



2 Years Running...

By AAPSM Member - Doug Tumen, DPM

Day 760. January 16, 2023. Two years and running. It started during Covid inspired by my significant other, Jenna, who was doing a Covid challenge called “75 Hard”. It was a demanding daily challenge I was not interested in however, I said if you do that, I will run every day to support you. And that’s how it started.

I have been a runner throughout my entire adult life. I have completed 9 marathons and countless races over the years. I just never had a streak. In fact, I always advocated not running every day. My advice to my patients was it’s not a good idea to run every day. Take one or two rest days each week. Cross-train or just let your body recover. So, prior to now, the longest “streak” I remember in over 40 years of running was 6 days in a row.

So, when day 75 came and Jenna completed her challenge she asked, “are you going to keep going?” And I replied, why not. I’ll just run every day until something comes up, or I don’t have the time, or I get an injury, or Covid, or something.

According to Streak Runners International, Inc., and the United States Running Streak Association, Inc., a streaker must run at least one mile a day. “Running may occur on either the roads, a track, over hill and dale, or on a treadmill.”

For me, my streak is a commitment to run a minimum of 3 miles and at least 30 minutes a day. So far so good. I average somewhere between 4 and 5 miles. I was even able to inspire my son to run his first half-marathon with me this past October. It was a wonderful thrill to cross the finish line together.

The streak has delivered an abundance of learning and personal growth. In the past, end-of-day office fatigue was not uncommon. Or a day off was because of a personal or business commitment. There was also winter, journal club, vacation, weather, or just too many patients today. There was always something I could use as my excuse.

Through this streak, I discovered commitment is a choice. I grew into my streak. I check my schedule and the weather the night before. I know when going to bed if I am running at 6 AM or

after patients. No excuses. You quickly recognize once you start running fatigue fades away and is replaced with streams of new energy.

6 AM runs often deliver the magnificence of morning sunrise. If your run is toward evening, you feel the day fade into the night. There is an inspiration in the air.

Running can take you many places. Run number 500 was in windy, cold Iceland. Morning runs allowed me to discover the city of Copenhagen in Denmark. Seattle was explored in early morning runs on the waterfront with a great group of colleagues from the AAPSM.

While in Seattle I was even able to improve my running form with advice from our sports medicine experts Jay Spector and Golden Harper.

There have been challenging days including running through a case of Covid and running behind a snowplow after a frightful ice storm with downed trees.

Yes, there are winter days when I run on my treadmill. Some say, "oh you count that?" Yes, it is my streak, and is included in the official rules.

Throughout my life I have always been a "runner". It is part of my identity. My other identity is as a podiatrist. I became a podiatrist in part because of the running boom of the late 70's. My first marathon was the year after my residency when I finally had time to train. It was thrilling to be at the starting line on Verrazzano Bridge for the 1985 NYC Marathon with my brother, also a podiatrist right next to me. I hit "the wall" at mile 20 and walked much of the last 6 miles yet still managed to squeak in under 4 hours.

Because of running, I prioritize health and wellness. This helps me guide my patients into healthy lifestyles best for them. They come in and ask, "Still running Doc? How's the running going?" It is something I am passionate about, being healthy, and being active. I tell my patients an object in motion stays in motion. Let's start moving. It opens conversations about their health.

Certainly, our skills as a sports medicine community are healing injuries and getting our athletes back to pain-free activity. However, isn't our greatest good possibly getting our patients, family, and friends who are not athletes into fitness and exercise? How can we as sports medicine physicians inspire our patients to discover the benefits of exercise and a healthier lifestyle?

To my colleagues at AAPSM, you can be the inspiration. Begin your own streak. Whatever it may be. Run, walk, cycle, or any fitness combination. Your streak is yours. Your days improve. Your energy will soar. What you do will encourage others. Isn't that what we are all about?

I have no idea when my streak ends. It doesn't matter. It has taught me much and I am grateful for every day I get to lace up my running shoes and head out the door. Look forward to seeing everyone in DC for some early morning runs around the National Mall.