

FITNESS FORUM

It doesn't have to be perfect

As summer shifts into high gear, there is absolutely no better time to start molding and sculpting a “more fit you” than now. Depending on your tastes, you could treat yourself to a different activity nearly every day of the week to keep things fun while burning calories and toning up. How about an invigorating 5k on The Canal on Monday, backed by a relaxing swim in one of the numerous area pools on Wednesday? Follow it up with a scenic, yet challenging hike in the Sourlands on Saturday and you’ve just put together a recipe for a sounder mind, healthier heart, and a smaller waist.

If asked, most would agree their quality of life would improve from the aforementioned benefits however, admit realistically they would fail to take action. Why? Perhaps it has to do with the fact that our lives are so hectic and overly scheduled. The previous scenario simply sounds too perfect to fit in our daily routines of work, kids, appointments and unaccounted for miscellaneous happenings. However, as I once learned things don’t always have to be perfect in order to be done. Sometimes you just have to do it.

Each year for the past few years, I had participated in the annual Run for Dad 5k in Mercer County on Fathers Day. It is a fairly flat, fast race with the proceeds benefiting prostate cancer research and I had always enjoyed running it. On the day of last year’s race, my wife stated she thought it would be a good idea for me to run with my two year old son in the jogging stroller. Now, running with the jogging stroller was nothing new to me and I rather enjoyed the peace and quiet of the run after my son fell asleep within minutes of the start. I had never considered, however, running with him on race day. What would this do to my time?

My wife has been a teacher for twelve years, and I’ve become quite accustomed to the first grade teacher looks that she has given me when greeting something I’ve said with disapproval. However, this

one was different from any I had seen before. It was a strange hybrid of disappointment and *Are you really serious?* “It’s Fathers Day,” she said “Why don’t you spend some time with your son?” It was a really hard one to argue.

As I stood in the pack of runners waiting for the gun to go off, I had a nervous energy that was different than previous races I had done. Even my son could sense that this was going to be a different run. After all, we had never run with others before. He liked it and I could tell there would be no napping in this run. The gun sounded and we were off. As I was unaccustomed to weaving through so many people, we started off a little slow but soon we found our groove. As we started passing people, my son began saying “Faster Daddy!” This was pretty cool.

As the race progressed, I had forgotten about trying to beat my time from last year. I was having a great time and so was my son. Each time we approached another runner he would command “Faster Daddy!” and I would oblige. The highlight of the race was yet to come. Towards the end, I was absolutely spent. Having had to speed up on command had exhausted me and my legs and my shoulders had begun to tighten. As we approached another runner, I could tell he was confused by the way he cocked his head around to the sound of the stroller. He took one look at us and said, “You have got to be kidding me!” and without missing a beat my son said, “Faster Daddy!” and with that I found new spring in my step.

Although my time was nearly four minutes off of my personal best at the time, I didn’t care because I realized that I had just run the perfect race. For more information visit us online at www.ptsprinceton.com.

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