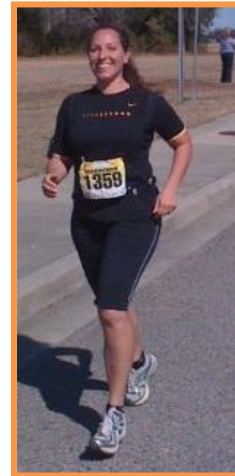


Health & Fitness Newsletter

By: Christine McInnes

Disclaimer: This newsletter is based on the information I have discovered through my passion of health and fitness. I am not a health professional. Seek the advice of your physician before starting a new diet and/or exercise program.



“Music & Exercise”

I have a hard time deciding whether listening to music while exercising is a good idea or not. When it comes to pumping me up and giving me that extra boost of energy, the right song seems to do the trick. But could there be health risks involved? External health risks are obvious and have always been in the back of my mind. When you are outside walking, running, biking or rollerblading along traffic with your music pumping in your ears, you may not notice the uneven pavement below you; someone could drive up behind you without you knowing; you could get struck by a vehicle or bicycle because they don't know you can't hear them coming or worse you could be attacked by a person who knows you can't hear them coming. Any time you go outside especially alone, you need to be aware of your surroundings. Music slows our reaction time and it has the power to keep you exercising no matter how bad your form or technique is causing you to become injured without noticing. Recently, I have been personally alerted to internal risks that could be involved and wanted to know what my reader's experience and thoughts on the matter were.

One of my readers, Heidi was out on a run, listening to music from a headset and running with traffic (even though she knows she should be running against traffic). At one point, she got the feeling she was being followed. She turned around to find a creepy guy in a white van following close behind. She picked up her speed as her heart raced and adrenalin rushed. She couldn't help but worry what this man's intentions were and if she had put herself at risk. After a few minutes of running at top speed, she turned around again and he was gone. She never even heard him approach her, turn around or take another road and she knows he never passed her. This incident has changed her opinion of running with music and she is thankful nothing else happened. Because of the risks involved in listening to your music and not your surroundings many states have mandated that if you are cycling while listening to music, you need to have the left earpiece out so you're able to hear traffic.

Like I mentioned before, I never put too much stock into the negative internal power of music and exercise until a recent run. Through years of running, I have become in tune with my body, however blasting music in my headset doesn't allow me to stay connected the way I should, especially in extreme conditions. Last month during Stamina Sunday, I headed out for a long run on a hot and humid day. I was having a hard time finding the motivation and energy to keep going. I decided music was what I needed so I put my earpieces in,

Reader's Poll

Do you listen to music while exercising?

Yes = 50%

But not outside at night = 16%

Only one earpiece = 16%

External Speakers only = 9%

If it's not music it's my TV = 9%

No = 18%

But I watch TV = 20%

Sometimes = 24%

Exercise? = 8%

Comments from Reader's Poll:

Amanda (Athlete – Feb. 2011) almost always listens to music while exercising. However she **never** listens to her music while running at night so she is aware of her surroundings.

Mary (Athlete - 2010) listens to music while training but never during an event.

Jessica definitely listens to music while exercising and says “It is usually something upbeat and fast. It seems to give me more energy, motivation and pushes me. It takes me someplace beside the treadmill and keeps my mind occupied!”

Kelly only listens to music when she has to run along side traffic but doesn't when she is out in the woods. In the woods she loves to be one with nature, listen to the trees, birds and her breathing. When she is low on energy and in an environment that she doesn't find as pleasant, she plays the tunes because she needs to be disassociated.

Leslie (Athlete – Aug. 2010) listens to music when she goes for a run but only plays music on her external speakers so she is aware of her surroundings. This also alerts others she is coming.

Anne doesn't have a habit of listening to music while exercising although she watches TV while walking on her treadmill and does exercise videos such as P90X.

Amy says if she isn't listening to music, she has the TV on while exercising.

Kathy informed me that she listens to music every morning while she swims at her gym. I have to admit that sounds really interesting and seems safe in the aspect that you don't have to worry about traffic. She has a waterproof case for her I-pod and waterproof ear buds. She isn't a big fan of listening to the music while swimming in the ocean because there is too much going on (waves, currents, sea creatures).

Neil says he listens to music when he runs but not when he lifts. He also thinks he might run better without his music because he is always playing with his iPod trying to find the perfect song instead of focusing on running.

This month's athlete, Jack says he only wears one earpiece when he listens to music while cycling.

Matt from No Meat Athlete says he “sometimes listens to music, sometime audio books. And sometimes nothing!” He said to check out his blog www.nomeatathlete.com/best-running-songs. It is a list he made but says to make sure you read the comments and suggestions by others too.

blasted my music and what do you know... my pace picked up, I felt great and back into what I thought was a great pace as I was pumping my fists in the air and singing out loud. Fast forward 45 minutes... My head is pounding, my stomach is turning, my heart is racing, sweat is pouring off me and I was breathing heavier than I should. I hadn't realized how bad my headache had gotten until I stopped listening to music and started listening to my body. “Wow, I feel like crap!” is all I could think as I ran towards the public restrooms and found myself cooling off in an outside shower. But even that wasn't enough to rejuvenate me and I had to cut my run 3 miles short or face possible heat exhaustion or stroke. Had I listened to my body, slowed my pace and took a few more hydration stops, I may not have gotten to that point. I fear what could have happened, had I kept my music blasting and kept going.

