

Fall walking & running: the health benefits go a long way

By Amy Cavalier

Did you know exercise can reverse aging? According to Dr. Micheael Roizen, dean of the College of Medicine at Upstate Medical University, the best way of preventing a disabling injury and aging is to keep some physical activity, such as walking, jogging or biking.



For Dr. Roizen, dean of the College of Medicine at Upstate Medical University, there are several steps to good exercise.

"Start by walking 30 minutes a day, or 10 minutes, three times a day," he says. "Unless you can't set aside the time for it, you'll fail, and feel bad about it."

Diabetes as well as prevent the disease in people with a family history, said Roizen.

"If you try and keep your blood sugar and blood pressure under control and exercise daily, you will slow and be able to better control the disease," said Roizen. "However," he said, "you should check with your doctor if you're a diabetic that's planning on beginning an exercise plan, because you will have to adjust your insulin or oral hypoglycemic dosage."

Those with arthritis can also benefit from regular exercise. "The most effective way to prevent or slow the progression of osteo-arthritis—the most common form of arthritis in people 60 and older—is to exercise, and to take vitamin C, D and calcium," said Roizen. For those already suffering from the debilitating disease, Roizen recommends take an anti-inflammatory two hours before exercise, and once you can move the troubled joints somewhat more easily, begin exercising those areas. He said eventually you can include strength building exercises as a part of the normal physical activity.

There are three levels to physical activity, said Roizen.

- The first is any physical activity – jogging, walking, gardening, or making beds, for example.

- The second, according to Roizen, is cardiovascular activity. In order to reach that level, Roizen said, you have to get your heart rate to over 70 percent of your age-adjusted maximum heart rate. You can calculate that by subtracting your age from 220. You can also tell you're getting a cardiovascular workout, according to Roizen, if you're sweating in a cool room.

Exercise is associated with living longer, and with reducing your chances of disability," said Roizen. It also decreases your risk of arterial aging, cancer and other diseases, he said. While that physical activity can be as strenuous as weight lifting, Roizen said, fitness and well-being can be achieved through a regular walking or jogging routine, done correctly.

Walking or jogging can help slow the progression of Type II

- The third level of physical activity is resistance exercises, which includes weight training, walking or jogging up hills. Roizen said each stage results in different benefits.

But don't try to reach the third level of activity on the first day. Roizen said the trick is beginning a workout that you'll stick with and progress in a gradual, safe manner. "Don't try to be superhuman right off the bat," said Roizen. "Start by walking 30 minutes a day, or 10 minutes, three times a day. Unless you can set aside the time for it, you'll fail, and feel bad about it," he said.

Once you establish a regular walking or jogging routine then Roizen said, add resistance exercises, for 10 minutes, three times a week. Resistance exercises build bone and muscle and that, Roizen said, makes you less likely to fall or break a bone.

Roizen said you should add cardiovascular exercise to the routine last. That's the point at which most people tend to stop, Roizen said, because they

don't have the time, or because they get injured. "If you do the other two types of exercises, before the third, you're less likely to get injured and more likely to be committed enough to the program to keep it up," according to Roizen.

There are a couple of rules to follow to avoid injury, he said. Always warm up by doing the same exercise you plan on doing at a very slow rate. Roizen said, "You want to put your joints and muscles through a full range of motions that they might go through in workout." He said to always stretch again at the end of a workout.

"Never increase more than 10 percent a week, no matter how good you're feeling, because that's why overuse injuries occur," Roizen said. "Never sacrifice form for weight. Make sure if you're lifting weights, to never do so much that you're not using proper form," said Roizen. For joggers, Roizen said, wear appropriate fitting socks. As for shoes, Roizen said, wear shoes built for the activity you are doing. Most

importantly, Roizen said, stop doing any exercise if you experience pain.

Roizen has some pointers to help those who often give up on shaping up.

"Start out with a program that you can work with," he said. "If you say 'I can do 30 minutes, three times a week,' make it a priority, carve out that time in your week and do it."

