

Chatting with The Good Dr. Laura Shook
September 2009

What a glorious morning this was and still is. I awoke early, fed Jordan the cat (first things first) then dressed in the exercise clothes I laid out last night. I wear good athletic shoes with quality, over the counter, orthotics that add stability to my stride and relieved the foot pain I was developing. My socks are cushioned reducing blisters and tender spots on my feet. My undergarments fit and provide support where I need it. The rest of my clothing is all about comfort, absorption of sweat, and the reflection of light. Lastly, I don a bright orange vest. Thus prepared, I step out into the coolness of the predawn for an hour or more of walking, breathing, contemplation of the day to come and the occasional greeting from a fellow walker or neighborhood dog.

I start out easy allowing/willing my hips, pelvis, ribcage and shoulders to relax. I am aware of my feet as heel-arch-toes touch the ground. I step forward and movement of my hips transform into a rolling motion in my pelvis then morphs again into a smooth rotation of my spine. Right-left-right I again remind myself to relax my ribcage and breathing diaphragm. I breathe and relax my shoulders and face. There it is, the power of my hips in motion has transformed into a gentle movement of my neck and head. It is a totally awesome feeling. As my body warms up hitches in my giddy-up and minor aches evaporate. Without forcing it and with respect for the flow of motion throughout the body, my pace increases, I am walking.

Just recently I've begun to move my arms and elbows with greater intent always maintaining respect for the flow of motion. Right step-left arm, left step-right arm this keeps me in balance, stimulates the right brain-left brain activity, builds strength in my upper body and increases my heart rate for an improved cardiovascular workout.

I walk, I move, I look, I see. I do not wear head phones for the distraction of music and news are not a part of my morning ritual. I pay attention to the sounds and sights around me. I am in the present. I enjoy the moon and the stars while keeping in mind I do NOT expect cars to see me. I am keenly aware that if it came down to me vs a car that the car would win. My mind is calm and alert, my breathing steady, my muscles warm. I walk and contemplate the day to come.

Near the final leg of this morning ritual I stop to stretch my ankles, legs, hips and shoulders. I hold each stretch a full 20 seconds maintaining awareness of posture, form and balance. Finishing my stretches I walk the last few blocks with a smooth easy gait. As my muscles and joints cool down and relax I count myself amongst the fortunate and I give thanks for a body that allows me to start my day in this way.

Dr. Laura Shook is a chiropractor with an office located near downtown Wichita KS. She can be reached by phone at (316)267-6522 or by email to gooddrLaura@cox.net