



Timely Information for Personal Success

A Journey to Higher and Holier Places

By Aaron J. Allie

Take a quick glance during your next 30-minute workout on the treadmill and you'll notice that exercise facilities primarily attract fairly healthy and mobile people. Some continue the journey of large weight-loss adventures, others prepare for a "sleeveless season," some enjoy the camaraderie of a class while still others will soon be competing in an athletic event.

But every now and then you hear a story that resets your thinking to a much humbler perspective. And partnering with this person as a personal trainer takes you on a wild, dedicated ride that, because of life's challenges, doesn't end with a 1st Place trophy or chiseled reflection in the club's mirrors. It's a different kind of reward.

Meet Jim. He transcended from a nearly crippled software engineer to super-dad to world adventurer. Jim does carry some accolades as he marched in the Texas A&M Marching Band. However, in the past 30 years he was diagnosed with ankylosing spondylitis and underwent three separate hip replacement surgeries. Multiple vertebrae in

his spine have fused together, his thoracic spine has twisted, and the range of motion in his shoulders has been compromised.

Jim's motivation for recruiting a personal trainer was highly emotional for both himself and his family. He was unable to stand comfortably for more than one minute, and his daughter's wish was to have him perform the father-son dance of 4-1/2 minutes at her wedding in six months.

Jim's programs focused on cardiovascular endurance, core stability, muscle strength and balance.

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Jim and his wife Jennifer visiting Israel.

Shoe-Buying Tips

- ❖ Find a shoe built to handle your bodyweight and running style (fore, mid or heel striking).
- ❖ Buy shoes that match the activity. Running shoes won't last long on hiking trails or with lateral movement sports like basketball or tennis.
- ❖ Try on shoes the same time of day you work out since feet swell throughout the day
- ❖ "Test drive" potential purchases with experts and specialty stores.
- ❖ Only purchase shoes from retailers who allow a 30-day or 30-mile return policy.

❖ Instead of buying 1 really expensive pair, buy 2 more moderately priced pairs. By alternating shoes with workouts, the cushioning has more time to dry and rebound between trainings.

❖ Choose new sneakers based on precise fit and performance qualities, NOT COLOR. Exercise places feet and ankles under stresses that far exceed your bodyweight. It's more important to feel good, then look good!

- Aaron Allie

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PO Box 322, Waupaca, WI 54981
Phone: 715-258-2448
Fax: 715-258-9048
Website: www.impact-publications.com
Email: info@impacttrainingcenter.net

Publisher: Scott Kolpien
Health Consultant: Aaron Allie
Managing Editor: Mike Jacquart

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Questions and Answers

Should Shoes Have Batteries?

Q: I've heard that some athletic shoes today have batteries. Can that be right?

A: Actually, yes, but let me backtrack a bit first. Athletic shoes have changed radically from Roger Bannister to LeBron James and continue to bloom alongside technology. Back then \$15 was breaking the bank, now you find new sneakers approaching \$200. Adidas unveiled the 'One' and '1.1 Intelligence' lines in the last decade that retailed for \$250. These shoes used batteries and built-in microchips to adjust performance components of the shoe based on bodyweight, speed and terrain.

I'd rather leave batteries where they belong and focus on shoe-buying hints. (See article elsewhere on this page.)

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He interestingly was strong with dumbbells but very weak with cardio pieces like the rower and Adaptive Motion Trainer. Flexibility and posture progressions were tough because of his condition, but he used the stability ball and was bent in ways he hadn't been bent in a while.

The wedding bells of July rang and the daddy-daughter dance went off without a hitch, leaving Jim thirsting for his next conquest. This coincided with his church planning a trip to Israel, which raised Jim's eyebrows. His next routine included obstacle courses, slightly heavier dumbbell sets and a weekly trip from level C to a roof totaling 200 stairs.

The poorly oxygenated stairwell rang with "I can't make it!" or "I'm going die!" only a couple of times, and his time from bottom to top improved. His wife Jennifer eventually hired a personal trainer just to keep up with her husband! Jim boarded the plane at his best physical condition in decades and hiked, observed, relished and was enlightened for 10 days in the Holy Land. He added, "I learned that even lofty goals are attainable, if you commit to them and work hard."

Jim's story was definitely a highlight in my career and quickly erases any petty excuses in my own life. I hope it provides a similar inspiration to yours. ■

Aaron J. Allie is a personal trainer and writer in Waupaca, Wis., and he serves as health consultant for Lifestyle Tips.

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