

MY WORKOUT

Losing weight helps man get back on health track

By NANCY DOW
THE OREGONIAN

Name: William Hersh, 45, Portland

Stats: 5 feet 7 inches; 155 pounds

Then and now: Hersh, a Chicago native, is a physician who moved to Oregon in 1990 to take a job at Oregon Health & Science University. He heads the Department of Medical Informatics & Clinical Epidemiology in the School of Medicine.

He has been married to Sally for 18 years; they have two daughters, 12 and 14. Though he rarely has time to "do nothing," he occasionally plays guitar to relax.

Fitness history: Hersh was a competitive distance runner in high school and college. He started lifting weights about 10 years ago. But by 2001, although he was still running, his weight was up to 195 and he was getting tired. He decided to join Weight Watchers after his stepfather lost 80 pounds on the plan.

Hersh lost about 45 pounds between fall of 2001 and summer of 2002. He says Weight Watchers, though nothing magical, is "a good framework to control one's eating." The plan helped him realize his portion sizes were too big. "I have since found a comfort zone where I can enjoy a wide variety of foods, even some occasional junk foods, and maintain my weight. I've put a few pounds back on but am comfortable in the mid-150s with a normal body-mass index."

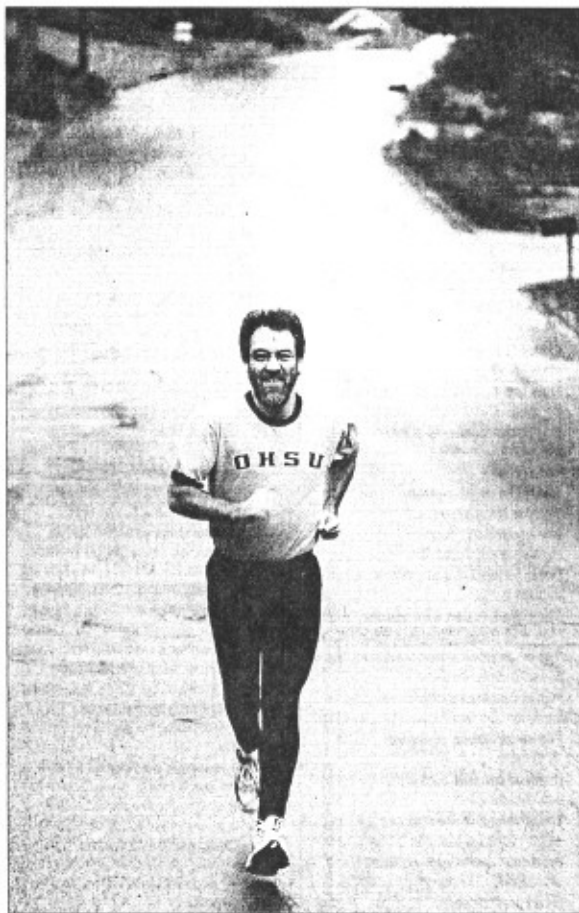
Current workout: He runs six to seven miles, three days a week, around his neighborhood. He also lifts weights at Bally's twice a week. He warms up on a stationary bike for 10 minutes, then lifts for 30 to 40 minutes. He skis a few times each winter, both cross country and downhill. He does a little hiking and biking when he gets the chance.

Payoff: Hersh says as soon as he started losing weight he noticed how much more energy he had. "I feel as energetic when I run now as I did when I was in my 20s." He also can bench press more than his weight and do six or seven chin-ups.

Travelin' man: He travels a lot for his job, so he likes his current workout because he can run pretty much anywhere. He has run, in fact, on every continent except Antarctica. "It's a great way to see parts of cities I might not otherwise see."

Trying to eat healthfully when traveling is more of a challenge. He's often confronted with large portions of rich foods at dinners and banquets. He just makes up for it by eating less at other meals.

Dr. Hersh on Dr. Atkins: Hersh



STEVEN NEHL/THE OREGONIAN

William Hersh runs six to seven miles three days a week around his neighborhood and lifts weights twice a week. He also skis cross country and downhill.

maintains his weight loss with a high-fiber, low-fat diet and naturally is interested in the controversy around the Atkins diet. "I am quite skeptical of high-fat, high-protein diets, though the studies show they probably work, at least in the short run. I am not sure of the long-term consequences. I do

believe long-term studies are necessary to determine the health implications of such diets." Hersh likes fruit and whole grains and prefers to keep them on his menu. He hopes to decrease his chances of developing the heart disease that runs in his family.