

From 20 Meters to Beyond

This is NOT a "what you should do guide" but is what I did to help my recovery from a near death experience to where I am today.

The Start of my Journey

In 2015 I had acquired severe Bronchial Pneumonia and septicemia and was put into a chemical coma. Whilst being treated as a permanent resident of the Intensive care unit at Gloucester Royal and later with a further transfer to another ICU in London, I managed to survive and then start the slow road to recovery. When I was woken from the coma, I could not lift any of my limbs or my head off the pillow.

Before my illness, I had spent 20 years cycling to and from work, which was around 10 miles a day and due to a knee injury picked up as a youth, I used a non-impact running device and would run for a couple of hours in between.

From that you can understand that I enjoyed fitness and it became clear that I now had a new challenge in life with my recovery.

Post Recovery

I was determined to get as much exercise as I could. My first outing, a month after returning home was a 20-meter walk with a walking aid from the hospital.

What I needed was a calm controlled programme of exercise, plus a method of charting my improvement.



By Pierre Weinzweig

BUT the first action was to chat with my GP (and other relevant healthcare professionals) to ensure that I was not risking my health irredeemably.

As I was also under a cardiac and endocrine consultant, I also discussed my plans with them. I was provided with parameters and controls to ensure that I did not jeopardize my health and also discussed my plans with a Physiotherapist, who provided me with a plan of activity tailored to my needs.

At first – I set a small achievable goal, and maintained that goal for 1 week before considering extending it.

- 1) My first was to walk to the end of the street and back
- 2) Then I would extend the walk by another 25 meters.

The problem I had was as I had had a heart crisis during my illness, I had to ensure my heart was not stressed unduly. I looked into what was available. There are a number of devices available to you: -

1) **Fitbit** – had step counter with a heartbeat monitor. There are a number of other similar devices on the market that can meet your needs (i.e. Samsung Gear/Apple watch etc)

2) **Note** – your phone has a step detector and some have a heart beat monitor, but those are suitable for taking pulses on demand rather than continual readings.

This is NOT a "what you should do guide" but more of what you can achieve with self-motivation, determination, a Fitbit and the Health & Hustle.

Although the Cardiologist was not familiar with Fitness levels and readings, we agreed that as I could monitor my heartbeat and aimed to ensure my pulse remained under 130 BPM to ensure my heart wasn't over exerted. I also wanted a system to monitor my step improvement and check what my achievements had been for the week. That is when I decided that I needed a method to assess and monitor my activity.

1) I could monitor my steps for the week
2) I could control my heartbeat during exercise to ensure I didn't over exert myself. In the exercise world, heartbeat between 80 and 90 is considered 'fat burn', between 90 and 130 is considered 'Cardiac strengthening'. Above that is called 'Peak'. I had agreed with the Cardiologist that Peak would be dangerous,

3) I could set small targets that could be achievable. For me – it was important that I kept those targets for a week, re-evaluate whether I'd made those targets and check whether I felt better for it. If I didn't feel that I could or was unable to increase the steps, I kept that target for another week before extending it in small increments.

4) I needed a device that logged my improvements and visibly see that I was getting better.

5) With the option I chose – I had charts showing my performance, with improvements and heart beat charts to show any Medical person who need it. I could graphically display how my body was responding.

The Added X Factor When I got my Fitbit, I discovered a community of friends. When I logged onto Fitbit, I found a number of friends were already using it and were part of the Health & Hustle. They had set up a group of similar minded people who were challenging themselves to get as fit as they possibly could. The point was that there are others out there using such devices who are helpful and supportive. Using the social media application has not only allowed me to recover, it has put me in touch again with friends and has also introduced me to new friends who have a common interest in activity for personal reasons.

Where am I now? Over a period of 3 years I have increased from 20 meters to several miles a day. I have got back to a level that I can feel comfortable with the limitations post recovery. I have to accept that I am unable to jog, but walking helps me keep fit and hopefully keeps my weight down, whilst keeping my health and happiness up.