

LIFE & ARTS

WHAT'S YOUR WORKOUT?

In Her 70s, She Took Up Running

'Grandma Anne' likes a 5K and encourages children to run with her, too; her doctor says 'Don't stop'

BY RACHEL BACHMAN

ANNE GARRETT encourages the children she runs with to jog beside her or behind her, but not right in front of her. The 82-year-old has finished half-marathons and routinely won her age group in a decade of running. But she doesn't want to trip and break a hip.

Ms. Garrett, of Oceanside, Calif., is the volunteer spokeswoman for the Move Your Feet Before You Eat Foundation, a Carlsbad-based nonprofit that encourages young people to be physically active. This time of year, she makes frequent visits to schools and Boys & Girls Clubs to run with children.

A 7-year-old girl grew wide-eyed as Ms. Garrett pulled out her cellphone to show her a running video. "She said 'You've got an iPhone!' And I said, 'Yes.' She said, 'But you're old!'" The children call her Grandma Anne.

On the day before Thanksgiving, Ms. Garrett ran a senior mile race for walkers and runners age 60 and older. She walked the 5K O'Side Turkey Trot the next day with her younger daughter, who is recovering from an injury.

Ms. Garrett grew up in Ireland and moved to the U.S. with her husband and two daughters in the late 1960s. She was a racewalker for years and planned to walk a 2006 half-marathon in Huntington Beach, while her younger daughter, Jayne Klein, ran. But everyone else started running so Ms. Garrett did too—and kept going.

She typically runs about four days a week. She encourages the children to get



Anne Garrett, 82, runs with students at San Luis Rey Elementary School in Oceanside, Calif. Ms. Garrett, left, stretches her lower back.

their parents moving, too.

The Workout

On days she doesn't run, Ms. Garrett does exercises at home to strengthen and stretch her muscles and improve her balance. She uses a 9.5-pound bar to work her arms, pulling it up to her chest 10 times, then pushing it overhead 10 times. She does three sets of each.

She lies on her back and pulls her knees to her chest 10 to 15 times. She stretches her arms to her sides, then moves her knees to one side and looks in the opposite direction to stretch out. "I get some cracks with my back at that time," she says. "It feels good."

She has arthritis in her lower back and left knee, and she sometimes walks parts of longer runs. She recently scaled back her training by a few miles a week but says running still feels good and loosens her up. "The doctor said, 'Don't stop. Do it as long as you can,'" she says.

The Gear

Ms. Garrett wears running skirts: "That's my trademark," she says. She wears knee-high compression socks and New Balance Fresh Foam shoes. She uses a foam roller to work out muscle aches.

The Diet

For breakfast she has a dish of blueberries

and banana, along with a bran muffin or oatmeal. Lunch is often a salmon sandwich with some grapes and Wheat Thins or potato sticks. Dinner is a broccoli and kale salad. She adds unsalted nuts, dried cranberries and chicken or salmon.

Every night she has a glass of wine, usually White Zinfandel. Dessert is a small piece of chocolate, candy, or fruit with "a little bit of Cool Whip on top just to make it look good."

The Playlist

Ms. Garrett doesn't listen to music while she runs but sometimes sings to herself. "I like the song 'My Wild Irish Rose,'" she says. "My husband and I used to dance to that."