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### *Reinventing Fitness, a Journey at 60*

Over the years I had become an avid runner. My preferred races were 5k and 10k with a half marathon tossed in once a year. As a result of this, I was consistently getting almost 600,000 steps a month in the Walk This Way<sup>®</sup> program; two years in a row I recorded over 6 million steps!

In March of 2012, I was in training for the Lincoln Half Marathon. For the most part, I was feeling pretty good, so much so that I had my highest monthly mileage ever - 150 miles. Unfortunately, my body was about to revolt against the grueling training schedule. I started nursing patellar tendonitis, a popping knee, and with the change in statin drugs, I developed a pulled hamstring that would not heal. Then, to make matters worse, my knee swelled up. After a visit to my doctor, I ended up at an orthopedic surgeon for an evaluation. He drew some fluid off my knee, gave me a cortisone shot, and lectured me. I could preserve my knees now or I would certainly be back for surgery of one kind or another. He advised me to cross-train. He didn't tell me I had to stop running, just that I could not continuously pound on my knees anymore.

Being very physically active, I was bummed out. Running was all I knew. Leading up to this point, I was able to eat anything I wanted because I burned so many calories. I recognized it was going to require some big changes to replace that amount of exercise.

Over the previous year, I had watched my grandson become a competitive high school swimmer. I often thought, "I could do that! I just need someone to show me how." There was only one problem; I had never had a swim lesson in my life. Despite this, in July 2012, I "dived in" so to speak. As I got to the first lesson I thought, "How hard can this be? I am fit, have endurance, and good leg strength". Little did I know I would have to start from the beginning, literally - where a 5-year-old would begin. I did everything wrong. I had no stamina in the water, I choked and drank half the pool, and I had no form. But, I was committed and determined to make it happen!

Along with the swim coaching and practice 3 times a week, I also started meeting with a dietician. I knew I had to get a handle on my caloric intake to balance it against my exercise. I started tracking calories as well as exercise through a mobile app called 'MyFitnessPal'. The dietician helped me balance my meals and improve the quality of my food intake. I see the dietician about every 60 days and continue to log calories and exercise. Within the first 8 months, I trimmed off about 10 pounds and dropped my BMI from 23.3 to 22.

In September, I met with a physical trainer to help me improve my upper body strength for swimming. I was put on vigorous weight training 3 times a week. This has doubled my upper body strength in six months, which is resulting in improvement in my swimming stamina and speed. The final change was to add 30-60 minutes of daily walking on the treadmill. At a 13 minute per mile pace, I add 1300 steps and burn 100 calories every 10 minutes. On top of all this, I still get a few 30-40 minute runs in each week, about 7-10 miles per week. My knees and legs are very happy with the reduced pounding!

So, the combination of the treadmill walking, swimming, weight training, and some running, I am back on target to hit more than 6 million steps this year. Swimming continues to be the hardest thing I have ever tackled. But, I have good support and am determined. It took months before I could swim 25 yards and until Christmas 2012 before I could swim 50 yards without stopping. My endurance and stamina improve ever so slightly each month. I continue to work on my strokes through the masters swim program at Nebraska Aquatics.

In October 2013, I competed in my first Masters Swim competition in the 50 freestyle and 50 breaststroke. In January 2014, I entered another competition and dropped about 5 seconds off my previous times. Two years ago, I never would have guessed my fitness regimen would be so different. In the end, I never thought at age 60 I would add "swimmer" to the definition of who I am!