

Area women try jogging

Physical fitness means a superior way of life

By MARGARET MILLER

Less than three years ago, there was 80 pounds more of Mary Gaglead than there is now.

And the Livonia woman found just a little exercise wore her out. What's more, thyroid operations had rendered her vocal cords almost useless, so she could hardly speak above a whisper.

All of these factors contrived to making her a shy, withdrawn woman for whom life was just a bit of a drag.

All that is turned around now, and Mary, now 50, spells the difference with a seven-letter word, F-I-T-N-E-S-S.

She goes four times a week to the Livonia Family Y to effect these changes. Her friends, Ruth Stoddard and Peggy Harless of Livonia and Florence DeSempelaere of Canton, agree it's the way to go.

"Fitness is now a way of life," is the way Shirley Ritter, physical education director at the Livonia Y, put it. "And I happen to feel that the YMCA's cardiovascular health program, which is going on all over the country, is one of the best ways to achieve fitness."

"It's Mary's way of life now, and it has made her feel good. She is more healthy, and through her associations here at the Y she has changed socially."

Over at the Wayne-Westland Family Y, similar ideas come from fitness director Carmen Keay.

"Total fitness is what we stress in the Y program," she stated. "I feel it is important for all to be fit emotionally as well as physically. This is not just an exercise program. We treat each person as an individual, and we treat the mind as well as the body."

THE CARDIOVASCULAR health program as defined by the national YMCA is beginning a new term with registration next week in both the Livonia Y, Stark north of Schoolcraft, and the new Westland branch, 527 S. Wayne.

The procedure involves a screening—scheduled Saturday, Jan. 13, in Livonia and by appointment in Westland—to check four commonly accepted risk areas, smoking, cholesterol, blood pressure and percentage of body fat. These results are submitted to the participant's physician.

Following screening there is a fitness evaluation, including tests of cardiorespiratory endurance, body composition, flexibility and muscular strength and endurance.

Then those who would be more fit sign up for classes in designed to build cardiovascular endurance, at least three a week, said Mrs. Ritter.

These include, at the Livonia branch, men's and women's fitness, dynamic aerobics and senior citizen's fitness. There are 15 times a week that they are offered.

In Westland, there are such offerings as Dancefit, slymnastics, body toning and adult fitness, a coeducational evening exercise program.

In addition, participants are encouraged to get into some sports like racketball, tennis, jogging or swimming. And while they are doing all the exercising, they can work in special nutrition programs to cut calories and make the most of the food they eat.

WHILE BOTH Y branches prepared for their new terms—the Westland branch will introduce its classes with an open house 5-5 p.m. Sunday—Mary Gaglead talked about how she started toward cardiovascular fitness.

"I had seen a picture in the Observer of a couple of women getting an evaluation," she began in a voice that is still husky but now well above a whisper.

"Well, really it was my husband, Larry, who saw it, and he said he thought I should begin exercising at the Y."

She decided to try the program, but the going was pretty difficult at first after her evaluation.

"At first I couldn't keep up with the class more than five minutes," she related. "But I kept trying and keeping track, and now I can go the 20 minutes." (Mrs. Ritter explained that the fitness classes involve warmup, then 20 minutes of non-stop exercise, and then a cooldown.)

Mary was just getting started on the fitness routine when her friend Ruth Stoddard talked her into going jogging regularly. "I had thought I had to lose the weight first because I expected breathing problems," Mary said. "But now I can even talk while I jog."

She also started playing racketball.

And now the regular routine for Mary—and Ruth and Florence and Peggy, who is back in fitness classes a year after undergoing back surgery—

is two miles of jogging four times a week, followed by a fitness class and racketball.

"Then we all go out to lunch—salads if Tora is with us," Mary said.

TORA DUNN is the Livonia Y's fitness coordinator, and it is she who works closely with participants, making regular evaluations and setting up nutritional programs.

Mary has checked her progress every six months for the three years she's been working on better fitness.

"We check pulse rates before and after exercise," she said. "At first participants work up to 70 per cent of their maximum capacity, and gradually get up to 85 per cent. Mary's at 80 per cent now."

"I've saved the charts, and I like to check them to see my progress," Mary said.

The weight is down now and the fitness rating definitely up, but Mary Gaglead has no plans to change her routine.

"I feel great now, and I know I need to keep on. There are days when I don't really feel like exercising, but then I get to class and get going and I find I am having fun."

"I see a lot of heavy people come here and try the program but then drop out. I'd like them to know how good it is if you stay with it. Now, even when I'm on vacation, I do my exercises so I won't get stiff."

And the added dividend has been the improvement in her voice. Her speech therapist, Dale Friels of the St. Mary Hospital staff, has been amazed at the difference regular exercise made, she said.

SHIRLEY RITTER would like to see many more men and women and young people added to the fitness program rolls.

"This is the time of year when people hopefully will step back and evaluate," she said.

"Fitness involving regular exercising and sensible eating is really the new way of life. Dieting alone will only reduce weight, and exercise alone will only turn fat into heavier muscle. You need both, and the best way to fitness is total involvement in a program like ours."



Mary Gaglead (front) jogs with her Livonia Family Y friends, Ruth Stoddard (left), Florence DeSempelaere and Peggy Harless.

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