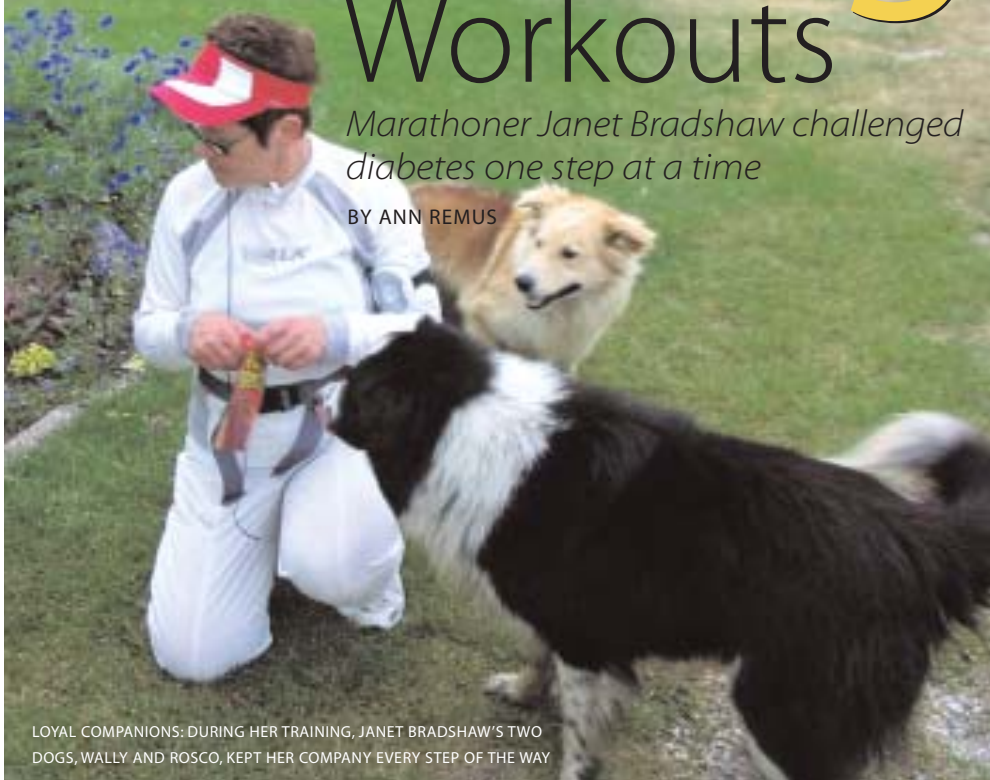


Walking Workouts

Marathoner Janet Bradshaw challenged diabetes one step at a time

BY ANN REMUS



LOYAL COMPANIONS: DURING HER TRAINING, JANET BRADSHAW'S TWO DOGS, WALLY AND ROSCO, KEPT HER COMPANY EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

Janet Bradshaw, a part-time pharmacist and pharmacy consultant in Fort Qu'Appelle, SK, admits she's not the sporty type. "I'm not an athletic person by any means," says the 52-year-old. But in the fall of 2004, she wasn't about to let that small detail get in her way. Determined to do more for her patients with diabetes, she joined Team Diabetes, and in doing so agreed to raise \$6,000, travel to Iceland and walk a full marathon for the cause. "It was a personal challenge and I wanted to do something worthwhile for diabetes, which is a real focus of mine," she says.

Created by the Canadian Diabetes Association, Team Diabetes is growing fast as a way for people to mix fun, fitness and "free" travel. After raising the

requisite \$6,000, participants get an all-expenses-paid trip to a marathon of their choice.

Bradshaw didn't even consider the physical challenge in the beginning; she was more consumed by the fundraising. "The first thing that hit me was I had to have the money in place or I wouldn't go," she says. Luckily, that was the easy part; through her large network of contacts she raised over \$12,000 (thus qualifying her for a second Team Diabetes event).

Training days

Bradshaw's training kicked off with a workshop hosted by the Canadian Diabetes Association in March 2005. At the workshop, she received her

20-week program, with every training session and rest day clearly marked. It included interval and hill training to help with speed and endurance, with gradual increases in distance and intensity. "It was easy because I never had to think about what I had to do, but [as the distances increased] the logistics of trying to fit it in with everything else that was going on was the hardest part."

During the hot summer months, which coincided with the most gruelling part of the training, Bradshaw was out of the house before 5 a.m. to avoid the heat. "I don't think anybody going into this had any idea of the commitment—the time, the energy—there were times when I put in 20 miles and then had to go to work," she says.

To stay on track during her training, Bradshaw made sure she got enough sleep and watched what she ate. "I always had a good breakfast—something with protein—so usually an egg, peanut butter, a banana," she says. She also avoided alcohol, coffee and fruit juices because she didn't want to get dehydrated. On her long Sunday morning walks (some of which lasted five hours), she snacked about every hour and drank plenty of fluids such as water and Gatorade. "Hydration is really important, especially in the heat," she says.

The main event

Of the Team Diabetes marathon destinations—which also include Rome, Honolulu, Dublin and New York—Bradshaw chose Reykjavik, Iceland, because it's the least likely place she'd visit on her own. In all, about 250 Canadians attended and together they raised \$1.25 million.

The day of the race was great for walking—a sunny, breezy 14C. Along the course, Bradshaw kept a steady pace, stopping only for bathroom breaks. "Our trainer kept telling us it's as much mental as it is physical. And he was right. There were points where you run into what they call 'the wall,' where you feel like you can't go on." But go on she did, finishing in 6:29:20—just under her goal time of 6:30 hours. Would she do it again? "You bet," she says. "It has been an amazing journey."

