



July 25, 2015 – Austin TX

Observations from the Road: Fitness vs. a Healthy Heart

As I finish my observations from my last trip, I'm on another trip to Austin to do another seminar. I'm sure I'll have other things to talk about because I'm always looking and listening.

During my run a week ago in Denver, I repeatedly passed two women who were out for an early morning walk. They carried on a conversation the entire time. I think that's great; having a walking or running buddy or group can get you moving on those days when you don't want to, and sometimes the gossip is what gets you going more than the exercise.

Before I go further, let me say that all movement is good; I'm always happy to see people exercising in any way. We are too sedentary as a society and any movement is a step forward. Back to these women.

They were certainly helping their heart and cardiovascular system get healthy, but they weren't doing anything for their fitness level. Aren't a healthy heart and fitness the same things? No. They use the same systems, but they're not the same. The difference is all about pace.



- Fitness is the maximal amount of oxygen your body can use during a max effort. The fitter you are, the more endurance and stamina you have.
- Having a healthy heart means you're training your heart to operate efficiently while at rest plus keeping your heart and blood vessels pliable; there are a whole host of other benefits to your heart and body.

The conversational walk is not hard enough to increase fitness levels. It helps the heart and the rest of the body, but it doesn't increase fitness. Doing 30- or 60-second intervals at a very fast walk can increase your fitness level. Do five or 10 of those when you walk with a friend, and you benefit your fitness level while you support your healthy heart.

How do you know you're walking fast enough during the intervals? If you can talk but you're breathing hard and you sound breathless, that's fast enough. If you can sing, pick up the pace, slacker!

As I said, all movement is good and walking is the best form of exercise because most people can do it. Just keep in mind that if you want to have a healthy heart and get fitter, you need to pump up the pace.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet



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