

# DOING MORE EXERCISE

As dusk approaches, residents in my hometown gradually gather together in the local town squares. They are there neither for mystic rites nor protests, but for exercise.

Recently, people in my hometown are putting more and more emphasis on their physical health. The magic fantastically tearing people from their TV sets stems from the new government policies, people's changing values and the improving living standard.

Since 2003, local authorities have put a series of new policies concerning people's physical health into effect. Wandering around the town, one can see various kinds of sports equipment, including tennis courts, gym equipment, jogging machines etc. In the year 2004, the local government carried out a project with a budget of ten million RMB for a square with all kinds of sports facilities, such as skating rinks, football courts, badminton courts, etc.

Now sports equipment is available in parks, squares and roadsides, to name just a few. Along with the facilities, government officials also use slogans and banners to urge people to do more exercise. Obviously, with more and more people benefiting from the facilities their attempts are well rewarded.

Besides the government's effective measures, it is unfair to leave out the power of people's changing values. People's changing attitudes toward their physical health contributes enormously to the popularity of

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exercising more in daily life. People used to neglect the importance of doing regular exercise.

They held their groundless belief that doing exercise was troublesome and dispensable. In most cases, they would rather watch TV at home. As the telecommunication technology has developed rapidly in China, people are now flooded with information emphasizing the importance of regular exercise.

Websites, TV advertisements and magazines are all encouraging people to keep fit. People's values are changed unconsciously, leading to the popularity of exercise. According to a recent survey, up till the year 2005, 500,000 people in my hometown claimed to do regular exercise all around the year, which counted for 50% of the permanent residents.

Even though people's values have changed, it is odd for a poor peasant to consider jogging after working in the fields for a whole day. The improvement of the living standard was the real factor that ended the original situation. In 2005, the annual average income reached 8,102 RMB for each peasant.

People's consumption capabilities were improved. In such a small town these achievements were- and still are- marvelous. As people are getting rich, they are concern with more than basic needs such as food, clothes and shelter. More and more people tend to pursuit a healthy life. Wealth provides people with the dream of getting healthy and helps them to fulfill it.

With government efforts serving as the spark, people's new values as the tinder, and a better financial situation as the fuel, the fire of exercising is blazing around the town.

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