

The Path

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Photo: Jim Myrick before and after gastric bypass surgery at Memorial Health Bariatrics.

Finding Happiness, At Last

By Jim Myrick
Gastric Bypass Surgery Patient

■ For as long as I can remember, I have always been the big guy. I was always the overweight guy that “carried his weight well.” Through lower school, high school, and college I was always overweight. As time passed, I became more aware of my weight and started to see that things were not happening for me as they did for many others. I saw that my weight was more than just a pain in my back or knees—it was a pain in my heart. My opinion of myself was not very high, so I never had a lot of motivation to get out and do anything. I decided that I had to change something. I went on another diet and it worked for a while, but then I gained the weight back plus another 10 percent. I told myself that I had to find something that would work.

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Support Groups and Office Hours

Post-Op Support Groups: First Monday of every month from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the Memorial Health Bariatrics Office. **Please note: beginning in June, these meetings will be moved to the Medical Education Auditorium at Memorial Health.**

Pre- and Post-Op Support Groups: Third Wednesday of every month from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the Medical Education Auditorium following the Wednesday night information sessions.

Information Sessions: Third Thursday of every month from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Ogeechee Technical College in Statesboro, and every Wednesday from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the Medical Education Auditorium at Memorial Health.

Hours of Operation: Monday through Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. (closed for lunch 12 noon to 1 p.m.), Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon. Tuesday and Friday mornings from 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon are reserved for patient weigh-ins and vitamin purchases.

Save the Date—Saturday, July 22, 2006

Memorial Health Bariatrics Presents The Second Annual Bariatric Gala

Watch for your invitation to join us for this fun-filled evening of dining and dancing.



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Memorial Health Bariatrics

SLOW AND STEADY WINS THE RACE

By John Angstadt, M.D., Bariatric Surgeon



■ We have all grown up hearing myths, fables, and stories that carry a message for us. In church, we heard the parables used to explain and illustrate a point. The story of the tortoise and the hare is familiar to all of us.

The hare races ahead but gets ambushed by his pride in his speed. The tortoise with his slow, steady progress wins the race.

There is a lesson there for all of us in the field of gastric bypass surgery. Gastric bypass surgery produces dramatic, rapid weight loss. You have all seen substantial improvement and have felt the weight melt away. What a gift!

However, nothing worth having ever comes free. Although those pounds seem to melt away, keeping them off permanently requires effort and commitment on your part. It requires the slow, steady approach of the tortoise. It requires you to change eating habits that have been present for most of your life.

Almost all long-term studies of gastric bypass surgery show some weight rebound in the second to third year. This rebound occurs for several reasons. First, your body gets used to the changes of surgery so there is less malabsorption. Second, your body becomes accustomed to the dumping triggers so the reaction is less severe. Finally, most patients begin to play with their diet and increase their calorie intake.

The key to long-term success in this operation is long-term dietary change. You must develop and maintain your new eating regimen in order to maintain your success for years. You must do the hard work of making those adjustments or you will regain your weight.

For most patients this has been a long road. It has significant risk. It is up to you to make permanent changes in your diet and to maintain them for life. Your reward is remaining free of the weight you have carried for most of your life. Slow and steady wins!

—continued from cover, *Finding Happiness, At Last*

I researched extensively and found that people who had gastric bypass surgery successfully lost weight. After two years of research, I decided I wanted to have the surgery. I went to Atlanta, but did not get the personal attention I expected for such a surgery. I felt like I was just another paycheck. Another year passed before I found Memorial Health Bariatrics. I attended the informational session and my first support group meeting in one night. Afterward, it was just a matter of how quickly I could get approved to have the surgery. I discovered that my insurance company would not cover gastric bypass surgery. However, I decided that my health was worth the hardship of paying for it myself, and I went forward with the surgery.

I had the Roux-en-Y gastric bypass Surgery on April 1, 2005. Even though my surgery had to be converted from laparoscopic to full open surgery, it was still well worth it. I would not change a thing. I have lost about 150 pounds from my heaviest weight.

I look at my quality of life now and cannot believe that I was so unhappy for so long. I have so much more energy now. I don't get tired as much, and I have a greater desire to live life to its fullest. I am more active than I have ever been in my life. I have the ability to enjoy all the things I have ever wanted to do. Most important, I am finally happy with myself. This was not an easy or quick fix, but it was a fix that I believe will last a lifetime.

Never have I had greater satisfaction with my life. If asked if I would have the surgery again, I would say, "yes" emphatically. Each day of my life gets better than the last. Thank you Memorial Bariatrics and Dr. Angstadt for giving me a new life to live. 🌟

Wonders of Water

By Helen Hussey, R.D.

