

Reza Nazemi, MD: MIND AND BODY AT WORK



Dr. Nazemi and wife Mandy make time for exercise together

Talk to neurologist Reza Nazemi, MD for a minute and you will know why this warm, approachable man is a hit with his patients. Spend just a few more moments with him and you are sure to discover Nazemi's passion — exercise. Dr. Nazemi's ardent enthusiasm for physical activity, combined with his gentle manner, could charm even the most apathetic exerciser into action.

"I am a firm believer that many human diseases can be alleviated or diminished by exercise," says Dr. Nazemi, Section Chief of Neurology at Eisenhower Medical Center. "Common problems such as anxiety, stress, tension headache and high blood pressure all benefit from moderate exercise. Working out can help people live longer, happier lives. With predisposed conditions such as diabetes or hardening of the arteries, exercise can still minimize long-term complications."

In addition to being an exercise advocate, Nazemi has always been fascinated with the brain. "It encompasses so much. Everything is connected to the brain." Dr. Nazemi began studying medicine as soon as he finished high school in his native Iran. He received his medical degree from Tehran University and did his neurology residency at Chicago's Northwestern University. He completed a fellowship in neurology and neuromuscular disease at the University of California at San Diego and is Board Certified in Neurology and Electrodiagnostic Medicine.

Soon after graduating in 1980, he found a job at Eisenhower Medical Center and proposed to then-girlfriend Mandy. "We had a simple wedding, but no honeymoon because we got married June 21, and I had to be at work on July 1." When they arrived in Palm Springs, the Nazemis were greeted by a desolate landscape and desert temperatures of 116 degrees. It was a stark contrast to their metropolitan Chicago and San Diego lifestyles. "I am a firm believer that many human diseases can be alleviated or diminished by exercise."

"It was hard at first, especially for my wife. There wasn't much here in the early 80s and she had to endure my schedule," Dr. Nazemi recalls. "I was working 12 to 16 hour days. There was a lot of loneliness, but we managed and took advantage of our surroundings. Now we are so grateful to live here and to have brought up our family in this beautiful place."

The Nazemis raised their two sons, Navid, now 26, and Cameron, 24, (both avid tennis players and both in law school) amongst the arid, sun-soaked beauty of the quiet Palm Springs community. "We have always been a very active family and have always used sports as a way to bond. When the kids were young, I really got into running and it became something we did as a family. On weekends we would do a 5K or 10K together. It was great fun. We have terrific memories."

The Nazemis also are ardent travelers. Dr. Nazemi credits his wife for getting him interested in photography during an early vacation. "We found that photography was a wonderful way to cherish our memories and now we take tons of pictures," he explains. Dr. Nazemi has become quite an accomplished photographer over the years, and pictures from their travels are artfully placed throughout his office.

Devoted to his family, patients and running (he runs five to seven miles every other day), Dr. Nazemi encourages anyone who has never tried exercise to give it a try. "Just try everything until you find the thing that is right for you. Dancing, walking, swimming — find a partner to encourage you and support you. The benefits are so worth it. You're worth it!"

Photo: Andreas Koessler

Healthy Living is a publication of Eisenhower Medical Center · © Copyright 2015 All Rights Reserved · www.emc.org