

From fat couch potato to fast runner

It's difficult to see Frank Diaz weighing some 90 more pounds than he does now. But about 21 years ago, a picture of Frank would remind someone more of a blimp than a runner.



Fortunately, the Fort Worth runner realized that he was casting too huge of a shadow with the 259 pounds he was carrying around and decided it was time to do something about it. So, he started walking, which after 10 years and fewer pounds led to running. Now, Frank, 66, challenges and often wins trophies in the 65-69 age division. He placed second at the Run For Dad's 5K on June 16 with a 22:38.5, which shows he can pick 'em up and put 'em down with his deceptive short-stride style.

"I wasn't doing anything," Frank said of his former lifestyle, which included a beer or two. "I finally said that was enough and decided to change my lifestyle," he said. "I started walking and changed my diet. I decided to just stay healthy."

He said he probably wouldn't have started running except there were some runners (Scott Smith and Steve Cantrel) where he works (a meat company) who coaxed him into entering a 5K.

Afterward, Frank said to himself, "I can do that." He also had pushed a baby jogger for Scott and his wife. "I really liked it. I was hooked. Boy, this is it. From then on I started training and learning how to run."

One of his highlights was running his third marathon, the Boston Marathon this year, after qualifying at Austin with a 4:08.

"I'm 66 years old and have never felt better in my whole life," he said. "Lot of people my age have aches and pains. I don't. I feel good."

His usual training include running four days a week and riding a bike two days a week. Frank said his long run is a minimal 10 miles and often is 15. "I love to run. I can get out there and get lost. I have no problem running."