There are plenty of other athletic activities besides running and cycling where music is acceptable and not dangerous. However you will notice people use external speakers and not a headset. These activities include: dancing, exercise classes and videos. In the Military during basic training they use cadence to keep pace. Runners also use metronomes which makes a beeping noise to keep you on pace. Once we hear a rhythm or tempo our bodies want to follow that pace. This is not good if we are listening to a tempo that is too slow, too fast or constantly changing because the slightest difference will throw you off.

In the article “Listening to Music while Running or Exercising” by Dr Romano, he says that you will not achieve any serious results if you are constantly listening to music and not your body while exercising. He says, “Any elite or competitive athlete will tell you how much focus it takes to train and compete, you will NEVER see any professional athlete doing any serious training with headphones on. Why? Because they understand the importance of keeping their focus and prefer to listen to what their bodies are telling them. Every now and then, someone will jog with

some music for a little bit, but never do they constantly train with music.”

Now that we are all aware of the hazardous potential of blasting music into our headsets, we can be more careful and cautious. Don't just listen to your surroundings but make sure you're able to listen to your body too. Our bodies are amazing machines and let us know how they are doing so take care of it.

“Live to Ride - Ride to... Hike”

This month's athlete, Jack Roman is the man I got the idea of tracking my monthly and yearly miles and sharing them. For a few years now I have been getting monthly updates from Jack showing how many miles he has trekked each month and what his year-to-date miles are. It is so motivating!! From 2003 to the end of August 2011, he has cycled 57147.6 miles!! Although I don't cycle like he does, I am impressed with mileage and the fact that he tracks it; it makes me want to be active, track what I have done and then share it in hopes of motivating others. You don't have to be a cyclist or runner to track, it can be minutes. Here is a little more about Jack and how he lives to ride and rides to... hike.

During the interview process I asked Jack what his favorite athletic activity. I am happy I did! I would have assumed it was cycling but his response was, “Hiking!” He goes on to say, “I got back into cycling to get in shape to go on hiking trips. I do not live in an area with mountains so I had to do my hiking only on vacations to Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Canada, etc... I use my vacations to get away from people and smell the fresh air in the mountains. Cycling was a good way to get in shape. It has always been high on my list of favorite athletic pastimes... Cycling is the activity that I do the most.” In high school, he enjoyed football, basketball, baseball and ran track. He also really enjoyed and still does enjoy throwing around a frisbee as well as playing golf and tennis.

Jack remembers cycling as far back as when he got his first tricycle. When he was a teenager, riding his bike was a means of transportation. He grew up in a small town and would ride his bike everywhere (to the local swimming hole, to other friend's houses, school, work, to do laundry and other errands). In college he did not have a bike that was in working order and didn't ride much from 1988 to 1998. But in 1998 he joined the St. Joseph Bike Club and rode with them on Wednesday evenings and some weekends. In 1999 he rode in his first MS 150 which is a 150 mile bike tour to raise money and awareness for Multiple Sclerosis.

All of his riding to this point was done on various 10 speed bikes which he bought second hand for less than a \$100. But in 2000, he bought his first brand new bike.... a Trek 1000 and started riding even more. In 2003, he purchased his first carbon fiber bike at a local bike shop. This was also when he started tracking his monthly miles because his bike club published a newsletter which included miles of anyone who wanted to submit them. Now



Jack during the Triple By Pass ride in CO. A 120 mile bike ride from Evergreen to Avon.



Jack and his friend Bob Bailey climbing Trail Ridge Road in CO.
R.I.P. Bob. You will be missed by many.

Jack has five bikes: Trek 1000, Aegis Victory, Gary Fisher mountain bike, Surly Karate Monkey, and a custom built Ramblumtick and he could tell you how many miles he has trekked on each bike.

In 2004 Jack was introduced to Spencer Klaassen and distance cycling. Spencer who joined the St Joseph's Cycling group asked Jack if he wanted to ride ACROSS Missouri. It was the first time Jack had ridden 100+ miles back to back. In 2005, Spencer got Jack a membership with Randonneurs USA. According to their website "Randonneuring is long-distance unsupported cycling. This style of riding is non-competitive in nature and self-sufficiency is paramount. Friendly camaraderie, not competition, is the hallmark of Randonneuring". And Jack informed me that their shortest rides are 200k. He also said, "I started riding longer rides with Spencer and anyone else that wanted to go or go by myself. There is something about planning and riding a 100+ mile ride by yourself. Finish riding a century in seven hours or so makes you feel good about yourself. Long rides are not so much about the physical aspect of cycling but also about the mental aspect."

