



December 7, 2011 – Grand Rapids, MI

More Muscle Damage

I'm a runner because I like running more than any other form of exercise. There's a sense of power when you can go from one place to another several miles away just using your legs. But the past two years, my running has been more off than on due to injuries, travel schedules, and the lack of desire to run outside in the bitter cold of a Michigan winter.

This fall, I've committed to working one hour every day to get my body in prime running condition. I started by walking one minute then running one minute for an hour on a treadmill. Before long, I increased the walk/run ratio to 2:1, then 3:1. At that point, I started running on the track in my health club. Run a quarter mile, walk 100 yards. Run a half mile, walk 100 yards.

Finally last week, I ran one consecutive mile—that was a real milestone. This past Friday, for no good reason at all that I can think of, I ran four miles without stopping to walk. I could feel my body start to get fatigued after three and a quarter miles, but I finished four.

Four miles when I could barely do a mile two days earlier? That increase in mileage definitely induced muscle damage; I could feel the glow of my muscles. In fact, I had trouble sleeping because I could feel my body dealing with recovery.

I left you with a question on Monday: are intervals the only way to increase muscle damage with aerobic work? The answer is *no*. If you increase the amount of work overall in a given time frame, that will also induce the damage necessary to increase metabolism; for example biking seven miles instead of five while keeping the time constant. Another approach is to increase the time of your workout: instead of a 30-minute walk, make it 45 minutes or even an hour. You'll feel it, trust me.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

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