

Running in Circles- Naked

Jonathan Shopiro

When I saw the announcement about the “Streak the Cove” 5K run to be held on May 22, I first decided I wouldn’t do it because we were planning to be in New Jersey at that time. But after I thought about it for a while I decided to postpone our annual northward migration and sign up. It would be my first road race in 35 years and my first nude race ever. I just didn’t want to miss it!

I suppose all this requires some explanation. During the winter I live with my wife, Susan, at Cypress Cove, a nudist resort in Florida, and in the summer we live in a cabin at Sky Farm in New Jersey. Cypress Cove is hosting a 5 kilometer (3.1 miles) run, organized by Pete Williams of Enterprise Media, LLC.

I was a casual runner years ago when I was a graduate student but I gave it up when I finished school and started a job and a family. Four years ago with the children on their own and after leaving the job on disability, we moved to Cypress Cove. The Cove is just about an ideal place for nude running: its 1.35 mile

main loop road is paved and flat; the weather is usually warm, and particularly important to me since I am legally blind, the traffic is very light, consisting mostly of bicycles and golf carts. Since I had recently had some heart trouble that left me with a stent, but no restrictions on activities, I started running again at age 59.

Since I hadn’t run or done any strenuous exercise in so many years I started out slowly, just once around the park alternating a fast walk with an easy jog. I gradually increased my distance until I was running three times around about three times a week, with lap swimming in between. While I’ll never be the runner I was in my 20’s (and I wasn’t that much of a runner even then), I’m quite pleased with my improvement.

I don’t know where to draw the line between casual and serious running, but I’m sure I would fit on the casual side. Even though I’ve increased my running to five or six times a week in preparation for the *Streak*. I’m sure serious runners run further,



photos by Susan Shopiro

DISTANCE MARKERS ENCOURAGE Jonathan to keep going as he trains for the “Streak the Cove” 5K race hosted by Cypress Cove.

work much harder, and focus on improving their performance over time, while I just try to do the best I can without killing myself each time I run.

I usually run early in the morning. I put on socks, sneakers, headband, and add a t-shirt if it's chilly out. I put a little Vaseline on my inner thighs to prevent chafing. Then I leave the house and start off slowly to warm up. I run by myself and don't use a stopwatch so there's no competition, but I try to be aware of how I'm feeling—whether this is a good day to try to push myself or whether I should take it easy and just concentrate on getting done.

Running isn't easy but it has its pleasures. I'll be running along and suddenly I'll smell orange blossoms or other flowers, as if I had run into an invisible cloud of sweet aroma. Later I may hear the warbling squawk of sand hill cranes flying overhead. I feel the sun and the wind on my naked body as it works close to its capacity—breathing hard with arms and legs pumping. I see people walking and I always say hello since I usually can't tell if it's someone I know or not. I almost never see another runner. As I pass the distance markers painted on the street every tenth of a mile I think about how far I have to go and how I am feeling. If I am on my last lap and I'm feeling okay I try to push myself to run a little faster the rest of the way.

When I get back to the house after my third lap, I stop running and walk for a while to cool down. Then I take a shower in our outdoor shower. Our dog, Buster, always joins me in the shower. I don't know why since otherwise he hates to get wet. Then it's back in the house for a well earned breakfast and the rest of my day.

This may all seem like a lot of unnecessary work and of course it is, but I find it quite rewarding. I feel pride and accomplishment that I am doing something that few people my age are willing to do or are capable of. I'm a little frustrated that I haven't lost as much weight as I'd like, but I feel in pretty good shape and my health and vigor are, I'm sure, a lot better than they would be without my running. Also, Susan seems to be pleased with my renewed healthy attitude. **N**



JONATHAN ENJOYS A MUCH DESERVED cool down, while Buster keeps him company.

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