



# Move it!

BY M.B. ROBERTS

IT'S NOT SURPRISING that the words "truck driver" and "healthy living" are rarely found in the same sentence. Blame it on job logistics, including stressful conditions, meals on the go and lack of exercise opportunities.

Some drivers are in such bad shape that Country Music Television (CMT) recently followed up their popular *Trick My Truck* series with a driver makeover show, *Trick My Trucker*.

But here's what's truly shocking: a recent study conducted by Toronto researcher Dr. Martin Moore-Ede found that a truck driver's life expectancy is 10-15 years less than the rest of the population. On average, most American men expect to live to age 76. According to the research, male truck drivers can only expect to live to age 61.

Has this statistic served as a serious life-changing jolt? Barry Pawelek, founder of Walk a Mile America, a health initiative for drivers, whose group confirmed this and similar research with its own survey of 160,000 drivers, says no. "Incredibly, when drivers hear that figure they say, 'I'm going to die anyway.' What hits home is when we involve the family. If you tell a guy he may not be around to see his daughter graduate, that's what gets him."



## Feel the Burn

Before you reach for that gooey, 700-calorie dessert, remember that it's going to take a while to burn it off.

Examples of approximate number of calories burned by a 250-pound person in 30 minutes:

Activity	Calories burned
Carrying a moderate load (up/down stairs).....	310
Driving a truck.....	149
Playing basketball.....	478
Walking briskly.....	330
Walking slowly.....	240
Watching TV.....	60

Note: Someone weighing less will burn less. Someone weighing more will burn more. \*source: Calorie Control Council

The reasons for the shorter lifespan are easy to understand. Making poor food choices (especially consuming high fat foods in large quantities late at night) and not exercising can lead to chronic and even life-threatening conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, arthritis and certain types of cancer. Other unhealthy lifestyle choices, especially smoking, can lead to stroke, heart attack, bronchitis and emphysema.

As dire as the stats may be, several voices in the trucking industry are offering hopeful solutions, including Pawelek, whose Walk a Mile America is the newest program from his Ohio-based non-profit group, Truck Stop Events.

"I wanted something that would motivate the drivers that was so simple," he says. "You don't have to buy weights. You don't have to belong to the gym. It's just something you can do yourself. Do things like park farther away in the parking lot. You'll be adding 500 steps. Do that three times a day. Or, when your trailer is being unloaded, go walk the whole line of trucks for 15 minutes. It's not about working out for two hours straight. It's a few minutes here, a few minutes there. One step at a time."

A few years ago, after finding himself overweight, out of shape and barely able to pass his DOT physical, Green Bay-based driver Jeff Clark took the idea of one step at a time and ran with it.

"Once, it was going to take a couple of hours to unload, so I walked to town," says Clark. "Everybody said, 'Where'd you go?' I said, 'There's this really cool bagel shop downtown. About a mile from here.' Everyone looked at me like that was on the moon."

Clark took his sightseeing to another level when he began jogging, then running to towns after parking his truck.

"I'll run for time more than distance," he says. "A half-hour out, a half-hour back. It brings the tourism back to truck driving!"

Currently, Clark is training for the Green Bay Marathon in May. (This will be his fourth). He admits his approach — long distance running — may be too intense for most drivers. So wherever he goes, Clark encourages other drivers to walk or join the Y or quit smoking. He also plans to self-publish a book this year entitled *Hey! We're Dying Out Here! The Hidden Secret Behind the Driver Shortage*, which lays out a 10-point solution for the short life expectancy of truck drivers and how they can change their lifestyles.

Aaron Aguilera, the 30-year-old, 6'6" trainer from CMT's *Trick My Trucker*, got a crash course in the lifestyle challenges truckers face.

"Truckers are on a tight schedule," he says. "So you have to get creative. When you pull in, park at the farthest stall. Strap on some ankle weights and jog to the rest area. Then jog back. Next time, jog around the truck stop."

Won't most guys feel a little funny walking around with ankle weights?

"At first," admits Aguilera. "But then they start getting results. It's about dedication."

Pawelek agrees.

"It's about what kind of commitment will you make to yourself," he says. "It's not about anybody but you."

This article is for informational purposes only and is not medical advice. Before beginning any lifestyle changes or exercise programs, consult your doctor.



