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Expanding My Fitness Horizons

Thursday, June 11, 2015

I write all the time that logging into Spark every morning provides my daily dose of motivation. Sometimes it comes from an article, sometimes from a blog or even a recipe.

If you are my spark friend, you are likely aware that exercise was never my problem, food was. I like movement. However, I do not like all kinds of movement equally.

At a recent conference where DD & I gave a presentation about living a healthy lifestyle in body, mind and spirit, I emphasized the necessity of all aspects of fitness – cardio, strength training, flexibility and balance.

I spoke about how I enjoy cardio, but the other types of activities not so much. However, through spark videos, where I can be klutzy in the privacy of my own home, I have incorporated strength training with dumbbells, yoga and Tai Chi and come to appreciate them, at least how I feel afterwards.

Then I was asked “do you bench press?” Uh, no. I’ve seen that equipment at the gym, but never tried it.

Two weeks ago I decided to give it a try. I’m not stupid. I know that at age 68 (in 11 days), trying something new like this will require help. So I asked an old guy and a younger woman who do this regularly to get me started.

I learned that the bar itself weighs 45 pounds. Hmm, my heaviest dumbbell is 12 pounds and I don’t lift that over my head. With my two “trainers” on either side I did one wobbly press, up, down, up. They pointed out that my right side was stronger than my left side. I knew that. I’m strongly right handed.

They showed me some exercises I can do with my dumbbells at home. The next week we met at the gym again and I did TWO non-wobbly presses.

Such a wimpy start might discourage some people, but not me. I prefer to think that I’ve just achieved a 100% increase, LOL.

Then this morning I read a sparker’s blog which included her 100 pushup challenge. She was up to 65. Now she’s a lot younger than me, but faces a life challenge more difficult than I ever have. I’ve seen that challenge before in spark email, but like the bench press just ignored it.

Somehow reading about a real person doing it inspired me to give it a shot. Note that I’m still at the thinking stage. I haven’t actually gotten down on the floor yet.

Long ago when DD gave me my set of dumbbells, I wrote on Spark that I did 5 minutes of weight training with them. One commenter told me that what I was doing was useless and wouldn’t have any effect. Not every sparker is supportive. Somehow he missed that I didn’t intend to stay at 5 minutes, but increase my time and weight gradually.

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That's my plan with this bench press thing and maybe push-ups too.

After all, 30 years ago although I considered myself fit, my first attempt at running lasted 30 seconds. Now 13 miles is no problem.

My philosophy is that it's never too late to start, but the earlier the better.

That's my only regret. I wish I had done this decades ago.

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SWEDE_SU

great re-inspiring blog! and i figure 5 minutes i do is better than than the alternative, and i've come a long way with that philosophy...

2183 days ago



SUBMOM2

the fact that you're still running, 30 years later, tells me that your gradual-increase plan makes sense. I need to be more consistent with my strength training - the sooner the better!

2186 days ago



CD5500762



2187 days ago



PHEBESS

Absolutely!!!! You make so many good points:

-Age is not limiting!

-Set a goal and expect to get there eventually.

-Small steps along the way reach the goal.

-We need to just begin!!!!!

2189 days ago



LINDAKAY228

When I first started "hiking" several years ago, after being inactive, I parked in the forest on a forest service road where I lived then. I walked about 10 minutes one way, then 10 minutes back, and then sat and read for a while (I always have a chair in a bag in my trunk). I worked up from there. But it was a start. Before I had a stroke I was up to hiking or walking miles a day, and participated 4 years in an event to honor those in the Bataan Death Marchh and did 15 miles each year. 2 months before the stroke I did a different walk where I did 19 miles. I have light weights too, with 3 sets being 2 lbs, 5 lbs, and 8 lbs. Maybe I'll move up to 10 lbs soon. Anyway, it starts with a small start and it doesn't matter what you are doing, or did back when it was just 5 minutes with weights. You are making progress. I'm 60 with fibromyalgia and had a stroke. But I still push on and do these. We may not be body builders for weight but it does matter what we start with. Good for you.

2190 days ago



CD6939912

So many insightful nuggets in this blog!! Just know that something you said is helping someone (ME) right now. Thank you so much for sharing!

2190 days ago



JANETRW50

You go girl!

I am always amazed at how quickly my body responds to a new movement. It's so nice to know it is never too late to get stronger or more flexible

2190 days ago



WALLAHALLA

I've been looking for something new to shake things up a bit. Maybe bench pressing is it. I'll have to go to the gym with my son and give it a try.

2191 days ago





MARYJEANSL

You continue to impress me. I think you are doing extremely well. Being sidelined by injury right now - and probably for longer than I want - I am even more impressed by how much you continue to accomplish.