Stepping out

Whether or not you're participating in an organized charity walk, experts agree that regular walking is a great way to stay in shape—especially if you're concerned about injury or can't make it to the gym. To get going, Brendan Fox (www.foxfitness.ca), a certified fitness trainer and strength coach in Whitby, ON, suggests walking three times a week for a total of 45 minutes each time, and gradually increasing distance and intensity every few weeks. "One of the keys is to be sure your walking is consistent and progressive," he says.

As long as you're moving you'll burn calories, which can increase metabolism, help with weight loss and improve your overall health. It doesn't matter if you climb the stairs at work, stroll through the mall or walk the dog in the park—it all counts. Fox points to a recent study published in the medical journal *CHEST*, where researchers from Duke University in Durham, NC, found that walking briskly for 12 miles (about two to four hours) per week can dramatically improve aerobic fitness and lower the risk of heart disease by up to 40 percent.



ALWAYS SMILING: JANET BRADSHAW WALKING TO THE FINISH LINE IN REYKJAVIK, AUGUST 25, 2005

Janet Bradshaw can also attest to the health benefits of regular walking. "During the training, I was in the best shape of my life," she says, explaining that she lost weight, felt stronger and had more energy.

"During the training, I was in the best shape of my life."

Get started

Here are some simple tips to help you start—and stick to—a walking program:


Book the time If you write down your walks in your day timer, you will be more motivated to do them.

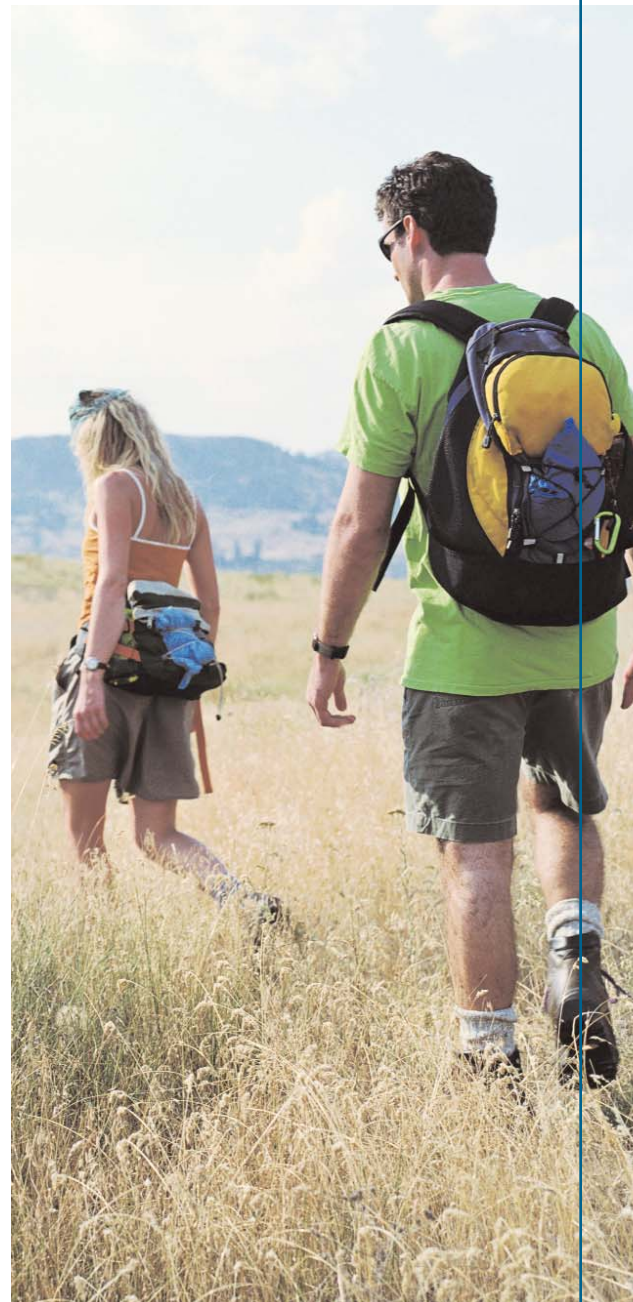
Wear good shoes You won't feel motivated if your feet hurt, so a good pair of walking shoes is essential. These should be flexible, comfortable and provide adequate support. Good shoes will also help prevent blisters.

Get a pedometer Some experts say you should aim to take 10,000 steps a day to stay healthy. By wearing a pedometer throughout the day, you will know exactly how many steps you take.

Vary the terrain Stress fractures caused by the impact of your foot hitting the ground are the most common injuries associated with walking. Fox suggests walking on grass, beach sand or dirt trails whenever you can, because they absorb more shock than asphalt.

Walk with a buddy Although Bradshaw preferred training on her own with her dogs, many people find a walking club keeps them motivated.

Remember the big picture Add stretching and some form of strength training to your schedule to get a complete workout. Doing this will help prevent injuries and build cardiovascular endurance, strength and flexibility. 



Websites

- www.thewalkingsite.com (The Walking Site)
- www.chatelaine.com/health/walkingclubs/index.jsp (Chatelaine Walking Club)
- www.in-motion.ca/walkingworkout (In Motion)
- www.diabetes.ca/section_donations/TeamDiabetesIndex.asp (Canadian Diabetes Association, Team Diabetes)