

Running Changed My Life

In the first collection of stories in an ongoing series about how running has changed the lives of everyday Canadians, these three runners share their inspiring fitness stories

Rick Geddes

AGE 48

HOMETOWN Port Alberni, B.C.

My wakeup call came when my older brother had a heart attack,” says paramedic/deputy fire chief Rick Geddes. “He’s also diabetic and these are both health issues that my father has dealt with, so my doctor suggested that I have some blood work done. Sure enough, I showed signs of pre-diabetes.”

Five years, 72 lb., one pair of shoes and one shift in perspective later and Geddes is now a runner.

“I came home to find that my wife had purchased me these fancy New Balance runners,” Geddes says with a chuckle. “I asked her why she bought them, because I don’t run. The shoes sat on the shelf in my basement for some time.” One day, Geddes decided to try them on. “I thought, ‘Man, these are comfy, I’m going to give this a whirl.’” Geddes went for a little run. “I thought I was going to die,” he now laughs. “But also felt that I was onto something. I used to think people that ran were kind of weird,” he adds, “and now I’m that weird guy that runs to work.”

Geddes’ wife supported his lifestyle change with one of her own – healthier cooking. The couple’s Rhodesian ridgeback has been supportive too, joining Rick on his runs.

Aside from the health benefits, Rick is confident that running has improved his ability to perform at work. “Sometimes people underestimate the physical nature of being a paramedic. A lot of my job involves heavy lifting, something that feels much easier having lost weight,” Geddes explains.

In terms of advice to runners just beginning their weight-loss journey, Rick’s advice is tried and true: “Be persistent. You won’t see results right away, but you have to stick with it.”



RIGHT Rick Geddes racing the Tri-Conic Challenge

LEFT Geddes at the Edge to Edge Half-Marathon, Ucluelet, B.C.

Pam Yorkapic, Douglas Ludwig. Courtesy Rick Geddes, Daniel Fredlund