A Testimony on how GETTING FIT works to reduce health risks

Three years ago at 49 years old I was carrying 208 pounds on my 5 foot 10 inch body frame. My blood pressure was 168/104 and I was experiencing migraine headaches at least two times a month. I went to my doctor for my annual check-up and he immediately put me on high blood pressure medicine. He gave me some general information on heart smart diets, and how to reduce cardiac risk. My cholesterol was normal but my triglycerides were 374 in the high risk range. All other health indicators were normal.

I went home realizing that I was not in good shape and my chances of living a long life, and having a future healthy life were being compromised by being over weight. I decided that I was going to increase my exercise regime and lose 40 pounds. Although I lived an active life and played sports, it obviously was not enough to stay fit.

I bought a bicycle, joined the local bicycling club, and started to ride 3 to 4 days per week putting in up to 150 miles per week. On the off riding days, I put on my in-line skates and bladed 6 miles 2 to 3 days per week. I also added some weight training to my weekly exercise program. During the winter months, I continued to play hockey 2 days per week, and added a spinning class at the YMCA 2 days per week. I made EXERCISE a priority in my life. I exercised after getting home from work, before eating or doing anything else in the evenings. Not only did this schedule provide my daily workout, it also was a great stress release from the work day. When I sat down for dinner, I was relaxed and my evening hunger craving was diminished. It was easy to not over eat.

In addition to burning calories and increasing my aerobic exercise, I started cutting various tems from my diet. I gave up drinking pop, eating pizza, and high fat snacks. I cut down on the serving portions, but did not go on a specific diet. I added more vegetables, fruits, and salads to my diet.

At my annual health check in January, I weighed in at 165 pounds, my blood pressure was normal (120/80), and my triglycerides were down to 53 at the low end of the normal range. I was still taking high blood pressure medication. Not only was the weight loss a goal of mine, but I wanted to go off the medication. My doctor agreed to let me try to go off the medication as long as I monitored my blood pressure at home. I have been off the medication since January, and my blood pressure has been normal; last reading 118/78. I have not had a migraine headache for over 2 years.

It has been three years of hard work, 1-1½ hours of exercise daily, but fun. And the results are worth it. I am fit and healthy. Physically I feel great and mentally I have never felt better. Even my adult children say - "what' s with Dad? He is a different person."

So, control your weight, stay fit, and reduce stress. It's not that hard, if you make exercise a priority in you life. And the rewards are great!