
THE MAXIE CHALLENGE MEANS ALL-OVER HEALTH

BUT WILL THE CALL OF CHICKEN WINGS SLOW MAXIE'S QUEST?



I love Pluckers. There, I've said it. A few weeks ago, I was invited to go to lunch at Pluckers, a restaurant here in Austin that serves wonderful chicken wings with loads of flavor – and calories. Just thinking about those spicy delights makes my mouth water. And yet I've committed to a healthy lifestyle. Do I have to give up my favorite foods forever? What's the use of living until I'm 108 if I can't ever go to Pluckers again?

I'll tell you how I did at Pluckers at the end of the column. But the trip there got me thinking about why I'm doing the Maxie Challenge. What exactly does that mean?

I realized that the challenge is not to live until I'm 80 or 90, or even 108. It's about living well until I am however old I am. It

means exercising moderately like I've been doing, just taking a walk each evening listening to music on my MP3 player. It means when it gets too hot this summer, I'll get up early and do it in the cooler mornings before I shower and go to work.

It means bringing healthy snacks for the office instead of eating the candy and cookies someone is always leaving in the breakroom, and bringing my lunch most days. And I have to tell you: I do feel better. Exercising, even just walking, steering clear of fried foods more often, and eating more fruits and vegetables is putting a spring in my step. It's not an exercise program – this is a change I'm making for the rest of my life.

But the challenge goes beyond that. It means getting regular check-ups at the doctor that

include glucose and blood pressure checks. And since I'm over 50, it means preventative tests like the colonoscopy I had in March. The prep was awful, but the procedure wasn't too bad. And I got a clean bill of health, so I don't have to go back for another colonoscopy for ten years.

So what about my trip to Pluckers? I actually got a salad with grilled chicken strips, and I was just as full as if I'd had the chicken wings. And later on, I felt better mentally and physically than I would have if I had gobbled down those fatty chicken wings. But this is the important thing: I could have had them if I wanted to, in moderation. And that's the bottom line. And just knowing that I can eat at Pluckers is enough for now. However, I think I might have to plan a lunch there for next month...