

Exercise Is For Sleepwalkers

I believe that every human has a finite number of heart-beats. I don't intend to waste any of mine running around doing exercises.

- Neil Armstrong<p><p>

There comes a time while running the rat race that some of the participants stop to realize that racing with the rats is not as physically stimulating as their bodies need. Their minds, their emotions, their intellect, their very being has been absorbed by working hard to earn money for their employer (and for themselves so they can buy the products sold by their employer and other providers of rat race facilities) that they have become physically unfit.<p><p>

As a result of some epiphany--a heart attack, a movie, the death of a friend or a warning from their doctor--they decide that they must exercise their bodies. So they join a fitness club and do what they are used to doing, devoting their entire time and energies during that period each day to exercising their bodies.<p><p>

They seem to have two primary objectives for this period of physical stress: exercising their bodies as much as they can (preferably their hearts as well) and giving their brains a total rest.<p><p>

As neutral observers we might be tempted to believe that this commitment to focussing their minds on the work of their bodies, be it on machines or on a track or pavement, is required to do the job of exercising well. However, that belief would be erroneous. With the possible exception of counting sequentially, the brain is not required for any of these exercises.<p><p>

Exercising, either in a gym or outside, is time for brain-sleep.<p><p>

Of all the possible ways in which a body could be put to use for the purpose of accomplishing something--with or without the brain in gear--these people choose to do nothing but stretch and contract their muscles for the entire period of their "workout."<p><p>

I decline to offer ways in which a person could use their time beneficially while exercising to help their families, their community, the underprivileged, the homeless or many other causes because that would require me to assume that you can't think of any yourself. I choose to give you more credit than that.<p><p>

I will ask that you consider, if you know someone who fits into this category of person who stops running the rat race just long enough to do the kind of activity a gerbil does on a wheel, suggesting to this person that their time might be spend more productively to make the world a little better place while getting the same amount of physical exercise for their bodies.<p><p>

But please don't be any less gentle with your suggestion than the man who did the very first moonwalk, Neil Armstrong. Now there was someone who had more to do with his time than gerbil-race.<p><p>

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