

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Pandemic - Exercise Distraction

April 28, 2020. Exercise has returned as a highlight of our daily family routine. My wife has been a daily runner for 40 years, and I was also a daily runner for about 30 years until my knees started to act up. In my active jogging days I felt guilty if I let a day go by without hitting the roads for a run. Even in the face of family obligations, bad weather or work demands, I would always connive to find a way to fit in my self-imposed mandatory run. It was truly an obsession.

About 20 years ago I moved on from jogging and got addicted to golf. At first I walked the golf course carrying my bag before I started riding in a cart. Golf in a cart had become the extent of my exercise; gone were trips to the gym and casual walks, and as expected, I gained weight. Then along came COVID-19 pandemic. Suddenly my wife and I were spending most of the day complying with the sheltering-in-place order and we began to view exercise as a personal treat. My wife engages in kayaking and cycling on a daily basis, as well as jogging. It was as if she was training for the Iron Woman competition.

For me at first it became simply daily walks. Initially I walked a mile or so; then it was an hour. The more I walked the better I felt, and after a few weeks went by I was pushing myself to do more. Two days ago I decided to walk 18 holes at our golf course without clubs, approximately 5 miles. I did it but I also over-did it. I am now dealing with a cranky back, a reminder of my old marathoning days when I seemed to be always dealing with minor injuries. But overall I am feeling healthier, even lost some weight.

I also rediscovered a pleasant memory that I had somehow forgotten - solitude and contemplation. When you off by yourself, you are left with nothing else to do but to think and reflect. In my old running days my jogging buddies used to talk about an exhilarating effect that they called a "runner's high." But I think I experience a different kind of high; I would relish the opportunity to collect, formulate and challenge my own thoughts. Often as soon as I got back to the office after a run, I would immediately write so that I could capture those ideas and conclusions. In the work environment I was a frequent author of thought-provoking articles for posting or publication, which led to me being labeled as a visionary. But I knew that the key component was not the written word but rather time alone running and thinking that allowed me to develop and test my convictions. Hey, I decided to write this piece after being out for a walk after contemplating my rediscovery.

So here I am now; my daily walk has become a necessary distraction; much like my daily run years ago had become an obsession. In the process I have rekindled an enjoyable part of my daily life; time to think and write.