



For Wont Of Action

I love politics. I love reading, thinking, discussing, arguing and even worrying about politics. Despite this passion, I also realize I'm pretty powerless about effecting or affecting politics, policy or politicians. And, despite that, I don't care. I still love politics. It's fun if not fruitful.

I love exercise science - yes, can you believe it? What kind of a geek loves exercise science, vs loving exercise or science specifically? But I actually love reading about it, going to seminars on it, thinking about it, writing about it - can't you tell yet? - and actually implementing it. Despite this passion, I'm pretty powerless in effecting policy or participants when it comes to exercise science. And despite that, I don't care. I still love it. It's fun, for me at least, and fruitful, for me and anyone else who will apply it.

Now why do I say I'm powerless when it comes to implementing the benefits of exercise science? Well, that may be overstating my powerlessness. But in reality, on a grand scale, I and other exercise scientists (and fellow fitness professionals) have a pretty bad record when it comes to effecting substantial change in society's, let alone individuals', health and wellness behaviors. There are those who pay, come to the gym and train, and implement elements of what professionals discuss and share with them. There are also those who don't implement sufficient elements of what they learn and experience under

the tutelage of trainers, or even doctors, and therefore get fewer benefits from their investments in time and money as a result. But when it comes to exercise science on a national level, much of what is written, spoken, media-blasted, or even conveyed directly via medical professionals - the benefits and the how-to's of it - goes pretty much unattended and not implemented. If that was not the case, we would not be constantly discussing it, would we? Despite that, I still love it.

So here we are on the cusp of another war, or at least another intervention. We all discuss it, think about it, read about it, opine about it, and pretty much agree that our efforts here will have no

effect on it. Still we do it. Likewise, we all think about our health, our bodies, our overall wellness or lack thereof, our weight, our waists, our abilities or inabilities to do what we like to do, and for the most part, on a statistical level, few of us implement what needs to be done to effect any positive changes to it. Why? Because we like being unhealthy, unfit? Or is it because dealing with the abstractness of our own powerlessness in politics is easier than accepting the realities

of our own power to effect real change at the most basic level - of self? I don't really have an answer. I just like thinking about it, reading about it, opining about it...and trying to effect change, even if, ultimately, I'm powerless to do so. Only you have that power. Use it...or lose it.



THE
THINKER



THE
DOER



The Changing Face of Waist Management

Every couple of years, I attend the Annual ACSM Meeting to accrue my continuing education credits. This past June, I went to Indianapolis and attended many interesting lectures, symposia, and seminars. One in particular has the most relevance to what so many clients, and so many trainers, have an interest in: weight loss. Without espousing my personal philosophy on it, I feel that it's worth noting that the consensus from the lecturers of this symposium was based on a substantial body of short- and long-term research into diets, exercise for weight loss, and behavioral science as regards lifestyle change.

The bulk of the evidence re diets and weight loss is fairly negative. That is, on average, most diets help you lose weight early on; the longer you're on your diet, the slower the rate of loss you experience; the re-introduction of regular eating patterns usually reverses whatever losses you may have had; and by the end of most 1- or 2-year studies, weight loss is way below what you'd expect, and in some more weight is gained than was lost so the net change is excess weight. Acknowledging the individual variations within these studies - some lost, some gained, some stayed the same so the average was near zero - the overall conclusion was that diets are ineffective for long-term weight loss.

Furthermore, while it is generally recognized that those with extreme amounts of excess body fat are at risk for a variety of what can be called 'lifestyle diseases', the evidence does show that losing about 5% of your weight has clinical value. That is, even small amounts of weight loss reduces some of your risks for metabolic or cardiovascular disorders. In a separate lecture on osteoarthritis, one researcher noted that, for every pound lost your knees feel a 3-4 pound reduction, which could make you feel and function better if you lost a mere 10# off a 200# frame. But, and this was the main point of their message, for those who are obese, the slow and small amount of weight lost from a diet or even diet and exercise program is disheartening, often resulting in further damage to self-esteem and a sense of self-efficacy. After all that work, so little to show for it. For example, in a rare, 2-year study of the top commercial diets, at the end of the study, those doing Weight Watchers had lost a mere 5 Kg, or 11#.