Roizen even suggests breaking the workout up into 10-minute, three times a day. "Most people can do that during their lunch break, or you could park your car 10 minutes away from work, so you get in a 10 minute walk on the way to work and 10 minutes on the way back after work." He said if you make it a point to do the walk with a partner, your more apt to stick with it as well, because you'll be reluctant to let the other person down.

Roizen has his own method to working a workout into his hectic schedule. "I try to schedule at least two hours of meetings a day as walking meetings if it's possible."

Onondaga Lake, Beaver Lake and Breitback parks: Some of CNY's best places to walk, jog

No matter what the fitness level or activity, Onondaga and Oswego counties have plenty of places perfect for walkers and joggers.

The network of sidewalks in the City of Oswego are filled with walkers and runners on almost any nice day during the year, and very often, the more avid ones can be spotted even in the winter months.

"The public works crew does a great job of maintaining our streets and lighting, making the city's network of sidewalks and parks a very safe and easy way to get around the city," said Bob Farrell, superintendent of Parks and Recreation for the City of Oswego.

Farrell said, "Brietbeck Park, West and East Linear, and the new railway tunnel that lead you to Fort Ontario are all very scenic walkways that are perfect for walking and jogging." East Linear Park is in the process of being extended. Farrell said there is also the Oswego High School track which has limited hours and a track at SUNY Oswego that is always open to the public. In addition, Farrell said, the completion of the new bridge and walkway on East Bridge Street, near Dunkin Donuts, makes it easier for people on foot to get to the first group of stores on the east side.

For a more wooded area in Oswego County, Janet Clerkin, with the Oswego County Department of Promotion and Tourism, said the county has a 26-mile recreation trail that runs from the City of Fulton, through an abandoned railroad bed to the Village of Cleveland and Town of Constantia. It's used for biking, walking, jogging, horseback riding, and cross-country skiing, said Clerkin. There's also "Independence Park,"



Bob Geraci, Commissioner of Onondaga County Parks, says that the county's recreational gem is Onondaga Lake Park in Liverpool.



For Bob Farrell, superintendent of Parks and Recreation in Oswego, Brietbeck Park, the Linear Parks, and the new railway tunnel that lead to Fort Ontario are all scenic walkways.

located east of the city, off State Route 104, near the Sithe Energy Station. Clerkin said the system of trails overlooking the lake is a perfect place to exercise, enjoy nature, and watch birds.

Also in Oswego County, in Willamstown near the Happy Valley Wildlife Management Area, there's "Camp Zirby," which Clerkin said is a really nice, handicapped accessible, walking trail through the woods. There's also three small kettle hole lakes formed by glaciers and an interpretive display on the area's wildlife and plants. The nearby "Happy Valley Wildlife Management" area, owned by The Department of Environmental Conservation, features over 4000 acres of dirt roads and some trails.

Onondaga County's recreational gem is Onondaga Lake Park. Commissioner of Onondaga County Parks, Bob

Geraci, called it "the people's park." Located in the center of town, on the east side of Onondaga Lake, the park features two trails. There's the 12-foot-wide asphalt trail and a 22-foot-wide traditional trail.

Walkers and runners can use the trails anytime, while bikers and in-line skaters can only use the walking trail before four o'clock on weekdays. Geraci said the trails are all have distance markers on them, so you can track your progress fairly easily.

On the west side of the lake, there's a natural trail that goes two and a half miles. That trail is open to anyone and is destined to be paved over the next several weeks.

"Our goal is to have paved trails in the more popular, urban parks, to create an opportunity for everyone to get out and enjoy them, at all times of the year," said Geraci.

"So in February, when there's a 60-degree day, you can go out on the trails and not worry about mud." Geraci said the county will be building a 12-and-a-half-mile trail that goes completely around the lake.

For a different experience, Geraci said, there's the Beaver Lake Nature Center, which offers eight miles of trails covered in bark chips.

For the more avid walkers, there's the 100 Mile Club. Those who walk 100 miles at the park get a T-shirt.

In all, between the Erie Canal trails, the Onondaga Lake Trails and the Creek Walk, Geraci said Onondaga County boasts a little over 30 miles of class 1, paved trails. Geraci said a good network of trails is something people in the community want as evidenced by the heavy use existing trails get.