1998 I tried to get back in shape to run a marathon. I kept on breaking down, but finally achieved success 5 years later. However, this time I'm pointing to the NYC Marathon only 13 months after my surgery. In the past 6 months after surgery I have spent 2 months recovering and 3 months doing intense rehab. Even though I continue to rehab I have actually started training to race walk NYC.

Though my legs can't deal with the impact of running it can deal with the 50% lesser impact of race walking. The increase in aerobic activity has allowed my circulatory system to provide more protection against any future clotting. It has also relieved my depression related to my inability to exercise for fear of further injury. For me race walking is proving to be a life saver. I'll see you at New York in November.

DJ Johnson

10 Ways to Maintain Your Brain



1. Head first

Good health starts with your brain; it's one of the most important body organs. It needs care and maintenance.

2. Take brain health to heart

Heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and stroke can increase your risk of Alzheimer's.

3. Your numbers count

Keep your body weight, blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels within recommended ranges.

4. Feed your brain

Eat a low-fat, low cholesterol diet – dark-skinned vegetables and fruits; foods rich in antioxidants; vitamins E, C and B-12; folate; and omega-3 fatty acids.*

5. Work your body

Physical exercise keeps the blood flowing and encourages new brain cells. It does not have to be a strenuous activity – walking 30 minutes a day- to keep both body and mind active.

6. Jog your mind

Keeping your brain active and engaged increases its vitality and builds reserves of brain cells and connections. Read, write play games, do crossword puzzles.

7. Connect with others

Leisure activities that combine physical, mental and social elements are most likely to prevent dementia. Be social, converse, volunteer, join.

8. Heads up! Protect your brain

Take precautions against injuries. Use care seat belts; unclutter your house to avoid falls; wear a helmet when cycling.

9. Use your head

Avoid unhealthy habits. Don't smoke, drink excessive alcohol or use drugs.

10. Think ahead – start today!

You can do something today to protect your tomorrow.

Current research suggests certain foods may reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke and appear to protect brain cells: i.e. dark-skinned fruits and vegetables – kale, spinach, brussels sprouts, alfalfa sprouts, broccoli, beets, red bell peppers, onion, corn, eggplant. Fruits with high antioxidant levels include prunes, raisins, berries. plums, oranges, red grapes and cherries.

Marian Spatz

Healthy Recipes



Oat Bran Muffins

- 2 ¼ cups of oat bran
- 1 tbsp. baking powder
- ¼ cup sugar or maple syrup
- 2 tbsp. chopped almonds
- handful of raisins or blueberries
- ¼ cup shredded coconut (optional)
- 1 ¼ cup nonfat milk

- whites of 2 eggs
- 2 large overripe bananas

Combine all dry ingredients in a mixing bowl. Blend all other ingredients into a puree and mix thoroughly with the dry ingredients.

Fill muffin tins, allowing some room for mix to rise. If you use blueberries, it's easier if you add them by hand to the filled muffin tin.

Bake at 450F until top of muffins are brown (about 15 minutes). Makes approximately one dozen muffins.

(From Simplify Your Life, by Elaine St. James)

Submitted by Linda Myles



Almond, Chicken and Dried Apricot Salad Pita

Serving Size: 1/2 cup chicken salad and 1/2 pita – servings: 4

- 1/4 cup whole almonds
- 1 cup sliced skinless chicken breast, cooked, without salt
- 1/2 cup dried apricot quarters

- 1 celery stalk, chopped
- 1/2 cup fat-free plain yogurt
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon orange zest
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 2 whole-wheat pitas

Preheat oven to 300 deg.F. Place almonds on baking sheet for 7-8 minutes or until roasted. Let almonds cool. In a bowl, mix almonds and remaining ingredients. Spoon 1/2 cup chicken salad into each whole-wheat pita half. May be served with mixed greens.

Source: (2006) The American Heart Assn.

Submitted by: Marian Spatz

Coach's Corner



Making Walking a Lifestyle

Congratulation on your decision to walk for better health and weight lost.

Get Your Doctor's Okay

Have a physical check up prior to starting any exercise program. Particularly if you are Over 50 . Walking is extremely beneficial to overall health ; having a physical will help identify any health concerns that might require you to modify your routine from what is normally recommended..

* always listen to your body and take the day off if you are hurting or felling weak *

Americans everywhere are beginning to realize that “ WALKING is mans/women best MEDICINE “. Hippocrates , the Father of Medicine , prescribed walking in ancient times.

Walking will lift your sprits and lower your weight and enjoy a SLIMMER , STRONGER body without suffering for a week after every workout.

Wear the Right Shoes

Walking doesn't require fancy , expensive footage. But one investment worth making is the purchase of a good pair of walking shoes. Your shoe should have a low, snug heel , a firm rubber-type sole , some ” wiggle room “ for your toes and a comfortable breathable upper.

* YOU DON'T have to buy a walking shoe , which will cost more that a

running shoe *

New Balance has a large list of shoe with EEE widths if needed. I always check out sales , and discontinued models. Last years model might be better than the new.

When trying on shoes try to fit shoes in the after noon or later. Feet tend to swell later in the day.

Always Stretch

Before walking , lightly stretch the muscles in your body using relaxed non-bouncing movements (yoga type). It takes 20 to 30 seconds for the body to catch up with the brain on a stretch.

One should not try to keep up with the Jones while stretching. Don't stretch thru pain. Pain is a signal. After walking when your muscles are warm and loose, deeper stretching is usually possible. Stretching helps maintain flexibility, making your walk workouts safer and more comfortable.

Walk Tall : Assume an upright posture

Imagine you are being pulled up from the top of your head with a string , eyes looking

20 to 30 meter ahead. Do not look down (looking for quarters). It will close up your wind pipe and lower your center of gravity. It will be like trying to ride a bicycle that needs more air in the tires, you will move, but it will take more energy. So every time you put your head down , say to your self , I weigh 10 more pounds.

Focus on short steps

Newtons Law : For every action there is a equal and opposite reaction.

If you stomp down with 100 lbs you will get back 100lbs. So if you take a long stride in which your leg lands way in front of your center of mass (which is about 2 inches inside your navel). For women it is about 2 inches lower. You will be creating a breaking action.

So think of planting as breaking , and pushing off the toes as propulsion.

Practice good Form

Always work on technique , speed will come naturally.

Set Goals

One should have short and long term goals (5k walkathon - 1/2 marathon, etc.).

Make it Fun

Team up with friends, neighbors, co-workers, family members. Encourage other people you know to walk with you for health fitness, and companionship.

Lon Wilson

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