

## SHERRY McDONALD

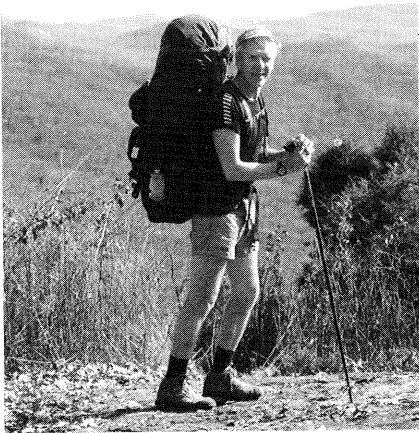
"WALKING HAS CHANGED MY LIFE AND SAVED MY LIFE," SAYS SHERRY McDONALD, 56, OF GILBERT, ARIZ. She's such a believer she convinced her father, who struggled with osteoarthritis (OA), to walk too.

It was more than 27 years ago when Sherry's doctor prescribed medication for a debilitating case of eczema on the condition that she start walking. She jokingly says that he never told her when to stop, so she's still walking. The benefits of walking revealed themselves immediately for Sherry. Before she began to walk, she found herself hyper and full of energy around 10 p.m. every night. After only three days of walking, she noticed she was relaxed at night. Eventually Sherry eliminated the medication, and now she no longer has eczema.

Sherry walks for an hour every morning with a fitness-oriented focus, but the benefits go beyond the physical. There are emotional and mental benefits, too. She often takes a second walk in the evening to alleviate stress.

It's been 20 years since Sherry introduced her father to walking. His OA was painful and limited his mobility so much he thought he couldn't walk. With Sherry's encouragement and support, he started walking little by little. Today he is 78 and still walking with no signs of pain. "Complaining is wasting time and, besides, problems get solutions when you walk. Anyone who knows me knows about my walking, it is that important," says Sherry.

## RICHARD PARK



RICHARD PARK TOOK UP RUNNING AT AGE 40 AND IN 16 YEARS LOGGED SOME 29,000 MILES IN THE FORM OF TRAINING FOR 38 MARATHONS. "In 1993, I was running with discomfort in my hip and a noticeable limp, so I went to my doctor," says the retired actuary and insurance executive, now 68. "He told me that I had bad OA in both of my hips."

Unable to continue to run, Richard began to incorporate other forms of

exercise he enjoyed, including yoga, lifting weights and hiking.

In 1983, the Signal Mountain, Tenn., resident began hiking the Appalachian Trail in sections, starting at the base of the trail in Georgia. "I made it to the Mason Dixon line by 2000 and then had my left hip replaced." Six months after his surgery, Park returned to the Appalachian Trail and last September completed the 2,175-mile trail in Mt. Katahdin, Maine.

Today, Richard enjoys weekly 10-mile treks with a local hiking club. "Prior to the diagnosis, I focused on being fit through all my running. But it was very one-dimensional, and I discovered the need for flexibility and strength as well, which I get from walking and hiking," he says. "Strange as it may seem, I feel my OA turned out to be a blessing."

## DOROTHY FOLEY



DOROTHY FOLEY HAS BEEN AN AVID WALKER SINCE MOVING TO DULUTH, MINN., WITH HER HUSBAND, GARY, NEARLY EIGHT YEARS AGO. Now 40, the North Dakota native was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) at age 25 when she began experiencing pain and stiffness in all her joints. The diagnosis came as a surprise because Dorothy has no family history of the disease.

She spent the next several years trying to find the right medication to control her frequent flares. Exercise was sporadic due to the pain and swelling she experienced. Since she started taking etanercept (*Enbrel*) more than five years ago, Dorothy's flares have been under control. "Before, I couldn't walk on uneven terrain," she says. "Now I can jump and even run without pain."

With her pain under control, walking became a necessary – and beneficial – pastime, she says, when they welcomed Chester, a female yellow Labrador retriever, into their family seven years ago. Today, Dorothy and Chester take hour-long walks six days a week in a nearby park.

"Walking helps keep me toned and limber," she says. "Without walking, I know I would be much more fatigued."

Even during the snowy months of winter, Dorothy and Chester faithfully continue their walks. When his schedule permits, Gary accompanies the pair on their walks.

"Chester loves our walks, it's the highlight of her day," says Dorothy. "Her happiness is what keeps me motivated."