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Tuesday, Jun 03, 2003

Posted on Tue, Jun. 03, 2003

The Mercury News

How I Stay Fit

MARIANNE

LUCCHESI HAMILTON

AGE: 50

HEIGHT: 5 feet 2 1/2 inches

WEIGHT: 108 pounds

PERSONAL: Married, lives in Los Gatos

OCCUPATION: Marketing writer/journalist

BACKGROUND: Hamilton grew up in a family where the normal presents were books and educational tools. "Sports were not part of my vocabulary in my youth," she says. "I was *always* the last one picked in any team." It wasn't until the summer before college, when she lost a few pounds, that she noticed her weight.

She struggled with her weight for years, and suffered from anorexia when she was widowed at 23. In her 30s, she picked up jogging and fell in love with it. "I became hooked on exercise," she says. "I'd just never put two and two together, that . . . moving would actually have an effect on my calorie-burning."

Hamilton began lifting weights in her 40s. However, the exercise took its toll and she injured a disc in her neck, resulting in fusion surgery.

A few months after her surgery, Hamilton found that while she couldn't run or lift weights, walking briskly had the same benefits. In 1997, she took up the sport of race-walking. "The cool thing about race-walking is that it is a complete, full-body workout," she says.

She's competed in many race-walking marathons since and even finished second in the Lake Tahoe half-marathon in 2001. It's also a routine she shares with her husband, Doug, since he has a similar neck injury. "It's a terrific sport to share," she says.

REGIMEN: Hamilton and her husband train with a group Monday nights at a track. She also walks an average of five miles daily. On the weekends, she and her husband try to do a longer race-walk -- about seven to 10 miles. She also watches sugar intake and eats healthfully.

RESULTS: "I've kept 40 pounds off for many years now," she says. "I've worn a size 2 for as long as I can remember, and I don't worry about my weight anymore."

OBSTACLES: Getting out on the trail on a rainy day is hard for Hamilton. She will often go to the gym on those days to get her workout in. "I also don't obsess about it if I can't work out for a couple of days," she says. "I just get back out there as soon as I can."

GOALS: "To be as happy and active as I am into my 60s, 70s and beyond," Hamilton says. "And to encourage others of my 'aging' generation to continue staying fit."



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TIPS AND COMMENTS: ``No one wants to hear it, but the only way to get the weight off and keep it off is to eat healthily," Hamilton says. ``Stop eating as soon as you're full, and get off of your butt and MOVE. Period. End of discussion."

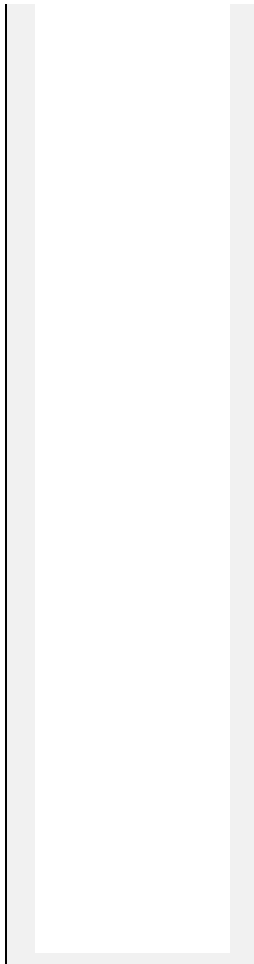
-- Kristina Nicholas

Do you manage to find time for exercise in an already hectic schedule? We would love to hear how you stay healthy and fit. Write to Kristina Nicholas at the Mercury News, 750 Ridder Park Drive, San Jose, Calif. 95190; or e-mail knicholas@mercurynews.com.






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