

Born to run ? No, but this former 'Butterball' does now

Last night at dinner, my 6-foot-tall husband looked down at my plate and said, "You eat more than I do."

It's true, and it's odd, considering I'm nearly a foot shorter than he.

In my 20s, my dad referred to me lovingly as "Butterball." Headed for size 12 at 36, I wear size 2 at age 66. So what's the secret? I'd say run -- don't walk -- away from fad diets and phony diet foods. In fact -- just run. Start slowly. Jog for five little minutes, then walk back. Next day, run 6 minutes, then walk back. Work up to a 15-minute jog, then walk back.

Here's my guarantee: In time, your body will command you to run back, not walk.

During a recent holiday visit, my brother asked, "Carrie, what happened to you? In high school, you hated any kind of exercise."

True. In the 1950s, way before Title IX, my friends and I looked down at athletic girls. Now I'm 66, and I've run a marathon every year since I turned 55.

When I first started running, every step hurt. I gasped for breath. If my partner stopped mid-run to walk, the pain of resuming the run made me miserable. Still, I stuck with the early morning jogs, pleased with the gradual weight loss.

Note that I said "partner." A running partner is not necessary but is helpful. Running alongside a pleasant conversationalist distracts from discomfort. Besides, having a partner was safer, since I ran at 5:30 a.m., before work. Just as important, the obligation to meet my partner pulled me out of bed.

Early running had other advantages. My husband and children slept, and I didn't need a sitter. In fact, I didn't need a club, a fancy outfit or any equipment except running shoes -- which I bought on sale.

So here's my simple formula for weight control:

1. Wake early enough for a half-hour workout on the street or treadmill, five to six days a week.

2. Ease into it gradually, but never give up.

3. Find a partner, if that helps you.

4. If you miss one day, get back. If you experience a muscle ache, walk or ride a bike -- but don't stop moving for that half-hour before breakfast.

My extra pounds came off gradually. Eating is still a big part of my day but no longer my major preoccupation. As I continued my runs, another great pleasure revealed itself. It feels fantastic to move through the morning air.

Luger Slayback recently placed 10th in the age 65-to-69 group at the New York City Marathon. She writes on issues of fitness and running. Read her blog at [She lives in Newport Beach with her husband and a house full of dogs.](#)

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