

Age can't stop them from breaking a sweat

■ Three South Floridians who swim, run marathons and do push-ups on the beach are proof that you're never too old to exercise.

BY DESONTA HOLDER
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Lt. Col. Bob Weinstein, 54, is retired, but he's not done with boot camp. Bebsie Thompson, 73, likes to run, and the folks who run the Disney World marathon named him one of Florida's Finest. G.G. "Grandma Gertrude" Durst trained to walk a half-marathon to celebrate her 80th birthday last year. Now she dips into the pool twice a week.

"You're never too old to exercise," Weinstein says. "Never, ever. The basic principle to follow is focus on what you can do, not on what you can't."

BOB WEINSTEIN

Weinstein can do a lot. He works out 15 to 30 hours a week in Fort Lauderdale at Las Olas and A1A, commanding his beach boot camp (www.nomorecrybabies.com), which he jokingly calls a "sightseeing tour."

It includes jumping jacks, squats, lunges. Push-ups, pull-ups, crunches. Walking, running, resistance training.

"I train with my clients," he says. "I'm not letting them have all the fun."

About five years ago, Weinstein was out of shape. "I was 20 pounds overweight with high blood pressure and cardiovascular inefficiency, and my eating habits were not good."

He started thinking about the consequences, how his life would be 10 years later if he didn't change his lifestyle. "I started looking around at family and friends with health issues and I scared myself into making changes."

He ate "closer to nature," more veggies, beans, raw nuts, oatmeal and whole grains. In three months he lost 20 pounds, lowered his blood pressure and increased his energy. "I was doing things I thought I could never do again. I sprinted in high school and I'm still sprinting."

Weinstein admits he's "not your normal human being" any more. Some of his much younger clients have a hard time keeping up with him. His advice: Get up and show up.

BEBSIE THOMPSON

Thompson of Lauderdale Lakes loves to run 26.2 miles. He ran marathons in Puerto Rico in 2003 and New Zealand in 2004, representing

Jamaica, his native country.

Earlier this year, he crossed the finish line at the Disney World marathon in 4 hours, 51 minutes, 56 seconds.

In a week, he runs about 60 miles, works full time at Office Depot and spends one day swimming in the ocean.

"I ride my stationary bike and do aerobic exercises, too," he says. "I don't lift weights; it makes my arms too bulky. You have to swing your arms when you run."

He has to stay active to keep up with his wife Lorna, 47, a strict vegan. She won the 2002 Reggae Marathon in Negril, Jamaica, and she recently competed in a half-marathon in Philadelphia.

"We train together," he says. "She's faster than me but sometimes it depends. In February we ran a half-marathon in Puerto Rico. She was in front with the Kenyans and I caught her."

Thompson's next race is the Fort Lauderdale A1A Marathon in November, then he's off to Jamaica in December for the Reggae Half-Marathon, then back to Disney World for the 2006 marathon in January.

"Last January, Disney World selected me as one of Florida's Finest," he says. "I got the VIP treatment — met elite runners, started in front. That felt good."

G.G. DURST

G.G. "Grandma Gertrude" Durst lives at The Sterling, an assisted living facility in Aventura, although she manages to get around quite well.

In 2004, she trained to walk the Hawaii half-marathon to celebrate her 80th birthday. She made it to the start line, but after six miles in the scorching heat she stopped before over-exerting herself.

She's not about to attempt another half-marathon, but she does stay active and she's trying to keep her sweet tooth under control.

"I go to the JCC and I do water exercises," twice a week for 45 minutes, she says. "It's an indoor heated pool."

"I take two noodles and I put them under my arms and I swim around the pool several times."

She also has a part-time job at Fresh Market. "I work six hours a week. Two mornings I water the plants and I'm moving around. It keeps me active and busy, too."

She tried Weight Watchers for a while and "I lost weight but I gained part of it back again. . . . I'm trying to eat nourishing foods. It keeps my pep up."

"Thank God my health is good."



HEALTH COLONEL: Bob Weinstein, 54, makes sure he and his clients get a full-body workout.



RUNNING MAN: Bebsie Thompson, 73, travels all over the globe to run marathons.



ON THE ROAD: G.G. Durst, 81, flew to Hawaii in 2004 to walk a half-marathon.