They then reiterated old and recurring data, mostly from the Cooper Clinic in Dallas, showing that those who exercised got the best results so far as health stats and morbidity and longevity are concerned. And not even a lot of exercise. In fact, moving from the lowest category of fitness, out of five categories, to the second lowest got the lion's share of the benefits. Compared to moving from the fit to the very fit categories, if you are obese and unfit, potentially at highest risk for a variety of disorders and diseases, simply starting a regular exercise program - 3 days/wk of 30 or more minutes of cardio - bumps you out of that category *even if you don't lose a pound!!!*

The researchers concluded that the fitness and wellness professions should be promoting the proven benefits of exercise over the ephemeral benefits of dieting for overall health and well-being. For those who've been battling the bulge of the waist by dieting, who've experienced the frustrations of loss and gain, of deprivation and privation, the thinking is, now, that you can more readily initiate some kind of regular and consistent exercise program and get real, more lasting results.

Needless to say, I was awfully happy to hear this affirmation that, if you'll just take the right STEPS, you'll get better results than if you continue meandering from one diet to another. You just gotta take these steps regularly.



News and Non-Random Acts of Kindness

Last spring, one of our own trainers, John Payne, went through a terrible ordeal. After a complex but still manageable shoulder procedure, he got an infection. A couple of weeks later, the infection, resistant to antibiotics, brought him down. With the long-term prospect of not being able to work, his friends at STEPS - clients and trainers - put together a night of music and nibbles to raise money for John and his family. With too many names to mention, let me personally thank all who entertained and contributed their energy and monies, including Randy Rayburn of Sunset Grill, Rick Bolsom of Tin Angel, and Robert Lipman of Lipman Brothers, who donated what makes any good party better: excellent food and drink. No one needed their arm twisted! Overall John netted over \$8000! And he didn't even have to sing for us. Best of all, he's back training and smiling and providing his usual high caliber of service, while keeping and baring both arms. Thanks again to everyone.

Congratulations to Stephanie Kemp on the birth of her son, Copeland Alan, June 7. Future trainer? We'll check back in 20 years or so. And Rachel Easley will soon be bringing on another potential trainer-baby. Expected in November. Congratulations, in advance. Moving away from babies, Chris Hite will be getting married to Molly on November 23. Congratulations are in order. Osa Omoregie has recently graduated with a degree as a Physician's Assistant so he may not be here as much as we'd like.

Lara BenEzra's departure marks the end of an era. Way back at the turn of the century she contacted me about a job opp; she would be moving from Florida. I hired her as a manager, and she single-handedly opened up STEPS at its current location despite all the inherent turmoil. Our friendship does not end at the doorstep, and though it is now a long distance one, I hope it persists. Good luck to Lara as she moves back to her homeland, Miami.

And then there's the sad news, though a few months late. Back in late May a dear friend and long-time trainer here, Lisa Froeb, died in a hiking accident. Survived by her husband, Luke, a professor at the Owen School, and son, Jake, and daughter, Halle, Lisa will always be remembered as a quiet but ever cheerful, bright and caring person in the broader community and in the gyms; and as a friend to all she met and knew. The shock we felt upon hearing about this does not come close to that experienced by her family and closest friends, but it does speak to the age old message we've all heard: you only have now - make the best of it. She did, and we all should try.

Many of you may not know Jack Thompson, who passed away a few weeks ago. Jack was a client of Chuck's from our first days on Belcourt all the way to our current location. Through all those years, he never lost his enthusiasm for fitness training, attributing much of his capacity for gentleman farming to the training he got here. Those of us old-timers who knew Jack fondly remember him as a very happy, positive person; a great family man whose love and concern for people, as well as his joy of living were always evident. And although he was unable to train for the last three years, Jack never stopped appreciating us at STEPS, especially Chuck. His passing is a reminder that what we do in our profession really matters, but who we are to our clients matters way way more.



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STEPS Fitness Menu

Solo Training: Traditional one-hour sessions of cardio, strength, stability, and flexibility. **12 sessions..... \$765**

Solo + Power Plate Training: one-hour sessions that incorporate Whole Body Vibration and other technologies to enhance bone density, muscle strength, power, agility, and balance. **12 sessions..... \$825**

Half Time: Utilizing our equipment, you take care of the cardio for 30-45 minutes, and work with your trainer for 30 minutes on strength, stability, and flexibility. **15 sessions..... \$700**

Duet: You and a friend for one hour with your trainer. **12 sessions..... \$940**

Biometrics: A successful program for long-term weight management balancing healthy eating with strength training. The 6-week program includes initial assessment, menu plan, 19 training sessions, and 2 month cardio membership. **\$1300**

* Initial consultation required for all new clients (\$100)