■ Water is one of the most important nutrients in your diet. It aids with blood flow, joint motility, muscle work, and breathing. Your body loses water constantly through sweating, exhaling, and urinating. These natural body processes may account for up to 10 cups of water loss per day. This is the reason for having high liquid requirements after surgery. Signs of dehydration include fatigue, dizziness, headache, and weakness. Here are some tips for avoiding dehydration:

- Drink fluids before and after exercise.
- Avoid fluids such as alcohol, soda, tea or coffee. These can act as diuretics and wash water from you body.
- Certain foods can be a source of water, such as watermelon, tomatoes, cucumbers, apples, and yogurt.
- Add fresh lemon or lime juice to flavor ordinary water and improve the taste.
- Drink ice cold water. Your body burns about 20 calories warming the water up to body temperature.
- Remember that your protein supplements count as fluids. 🌟



Variety, the Spice of Life...and Your Exercise Program

By **Kristine Hammond M.S., CSCS*D**

■ How is your exercise program going? Are you really still going strong? Is your exercise routine as exciting as it was five months ago? Are you still seeing the results of your hard work? Chances are, unless you mixed it up a bit along the way, you are beginning to hit a rut. The rut can be psychological or physical. A physical rut is often referred to as a plateau.

If you are experiencing one or both of these problems, the remedy is variety. Most of us are creatures of habit and doing things that are familiar is comfortable. However, we must remember that our bodies are amazing machines that adapt very quickly to the stresses (in this case, exercise) we expose them to. To prevent hitting a plateau in your workout, you have to keep your body guessing. If you are a runner, throw a day of swimming or cycling into the routine. Although you may use the same muscle groups in running and cycling, the stresses and emphasis on the muscles varies with each mode of exercise. The variety keeps the body guessing. Cross training is the best way to keep from burning out and hitting plateaus.

There are exercises for everyone. Here are a few ideas.

Dancing—Every kind of dance counts, from dancing at the club to line dancing, tap, ballet, or jazz. Dance

activities are available for adults at various locations around town. Check your local newspaper or phone book for contact numbers.

Pilates—This form of exercise concentrates on strengthening your “powerhouse” or your core. Your powerhouse includes the abdominal and back muscles as well as the rest of the muscles of your torso. Do you want strong abs? If so, this is the class for you. Not only does Pilates strengthen your abs and back, but it also teaches you to improve your overall balance, posture, alignment, and flexibility. On May 8, FitnessOne at Memorial Health opened a full Pilates studio. It offers mat classes and personal training on Pilates equipment. Call 350-4045 for more information.

Yoga—There are many different types of yoga available to meet the needs and levels of the participants. Ashtanga, for example, concentrates on strength, stability, and mental clarity. Other types of yoga focus on flexibility. Some even give you a great cardiovascular workout.

Spinning™—If you like a good sweat, this one is for you. Spinning is a term used for group indoor cycling. The concept was created by Johnny G. of Mad Dogg Athletics.

Anyone who takes a spinning class will agree that it is an awesome workout. The stationary bikes are shaped like racing bikes and have a resistance knob on them. The class is led by an instructor who takes the class through various core exercises that include riding on flat roads, climbing up hills, sprinting, and performing jumps. I highly recommend that you try it.

Water Aerobics—It is hot here in Savannah, so why not stay cool while you work out? There are several places around the region that offer water aerobics. Water provides wonderful resistance. Water aerobics will help you burn calories and tone your body at the same time. If you have arthritis, water aerobics should be your preferred mode of exercise. The water removes a lot of the painful stress on the joints that exercise on land would elicit. Sometimes you even get to play with those water noodles!

Community Service—How about Habitat for Humanity? Now, that is real work. Help build or restore a home for someone less fortunate in the community. What about adopt a highway? You can help clean up our community and get some exercise at the same time.

Group Sports—Join a team. You don't have to be a career athlete to do this. Many group sports are about getting together to have fun. A lot of companies have softball teams, and Ultimate Frisbee seems to be very popular at Forsythe Park. I've also seen a lot of amateur/club rugby, soccer, and volleyball groups in the region.

Shopping—Yes, shopping can be exercise. Just remember to keep up a good pace. Park at the back of the parking lot. Power walk from store to store. Take the stairs instead of the escalator. Let's face it, those shopping bags do get heavy and will over time tone those arms. Bring your kids along, they'll add to the intensity of your shopping spree. Lifting your bags and holding or pushing your children in a stroller adds an extra arm workout. One final word of advice: When lifting heavy objects, be sure to bend at the knees, not the back, and lift using your legs.

These are just a few examples of things that can add variety to your fitness routine. Be creative. The sky is the limit. If your heart rate is being elevated or you are using large muscle groups to complete the activity and you are having fun, make it part of your regular workout program. 🍌