

Adam Vincent

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Professor Reiss

English 111

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### Cycling for Life

It was July of 1998 and Jon Pasch was not been feeling well. There were a number of ailments needing to be discussed with his doctor. Jon was forty-one years old and having problems with dizziness, athlete's foot, blotchy skin, high blood pressure and a lack of energy. He decided to schedule a doctor's appointment. Jon is 5'7" and was tipping the scales at 189 pounds. During Jon's appointment, the doctor recorded a resting heart rate of 74 and blood pressure screaming at 162/121, indicating moderate to severe hypertension. As the doctor listened to Jon's heart he is became obviously concerned, and began the typical couch potato interview. "Do you exercise?" and "What does your diet consist of?" Jon's exercise routine consisted of virtually nothing and his diet was heavy on beer and red meat and low in fiber and whole grains. The doctor said, "There's really nothing I can do for you. You need to start taking better care of yourself. You can either get busy exercising or get busy dying. Keep doing what your doing and you'll be dead in a year!" The doctor's statements motivated Jon to dramatically change his life.

After the checkup, Jon's next stop was at the local bookstore where he previewed many exercise books. Most of what he read seemed to echo a common theme. Find an exercise you like and your chances of sticking with it greatly increase. Jon decided to try cycling, after all he owned a bike and could begin right away. He started with a few laps around the neighborhood for the first couple of weeks. Jon discovered that many people

commuted to work via bicycle, so he decided to give that a shot. Jon's round trip to work was 24 miles, which gave him about two hours in the saddle, on his Wal-mart bike.

After about a month, Jon started to believe cycling was something he could use to improve his health, but there was an immediate obstacle. The bike started giving him problems because it wasn't designed for daily commuting. He decided a visit to the local bike shop was in order. Ted at Gearhead Outfitters in Jonesboro, Arkansas really hooked him up with a nice mountain bike and many required accessories including a good helmet, clip pedals and shoes, biking shorts, jersey, socks, water bottles, spare tire tubes, a flat repair kit, ect. Jon's new bike was sweet. It was lighter and the components worked much better enabling him to increase his average speed by about 3 miles per hour. His confidence skyrocketed. He began going to the local mountain bike trails and quickly advanced from the novice to the intermediate and to the advanced technique trails.

Jon has also become an avid road cyclist and is now in the best shape of his life indicated by a resting heart rate of 46, blood pressure at 118/79, 160 pound body weight and having completed one 200 mile ride in twelve hours. Today his normal daily cycling routine consist of a twenty-five to thirty-five mile ride either before work or during lunch depending on his schedule and a century ride (100 miles) or mountain biking on the weekends. I ask Jon what enabled him to make such an impressive lifestyle change and he answered, "Your body can be trained. You can train it to climb Mount Everest or you can train it to be a six hundred pound fat guy." Hopefully, this story will inspire others to improve their level of fitness with cycling. Although very few people possess Jon's

motivation and ability to focus, his success serves an example of how to overcome a sedentary and unhealthy lifestyle.

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