

The 30 Pound Club

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July 14, 2011 – Grand Rapids, MI

Working Out in the Heat and Sun

I was in Dallas, Texas, last weekend, and they've been having a July heat wave—the temperature every day I was there was over 100 degrees. I ran two of the three days; I didn't run the day I arrived because it was in the afternoon. The other two days, I ran before the sun rose. Really, that's the only time it's safe to run in that kind of heat, and both days it was still 80 degrees when I began.

When it's that hot, you have two choices: workout inside or workout before the sun is too high in the sky. The first day, I ran out Commerce Street for a mile and a half, crossed over to Elm Street and ran back to Dealey Plaza. Of course, I ran around the entire square to touch a piece of history. But just about the entire way, skyscrapers blocked most of the sun—didn't make it that much cooler, but it kept direct sunlight off me.

The second morning, I headed in the opposite direction just before sun-up. I had noticed on Yahoo maps that there seemed to be a running path. It was actually a road that went down into the spillway for flood control. I didn't plan this—those who know me well know I'm directionally challenged—but out of my 45-minute run, I was in the sun for three seconds. Between the berm of the spillway and the skyscrapers heading back into the city, that's all the sun exposure I got. I couldn't have planned it better.

If you're going to walk, run, or bike outside in the sun this summer, I would recommend you try to stay in the shade if you can. If not, try to get through the sunny areas when you begin and the shaded areas on the way back.

Couple more tips:

Drink water before, during, and after your workout: the rule is four ounces of water or sports drink every 15 minutes during outdoor activity and for two hours after. You may think you've replenished the fluids, but don't take chances. Drink up, and make sure the kids and spouse drink up, too.

Apply sunblock, and get the type that is water resistant. Apply it liberally. I didn't need it during my run, but I didn't know that before I took off. Speaking of skin, this month's webinar is on healthy skin and skin conditions. The invitation will go out this weekend, so look for it and sign up—space will be limited.

It's possible to exercise in the sun and heat, but you have to be smart about it. Even if you're doing something less strenuous, such as gardening or playing croquet, keep these tips in mind. Taking precautions is critical because too much heat and sun when you're not prepared can be deadly.

One and Done.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet



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