

**“Motion Evangelist” Hooks Patients on Movement**  
*Local Doctor Trains Patients to Run Marathons*

by Teresa Melnick  
Syracuse Post Standard, June 2008

A self described "motion evangelist," Dr. Samuel Paris' pulpit is his office at North Medical Center in North Syracuse where he practices family medicine. "I try to get my patients hooked on movement," says Dr. Paris, MD, FAAFP, Clinical Associate Professor of Family Medicine at Upstate Medical Center and Diplomat of the American Board of Family Practice. A proponent of "practice what you preach," Dr. Paris is a devoted runner and veteran of over 300 marathons, including thirty seven Boston marathons. He doesn't just tell his patients to move, he shows them how.

"I've trained over fifty of my patients who have had heart attacks to run marathons," says Dr. Paris, who has numerous examples of the astounding benefits exercise has on people at any age. Like the 62 year old man with prostate cancer and hypertension who ran a four hour marathon after training with Dr. Paris. Or the by-pass patient who trained and ran a marathon, had a second by-pass operation, and ran a second marathon.

Of course, says Dr. Paris, any exercise program begins with a basic physical examination, a chemical profile, and an exercise stress test. Some patients need a program that includes diet and medicine as well as exercise.

No one starts with the Boston Marathon. Training is very gradual and starts with walking, then "schlogging," a term Dr. Paris coined to describe a pace between walking and jogging. How much a patient can do depends on the patient's physical condition and capabilities. "The idea is to get people to do something, walking, moving." And you don't need fancy equipment or machines, says Dr. Paris, who believes that more injuries occur with misused exercise equipment. All you need is your body and a good pair of walking or running shoes. "Just take your body and move it over distance," he says.

So what is it about moving your body that can have such remarkable results? Research shows that exercise will stretch skeletal muscle, increase circulation, and may create miniature arteries that can by-pass a blockage in the original artery. Movement also stimulates the morphine receptors in the brain, so acts as a natural mood elevator, contributing to emotional well-being.

Dr. Paris believes in both the restorative and the preventative health benefits of movement. He created a jogging club at North Medical where most of the members are his patients. He started the Mall Walkers at Penn Can Mall. He walks with patients. He continues to run himself. And his best advice? "You don't have to run a marathon. Just train for one."

Posted with Permission