2191 days ago



ONEKIDSMOM

for your first bench presses! You're only about 3 weeks behind me... I did my first bench presses with a bar in week two with the Boy Wonder. Funny, I've known about them, just never done them until now.

We may be moving those numbers up, but we are adventurous ladies in training!



2191 days ago



CD4114015

This is SO astounding and INSPIRING! I NEED to be inspired enough by you, in fact, that I make myself do the sam. I have muscles from all the heavy yard work and WORK I do to keep strong...but I need to follow suit...Thanks for lighting a fire! We even have TWO home gyms in our basement..no EXCUSE not to!

Am saving the blog...to "absorb" it!



2191 days ago



CD13758606

It is never too late to start! Switching it up is a good thing, it challenges us.

Another cliché, you're never too old to think outside of the box.

and

If it doesn't challenge you, it won't change you.

Last, I have never had a negative comment on SP. I am sorry to hear that you did. Those comments have no place here.

Good Blog! Thanks for sharing.

2191 days ago



LIVEDAILY

Excellent!! You are SO right! It is NEVER too late to try something new! We make ourselves better people by embracing our challenges, don't you think?

2191 days ago



PHOENIX1949

Baby steps continually taken eventually equal great strides. Starting is a step above and beyond someone who doesn't start. Wow, think I'm going outside in the heat with my walker and take a few of those baby steps. After all, my severely arthritic hip hurts whether I sit still or walk. Thank you for this inspiring blog.



2191 days ago



DR1939



2191 days ago



SYLPHINPROGRESS

Reading this FEELS like decades ago, if it counts in any way. I am ever in awe of you.

2191 days ago



WILSONWR

You have the best approach to starting a new regime - slow and steady. You get constant improvements while reducing the risk of injury. Keep it up!

2191 days ago



WUMPASTAR

HA! Funny blog, thanks for the laughs. And I think it's awesome you're still trying new things. You're braver than me, since I was always scared of trying stuff at the gym in front of people. Too





self-conscious... but at home I have no problem, even though I look pretty dumb when I try new yoga videos and just can't follow the pace LOL! I also did when I started running in 2010 - the thing I love the most now. If I never tried it, I'd never have known :)

2191 days ago



MISCHAKEO

I als regret that I did not exercise more in the past..I do cardio, strength training, yoga. I admire you for developing bench pressing. It is never too late.

2191 days ago



GINIEMIE

Great blog! I like it a lot, good sense, good ideas and aimed at getting me off this chair and try wall push ups again. I had gotten to 5 minutes, but dropped off. When I was in college-the third time around I got started at the gym with some of the younger early arrival set. I did a lot with guidance at GSU, but then I graduated in 1992 and didn't go to the gym so much.

I think bench presses and push-ups/always are just what my upper arms need. Pushing the lawn mower with out the power button is a good work out too.

Now I'll get off my duff and try some wall push ups and go for my walk. I'll try to remember your birthday. We are close in age and both have summer birthdays.



2191 days ago



BBEAGAN

That's awesome! I too was inspired by the sparker who has been writing about the 100 push-up challenge. I am thinking of taking that one on, too. And if it weren't for wimpy starts, none of us would ever accomplish much of anything!

I love the image of you and your barbell... A few weeks back one day at my gym there were 4-5 girls in the free weights area, all aged 13-14 yrs, I think. They were egging each other on to lift dumbbells, and were using the 3-5 lb weights. I wasn't paying them much attention, just went over, grabbed the 25 lb weights, did my bicep curls. I noticed a few of them eyeing me in the mirror, this 50 yr old woman using the 'big' weights. A few min later when I was on the stretching mats, I saw them each take a turn trying the 25 lb dumbbells! then the 15s and 12s. I think I'd inspired them a little, which was totally unexpected and kind of cool! Now I am imagining folks at your gym seeing your wobbly start at the bench press and thinking maybe they can do it too... Yay!

2192 days ago



TERI-RIFIC

I think you would like this article: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/8440838

Being able to lift the Olympic bar by itself is an accomplishment! That is nothing to sneeze at. I think you will be amazed at how great lifting free weights at higher weights will make you feel. I hope you also try the deadlift and the squat. The big three-bench dead and squat are the big three for a reason! Running shoes are too squishy for weight lifting-go get a pair of Chucks! Next time we meet, instead of a race maybe we can go to the Jamerson Y and pump some iron!

2192 days ago



SLIMMERJESSE

Another great blog.

2192 days ago



SWEETNEEY

Hi Ho Silver and a Weigh

2192 days ago



WATERMELLEN

This is a fabulous blog!! Gradual incremental improvement: yeah. It's sustainable and real.

And although NOT every Sparker is supportive, thank goodness most of 'em are and there's the delete button (silent and effective) for the few who aren't!!

2192 days ago

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