Running: Inside or out, it's good stuff

By Fred H. Hutchison

Curt and I started to run a week or two before the Thanksgiving break. Our goal was to run every day, even if it meant going outside and running short distances.

Daily running is important because procrastination is easier to tolerate if one can say, "Well, I didn't get up to run yesterday and yes, I could sure use that extra hour's sleep..."

The answer is simple, but difficult to admit: One morning I woke up and discovered that two years of easy living, little-to-no physical activity besides walking to class, and a diet crammed full of carbohydrates had left me out of shape and plenty flabby.

I had already been through two abso- lutely pathetic attempts at a running pro- gram: one late in the spring of 1973 and the other some three months after the first. Both efforts had started well, but had soon folded when aching shoulder muscles and sore calves were able to drown out the dwindling voice of my enthusiasm.

It seems that my enthusiasm for any one undertaking seldom comes in large doses, and I have been known to some as a chronic procrastinator. Neither of these characteristics are conducive to earnest daily running. Curt and I are both mem- bers of the same living group and after a few weeks, the subject of running came up again. Our discussion, became convinced that while single-person running efforts might gain from inertia of the individual, a joint program would offer, at the very least, daily reassurance and possibly a better chance for success.

It is probable factitious to call them running shoes, for they were originally fashioned during my senior basketball season in high school and have been worn on the gym floor, as well as a year and a half ago. The runway is easy to find. Just as smoking suits quickly become the dazed boxers, the shoes soon make their presence evident, even on occasion from a distance of ten feet.

Dressed, and relieved, we'd meet in the hall, exchange some short sentences about the weather and our assorted aches and pains, and then slowly descend the stairs to the red bottom of the stairs only long enough to tie our hoods and check watches. Since the path we travel was basically circular in design, one of us would ask the other, "Which way Curt?"

The other would point in the direction of his preference and we'd begin again.

As these thoughts raced through my muddled brain, my rear would perceive his drowsy footsteps on the carpet in the hallway. No quick knock, and then that fog-shrouded voice of his asking if I still wanted to run.

My answer to this query, more often a grunt than a real answer, would send him drowsily back to his room to don, and would launch my pain-eridden body into action. With a flurry (everything faster than a Texas drawl seems like a shrill chirping all melt from separate and distinct entities into a mood which starts as ripples on your subconscious and slowly washes over your entire being until your existence is bathed in the fulfillment of the morning. I've often experienced this same feeling on the way to breakfast after a long, slow shower and a change of clothes on the morning after an all-nighter.

This feeling so dominates your con- sciousness that you have rounded the first half of your morning run to become aware of the sidewalk and its inhabitants. The professors in their grey coats and; black sidewalks and its occupants. The balding professors in their grey coats and black shoes. They are usually easy to find. Just as smoking suits quickly become the dazed boxers, the shoes soon make their presence evident, even on occasion from a distance of ten feet.

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