Spencer helped Jack push beyond what he thought his limits were and he has seen many places he would not have seen otherwise. Some of Jack's cycling adventures consist of riding across Missouri and Nebraska, riding 200 miles in Death Valley and a three-week self-supported tour on a mountain bike pulling a Bob-trailer around Chile. He says, "Cycling is not only a good means of exercise... You see a lot of things from a bike that you cannot see while riding in a vehicle and has allowed me to meet some good people. I first met my wife while on a bike ride. I hope to ride for many years to come."

Parts of cycling that we have to be cautious about are accidents and Jack has had his share. He says, "One thing that I have learned over the years is that if you have a bicycling accident, make your first ride, once you are able to ride, over the place where the accident occurred. If you cannot mentally handle the ride over the location of the accident, you will have trouble riding again." He had a few falls as a child, one of which left a bump on the back of his head that he can still feel. In 2001, he was riding close behind his boss as they came to an intersection the light turned yellow, Jack thought his boss was going to ride through but he didn't. Jack slammed into the back of him breaking a bone just above his elbow.

The year 2004 was a very rough year for Jack in terms of accidents. He slid across the pavement twice when his bike slipped on ice and once when he was going over a wet train track but that was nothing compared to what happened in May when he had his worst accident to date. He said "I was riding to our old bike store to meet other riders for a century ride that day. As I rode down a hill about 20 mph, the rain from the night before had washed mud into the road so I swerved into the other lane to miss the mud. I do not remember what happened next". When he came to he was in the hospital with two broken ribs, a concussion, a jammed left shoulder, really bad road rash all over and a four hour memory loss. Luckily, his friends found him after his accident and got him to the hospital. The amazing part is that he was back on his bike two weeks after the accident. Six weeks after the accident he completed a very strenuous ride called the Triple By Pass in Colorado.



Jack after climbing Mt. Evans in Colorado. The road up Mt. Evans is the highest paved road in America.



Jack by the Ocean in Chile

On February 17, 2011, he was involved in yet another accident. He signaled to turn by putting his left arm out and started to turn left as a SUV passed him on the left. Jack hit the SUV in the side which knocked him down sending him rolling and skidding across the pavement. The driver was summonsed for improper passing. Jack was in the ER for about 2 1/2 hours. They took several x-rays of his chest and found three cracked ribs. He also had road rash on his left knee, left hip, left elbow, and both shoulders. But again, he was back on his bike a little over three weeks after the accident riding... slowly.

Jack lives a healthy lifestyle over all. He has never smoked or used any drugs. He used to drink pop but stopped drinking it 22 years ago. His diet consists of whole foods not pre-made meals or fried foods. He often makes his own meals and doesn't eat out much. He cooks chicken, pork, fish and has beef (from time to time) and trims the fat off his meats before cooking it. He also enjoys all kinds of vegetables and fruits and started to increase the amount of organic foods in his diet. He says, "The one problem with my diet is that I like food too much. My portion sizes are bigger than the normal sizes. I have always been a big eater."

His athletic/health aspirations are to remain healthy. He plans to be able to bike, hike, throw around a frisbee, etc. until he's in his 80s, 90s and even 100s. When I asked what he would tell someone who is interested into getting into cycling he said, "Cycling is not only for the young. It is for anyone of any age. I have friends that still ride in their 70s and 80s. I have friends that were heavy drinkers, smokers, overweight, had health problems that are now healthier because of cycling. Every cyclist no matter if they are a pro cyclist, started with a long ride beginning around the block at some time in their lives. You can start eating healthy or participating in some type of physical activity at any age." His favorite cycling quote is "Happiness is a tailwind but a headwind makes you stronger."

Now that you have learned a little about Jack and his cycling adventures, find something you enjoy doing and share your accomplishments with others. This will help motivate you and the people you share your accomplishments with. The activity you do the most may not be your favorite but find something you enjoy so when it is time to do the things you love, you have the energy, strength and stamina to do it!

****Recipe of the Month****

Pumpkin Bean Soup

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 red bell pepper
1 onion
2 cloves garlic
1 teaspoon ground cumin
15 oz can pumpkin puree
15 oz can black beans, rinsed & drained
14 oz can whole kernel corn, drained
2 cups vegetable stock
8 oz can tomato sauce
1 teaspoon fresh cilantro leaves
Salt and pepper to taste

Chop the onions, peppers and garlic. Heat the olive oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Stir in peppers and onions; cook and stir until the onion has softened and turned translucent, about 5 minutes.

Mix in the garlic and cumin and cook, stirring, for an additional 2 minutes. Pour in the pumpkin puree, black beans, corn, stock, tomato sauce, and cilantro; season to taste. Bring the soup to a gentle boil; reduce the heat and simmer, covered, for 25 minutes.

Source: Allrecipes.com

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. I put this together to help motivate you so I would love to hear your feedback. Please feel free to e-mail me with any questions or comments you may have: mcinnes.fitness@gmail.com.

Also check out my web-site: www.mcinnesfitness.weebly.com And become a fan of my Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/McInnes-Fitness/137086976362110>