



July 23, 2015 – Grand Rapids, MI

Observations from the Road: Ankle and Wrist Weights

As I was running Sunday morning before the flight home from Denver, a woman about 60 was walking around the lake path. She had on the requisite earphones listening to something, bandana to keep her hair in place, and ankle weights. I don't see them much anymore and that's good. Research shows that they provide no benefit and in some cases, can cause harm.

The perceived benefit is that a person wearing ankle weights or carrying weights in their hands when they walk will get some additional benefit, perhaps increasing muscle strength or burning more calories. One would think that, and one would be wrong. The weights can damage the tendons and ligaments when carried in the hands or on the legs: more force hits the ground with ankle weights during walking and there's more strain on the shoulders, elbows, and hands when carrying the weights. As for burning more calories, that doesn't last long; the body adapts quickly to the extra few pounds and by the third workout, there are no additional calories burned.



A better approach would be to carry exercise tubes (virtually weightless), walk like you mean it for a minute or two, and then stop and do some weight training exercises such as bicep curls, lateral raises, or overhead presses for 10 to 15 reps, and get going again. That would help you get stronger without damaging the joints. Or set the weights down in a specific place, walk out for a minute, walk back to the weights and do the same types of exercises; park them next to a hill, and that would be a great way to do intervals.

We'll finish this up on Saturday. Until then:

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

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