

POWER CRUNCH: MARK COHON, CFL COMMISSIONER

Plenty of time on the clock and three pounds to go

DENISE BALKISSOON
SPECIAL TO THE GLOBE AND MAIL
NOVEMBER 19, 2007

My goal

"Continue to improve my cardiovascular health and have enough energy from working out in the morning to get through the day. It's not a lot, but I'd like to lose two or three pounds."

My workout

Work with a trainer for an hour three mornings a week, incorporating circuit training, strength training, core strength work and dumbbells. A typical workout might start with a medicine ball, followed by three or four strength sets and 10 minutes of abdominal work, then stretching.

Print Edition - Section Front



[Enlarge Image](#)



15 to 20 minutes of daily core exercises in hotel rooms while on the road.

Semi-regular swimming, rollerblading and biking for enjoyment.

My lifestyle

"I'm 41 - after 40 I don't think your body bounces back the same way. I try to eat healthier, a good breakfast with some bran and psyllium for cholesterol. I eat fast food probably once a week - my weakness is French fries. But I try to get a good balance. You can be decadent sometimes, but not all the time. You really have to combine the workouts with better meals.

"I take probably two road trips a month for several days in a row, more when the CFL is on. ... I've definitely noticed a difference since working out with my trainer for the last six months in stamina, cardio and energy."

My motivation

"I have a 1½-year-old baby, so I'm up that early in the morning anyway. But really, I know I feel better after a workout."

My workout anthem

"My iPod is so eclectic, I've got everything - rap, rock, reggae. One that always gets me fired up is Jimi Hendrix, *All Along the Watchtower*."

My challenges

"Twenty years ago I was playing football in high school and a guy ran his helmet into my knee. It was dislocated - my doctor said that I'd feel it in 20 years. So I can't do a lot of running. I can do a short run, play a game of basketball, but a pounding run of three or four miles, it won't hold up. I tore my rotator once, but it's healed."

The critique

Mark Cohon's practice of functional core training is the best thing people can do to maintain their cardiovascular health and strength, says Paul Plakas, co-owner of Custom Fit in Edmonton.

Mr. Plakas prefers "primal movement patterns," which mimic how we move in real life: pulling, pushing, squatting, lunging, bending and twisting. He also likes exercises that work the whole body, such as a walking lunge with rotation from side to side. For Mr. Cohon, he recommends three sets of five to six exercises, with each set done twice in a workout.

Mr. Plakas approves of Mr. Cohon's choice to spare his knees by not running. "The human body is not designed to run long distances," he says. "It does more injury than benefit."

If he still wanted the benefits of running, Mr. Cohon could incorporate short sprints of 100 to 200 metres, interspersed with walk breaks. Mr. Plakas also suggests trying cross-country skiing in the winter, when rollerblading and cycling aren't options.

When it comes to losing those pesky three pounds, the magic number is 10,500 calories a month, which Mr. Cohon either needs to burn off or refrain from eating. This could easily be done with a lifestyle change such as cutting out cream from daily coffee or, for a frequent traveller like Mr. Cohon, always getting a hotel room on a higher floor and taking the stairs.

"If he walks five flights of stairs every day for a year," Mr. Plakas says, "those three pounds would be long gone."

Another healthy lifestyle tip is to find a grocery store close to his hotels to stock up on fruits and vegetables for snacking on during meetings. "Take a Tupperware container and keep it filled."

© Copyright 2007 CTVglobemedia Publishing Inc. All Rights Reserved.

CTVglobemedia

globeandmail.com and The Globe and Mail are divisions of CTVglobemedia Publishing Inc., 444 Front St. W., Toronto, ON Canada M5V 2S9
Phillip Crawley, Publisher