

## **Train Smart, Train Safely! Fitness Tip of the Week**

Congratulations to all who finished the Houston Marathon, Half Marathon or 5k this past weekend. Yes, I finished the full (26.2 mile) marathon. While not setting any records, I felt strong, due to consistent training and beautiful weather.

Speaking of consistent training, this is January, and the time when we see a new surge of runners, walkers and cyclists out on the road beginning either New Years resolutions, or beginning a new training season. In light of the recent tragic accident here in Sugar Land, involving a beloved walking enthusiast, I would like to take this opportunity to pass along a few safety reminders for both exercisers and drivers. (Most of you are both!)

Walkers/ Runners/ Cyclists: Although there are traffic signals, and laws, etc., meant to protect us, our safety is our own personal responsibility.

**BE ATTENTIVE:** Pay attention to everything that is going on around you. Know where the traffic is, pay attention to the signals, be aware of other pedestrians, and look out for potholes, curbs, etc. Many walkers, runners, and even cyclists, enjoy listening to music while out for their workout. If you do, be careful. You would not go running with a blindfold on, right? So why would you plug up both ears with loud music, distracting you from hearing what is going on around you. PLEASE.... Keep one ear open at all times. Save the earbuds for the treadmill!

**STAY ALERT:** Look ahead, look to the sides, and occasionally look behind you to see what is going on. Be ready to stop, speed up, or turn, as unforeseen circumstances come up. If you run or walk in the street, be sure you are facing the oncoming traffic so you can see what is coming at you!

**BE PROACTIVE:** Don't assume you can be seen. Wear bright, reflective colors. Travel in pairs or groups. Be ready to yell if you need to get someone's attention. Anticipate what a driver, cyclist or another runner might do, and be ready.

Now, lets do some deep soul searching and review our driving habits:

**BE ATTENTIVE:** When you are in your car, understand that you are aiming a deadly weapon at the public. Take this responsibility seriously. It is too easy to get caught up on the cell phone, eating lunch, text messaging –(DON'T DO THIS!) – cleaning up spilled coffee, etc, while

driving. Can you think of a time when you passed through an intersection but don't really remember doing so? Or what was going on at the corner, or whether there was someone waiting to cross the street? Do you really, honestly look in all directions before starting up at the green light?

**STAY ALERT:** If you can't talk on the phone and pay attention to your surroundings at the same time – don't do it. Pull over into a parking lot to finish your conversation, put on your makeup, clean up the spill, or whatever. The 3 minutes you might save by continuing to drive is not worth someone's life or safety.

**BE PROACTIVE:** Just as you anticipate what a driver might do while you are running, be sensitive as a driver to the runners and cyclists on the road. Anticipate what they will do. Be ready for them to make a mistake, and be courteous in giving them their space.

**LET'S BE CAREFUL OUT THERE!**

**Be Healthy, Get Fit, Stay Strong!**