



Last month I did an interview on Mid-morning Live, speaking about exercise and knee pain, and I made a comment that created some controversy. It wasn't my intention to create controversy; I was attempting to drive a point home and just speaking the truth, but some people didn't like it. The comment was:

“Walking Is NOT Exercise.”

For some of you, that statement is a no-brainer. But for others, I can hear the gasps and screams of shock and angst. Let me explain...

There are a few exceptions to this statement and they are if:

1. You are recovering from a serious illness or injury where you have been bedridden and haven't walked in a long time
2. You have seriously neglected your health to a point where the act of walking takes your breath away
3. You can consistently keep your heart rate above 120 bpm for longer than 20 minutes while walking and can progressively increase walking intensity (by the way, this increased intensity leads to jogging and then running)

Aside from those circumstances, walking is not considered exercise, and here's why:

- Walking is natural part of life. We use it as a means of getting from point A to point B
- There is not enough stress on the body to create the "training effect." Walking does not include the "overload" principle, "which states that a greater than normal stress or load on the body is required for training adaptation to take place. The body will adapt to this stimulus. Once the body has adapted, then a different stimulus is required to continue the change." [About.com]. Therefore, walking must become speed walking, then jogging, then running, which should then be increased and have varied intensities
- Walking is maintenance; meaning it is expected for living and maintenance is not exercise. Exercise is physical and mental exertion.

As a people, we have regressively become more complacent and lazy as technology has progressed. If we continue along this path, in 100 years stepping away from the computer will be considered exercise and new "controversial" statements will need to be made, like "getting up from your computer (or couch) is NOT exercise."

How does that statement sound? How do you think the statement, "Walking is NOT exercise" would have gone over 100 years ago?

When we work harder or longer hours at our desk jobs, it doesn't change the name of what we are doing. We just say I worked hard or worked overtime. In the same way, if you walk longer than you normally do, it doesn't become exercise, it becomes a long walk.

For centuries, people would walk miles to get to the next village, go to school, get food, water etc. It was the norm. Now people can avoid walking at every turn – driving to Walmart, getting into those little carts to drive around the store, taking escalators and elevators.

Let's stop being complacent with the bare minimum. Let's lead the kids of America into a future of health and prosperity and let's start by example. The obesity rates are staggering; the percentage of people consistently exercising is depressing. The funny thing is that everyone is obsessed with fitness and dieting, yet only a small percentage of the population is truly healthy. We are preoccupied with shortcuts instead of real, honest exercise and clean eating.

If walking gets you started on that path to health and consistent exercise then I'm all for it, just make sure to adapt and progress to exercise.

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