



It is ok to start out slow, just start. Putting off physical exercise can have dire consequences. photo by Mark Rackay

Health Tips From The Posse

Start Slow

By Mark Rackay

One of my closest friends is a doctor. It is difficult for me to picture him as a doctor, partly because I have known him for 50 years, and partly because I know too much about him. Nevertheless, he is a doctor and never misses an opportunity to let me know.

Recently, he gave me one of those health riddles to solve. It went something like this:

You are sitting in front of your computer watching a streaming movie, you are talking on your cell phone, eating a bag of cookies, drinking a beer and smoking a cigarette. What of these

activities is most likely to give you cancer?

I immediately guessed Covid or a lightning strike. He told me I need to take this seriously and call him back when I figure out the answer. I told him not to wait up for the call and hung up on him.

Riddles like that seldom teach me anything. But I actually did learn something from another friend of mine. His name is Mike and he just went through a bout with throat cancer. Prior to the cancer, Mike was a

activity levels correlate closely with those of their parents.

Only 1 adult in 3 meets the recommended amount of physical activity each week, and 80 percent of all adults do not meet the guidelines for proper aerobic, cardio and muscle strength training. Less than 5 percent of adults take part in 30 minutes of physical activity each day.

The end result of all these numbers is that 80 million Americans are physically inactive. People who don't exercise on a regular basis lose up to 80 percent

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anything. But I actually did learn something from another friend of mine. His name is Mike and he just went through a bout with throat cancer. Prior to the cancer, Mike was a prime athlete, exercising daily, eating right, and generally taking good care of himself.

Mike spent about 2 years dealing with the cancer before he completely whipped it. I am happy to report that he is cancer free. Problem for Mike was during the cancer he stopped all of his daily workouts because the chemotherapy and radiation treatments left him to weak. Over those 2 years, all of Mike's physical training went out the window.

About 6 months ago, Mike decided to get back on the exercise wagon. He chose running/jogging as the exercise he wanted to utilize. He set a goal of 3 miles in 30 minutes and began running each morning.

The first morning, he made 2 houses down the street before getting out of breath. The next day he made 3 houses, and so on. I just got a text from Mike the other day that he finally achieved his goal and is going to up the ante, running farther and faster. Mike is 73 years old. He showed me that you just need to start, no matter how slow, just start.

According to the American Health and Human Services Agency, we Americans are woefully under-fit. Part of it is the electronic age, with everyone glued to their phones and computers, part is diet, and part is perhaps just plain lazy.

Only 1 in 3 children are physically active each day. What a change that is from when I was a kid. We played ball every day during the warm months and hockey in the cold, and in between we camped, hiked, fished, hunted and did endless farm chores.

Only 3 in 10 high school students get 60 minutes of physical activity each day. That means that 7 of those kids don't take part in any sports activity or PE classes. Unfortunately, this fitness attitude will follow them into adult life. Studies show that children's physical

physical activity doesn't stop.

The end result of all these numbers is that 80 million Americans are physically inactive. People who don't exercise on a regular basis lose up to 80 percent of their muscle strength by age 65. A pound of muscle burns 3 times more calories than 1 pound of fat.

We have been preached to endlessly ad nauseum about the benefits of exercise and cardio activity. We all know that regular exercise has been shown to lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, improves mental function and mood, sharpen your memory, and elevates your metabolism to burn more calories, even when you are at rest.

I absolutely hate to be sick. Colds, viruses and flu bugs are not handled well by me. My wife says I am just a big baby about being sick but what does she know. I just get sicker than she does when the bug hits our house.

For me, the biggest benefit of regular exercise is the boost your immune system gets to help fight off infections. Regular exercise allows immune cells to perform effectively, increase blood flow, reduce stress and inflammation, and strengthen your antibodies. Some studies show that moderate intensity exercise may cut down the number of colds you get.

Take a lesson from my buddy Mike and start slow but start. You can't reach your goals if you never leave the gate. All the excuses of overweight, hurt knees, no time, put them aside and just start. Go to the first mailbox. Tomorrow, try for the second mailbox, and keep at it every day.

As for the riddle from my doctor buddy, the activity most likely to leave you with cancer... the sitting. Regular exercise helps keep cancer away too. Don't put it off, just start.

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press and the Delta County Independent, an avid hunter and world class saltwater angler, who travels across North and South America in search of adventure and serves as a Director and Public Information Officer for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. For information about the Posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspl.org

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