## Truckstop Training Tips from Trick My Trucker's Aaron Aguilera

- Use the benches at truck stops to do step-ups and triceps pushups. (Work up to three sets of 20.)
- Buy resistance bands. They stow easily in your cab. Wrap them around your mirrors or bumper to work biceps, shoulders and chest.
- Walk or run around your truck for a warm-up. Walk or run up hills when possible. Mix in jumping jacks and lunges.
- Try replacing a favorite fattening food with a healthy alternative for one week. Example: swap potato chips for pretzels. Try grilled chicken instead of fried. After one week, you may have a new habit.

## Running Tips From Trucker-Marathoner Jeff Clark



- Get a good pair of shoes from a running specialty store. Use them only for running or walking.
- Start by walking. When you can walk 30 minutes non-stop, try running a bit. Walk for five minutes then run for one. Soon you'll be running for an hour!
- Check out the newspaper for run/walk events. Sign up for a 5K (3.1 mile) walk/run. Don't push yourself. Enjoy it!
- Explore what's around the truckstops. There are great little towns within a mile of most of them.

## Calories In, Calories Out

The choices of weight-loss plans are overwhelming. There's no carb, low carb, good carbs, fat-free, the Atkins Diet, South Beach, Weight Watchers and Nutri System for Men, just to name a few. But don't despair. No matter what the plan, experts agree: To lose weight, burn more calories than you consume.

### Also:

- A healthy goal is to aim to lose 1-1.5 pounds per week.
- A person must burn 3,500 calories to lose a pound of fat.
- Shoot for 30 minutes a day of exercise to lose weight and improve health. (Note: This doesn't have to be consecutive. Three 10-minute sessions are just as effective.)



**WALK TIPS:** On average, 32 laps around an 18-wheeler = one mile.

Get a pedometer. (It's a tiny mechanical device that counts steps.) It will motivate you by tracking your progress.



## Baby Steps

**Short bursts of exercise lead to long-term fitness**

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." That saying takes on special meaning when you're a long haul trucker with many miles to log and little time to exercise!

Yet a short, brisk walk around the truck stop or rig can give you the same fitness and cardiovascular benefits as running, with less risk of damaging knees and joints. And you don't need to carve out a full hour for a workout – studies show that three 20-minute activity sessions carry the same benefits as one that lasts an hour.

The American Heart Association is encouraging all Americans to improve their cardiovascular health by joining its national Start! fitness campaign. It offers an online site where you can track your progress through its interactive web tools. Just log on to [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org) and follow the links to MyStart! Online.

Once you're registered, you can log in to track your daily activity and food intake. You'll get back a summary of your calories in and calories out, and a weekly email summary of your activity and dietary intake for that week.

Using a tracking tool helps keep you motivated to achieve your goals. It's also a reality check – many of us think we move more and eat less than we actually do!

What are you waiting for? Start!

## Hitting the Scales

Ideal weights vary between individuals. (Obviously, age, sex and amount of muscle make a difference.) For this reason, people should consult their doctor regarding their goal weight. For a general guideline, here is a chart based on a healthy body mass index (BMI), an indicator often used to predict chances of developing conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.



### Healthy Weights for Men and Women:

Height	Weight (lbs.)
5'0"	101-127
5'1"	105-132
5'2"	110-136
5'3"	112-140
5'4"	114-145
5'5"	119-149
5'6"	123-156
5'7"	127-158
5'8"	129-162
5'9"	134-167
5'10"	138-173
5'11"	143-178
6'0"	145-182
6'1"	149-187
6'2"	156-193
6'3"	158-198
6'4"	162-202
6'5"	170-211
6'6"	172-215
6'7"	175-220

Source: U.S. government's Partnership for Healthy Weight Management

## Learn More

For more information on the Walk a Mile America challenge, contact Barry Pawelek at Truck Stop Events.

### Truck Stop Events International

RR 1, Box 217  
Hinton, OK 73047  
[Walkamileamerica.com](http://Walkamileamerica.com)  
(405) 542-6857

### Walk a Mile America 2008 events:

March 27, 28, 29, 2008  
Louisville, Ky.

## Why Move?

Exercise is more than just a ticket to weight loss. According to The American Council on Exercise (ACE):

Moderate exercise improves digestion and sleep, reduces stress, provides endurance, helps manage lower back pain, arthritis and diabetes and reduces the risk of coronary heart disease. 🚶

