

JUST KEEP GOING, CONTINUE JOGGING

Over the past three weeks, I have gone jogging in four different cities in four different continents.

I have been jogging in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Geneva, Switzerland, Madrid, Spain and St Francis Bay and Port Elizabeth (Gqeberha) in the Eastern Cape in South Africa. As I was out jogging along the seafront in Port Elizabeth today in the wind and rain, it occurred to me how privileged I am to be able to do this. I am not saying this boastfully because I am not a very good jogger, but as an encouragement to others to keep exercising even when they are older.

As one gets older, one usually gives up various activities because the discomfort or dangers outweigh the benefits.

When I lived in London, I used to ride a motorcycle and later I rode a Ducati in Uganda, but on one occasion I almost came off while going at 120km per hour, and on another I slid off while in traffic.

After that, I decided to stop, because there was a high chance of having a more serious accident.

I heard later that the person who bought my motorcycle died in a tragic accident when a truck pushed him into a concrete bollard.

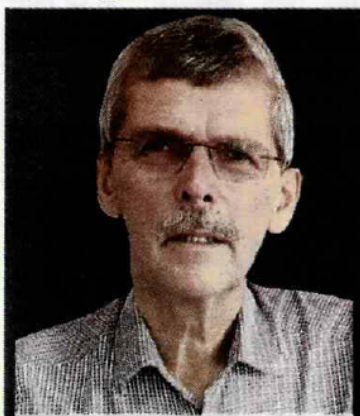
I used to ride horses, but a few years ago, the horse I was riding shied: The horse went right and I went straight on.

It was a painful experience and I spent a night in the hospital. Although I still know how to ride, I am weighing whether I will start riding again.

I have never excelled at sports, but over the years, I settled on jogging as the most convenient way to exercise, since it does not need a gym membership or any equipment.

The running club which got me into regular jogging is the 'Kampala Hash House Harriers (KH3)', which is a global network and described as 'a drinking club with a running problem'. In Kampala, we run every Monday evening and follow up the run with a beer.

This might not be the healthiest combination, but it provides the opportunity to jog on a Monday evening and the beer is voluntary. Over the course of the years, I have seen young hashers become



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middle-aged and middle-aged hashers become old, but they continue, even if they stop jogging and start walking.

Jogging has advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are that it strengthens the heart and lowers the blood pressure; it also increases the capacity of the lungs and thence the supply of oxygen to the brain, which makes



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one feel more alert. It reduces the tendency to type two diabetes, reduces the risk of cancer and increases bone density.

The disadvantage is that it is hard on the joints, which can result in knee, back and hip pain. I developed back pain some years ago, but when I had an X-ray, I could see that my lowest lumbar vertebra was fusing with the sacral vertebra.

In other words, nature was taking care of the pain – and it went away. The constant banging of the bones and joints induces increased calcium formation, so the bones get stronger and are less likely to break if one falls.

Every year, as my jogging gets slower, I wonder if I will be able to keep going, but then I just carry on, until the next birthday. When I was in Geneva, it was very cold and because of the tight programme, the only time I could jog was early in the mornings, but I wrapped up and jogged along the shores of Lake Geneva.

A young lady called Barbara, who was on this coffee trip, volunteered to run with me and we set out in the cold and wet.

I was more than twice her age, but we were pacing each other, so tell me what other sport one can do with someone less than half your age?

The famous Robert Kabushenga (now also a coffee farmer) was on the same trip in Geneva, but I did not volunteer to run with him because he is far faster than I am.

Jogging has taught me many lessons about life – about keeping going when things are hard by just taking the next step and putting one foot past the other.

It has taught me grit so that I do not give up and taught me to see how long I can keep going.

It not only strengthens my bones, but jogging also strengthens my mind.