

THE IDLE AMERICAN

Out On a Limb....

Commentary by Dr. Don Newbury

Column #1,115 for Release Week of October 28, 2024, or Later

The deeper dive one takes into life's hourglass of time, the more likely it is to ponder nuggets of health news that might affect longevity.

One jumped out at me the other day when a physician's findings gave me an additional reason to keep as close an eye on my cane as I do my cell phone.

At first glance, I thought his findings might involve physical exercising. (Asked the other day if I jog, I responded, "No, I get my exercise serving as pallbearer for my friends who jogged.)....

But no! His study centered on standing, so I made a mental "sign up," figuring I'd finally encountered an exam I could ace. Again, I'd jumped to conclusions, and I know, such a decision doesn't count as exercise.

I've done quite a bit of standing in my life, clinging to the belief that anyone who doesn't stand for something is likely to fall for anything.

Perhaps I smirked a bit upon learning that my ongoing commitment to remain vertical and ventilating could hinge--of all things--on my ability to stand....

All I was asked to do was to stand on one leg for five seconds. Piece of cake, I thought. Why, I could do that with one arm tethered posteriorly, and maybe even with eyes closed.

Wayda minute! This was not an easy assignment! Three seconds seemed to be my limit.

Looking for loopholes, I read further into the study, learning that my chances of making it for five seconds would be enhanced if I tried using my "nondominant leg." Now that's a real puzzlement; I immediately wondered if bull riders--just trying to stay lodged on the snorting animal for eight seconds--are given any kind of instructions involving leg dominance....

Truth to tell, I didn't--and don't--have a clue as to which of my legs is dominant. The study suggested that this could be determined merely by remembering which gym exercises seem most difficult on which leg.

Beats me.

The only leg exercises I get at gyms involve simply twitching or making multiple trips to the concession stands....

Respect for the doctor's findings seems important, however. He cited a sobering stat that senior adults who are not able to stand on one leg for five seconds are much more likely to experience falls in the coming year.

AND, he emphasized that some 30% of us will do so.
Whether we have a leg to stand on or not....

'Course doctors ain't always right. It's hard for me to take seriously their admonitions to get my belt size down to a size 38 when theirs is a 48.

The Internet claims there's a long-time physician in Austin who is quick to brag about how he has maintained his exercise regimen delivering babies throughout Texas. He claims to be "slap happy" about his thousands of deliveries. "Slap happy?"

Yeah, I guess that fits. He further admits that in his early years in delivery rooms, he was absent-minded, often holding newborns up by their hands and spanking their faces. Maybe admissions are in order by some of our leading governmental officials--in both Washington, DC and in Austin--who came into the world in this unorthodox manner. Trouble is, they are supported by deep-pocketed people who may have been delivered by the same physician. This would explain much....

I recall an old doctor who served a rural community faithfully for many years. On his day off--en route to his favorite fishing spot--he dropped off some prescription orders at the drug store.

While inside, several young people gathered around, poking fun at his ancient farm vehicle.

Hearing their giggles, the physician expounded, "Kids, this truck is paid for." Then, finger pointed at several of them, he added, "But, you're not, and you're not, and you're not."....

Dr. Newbury, longtime university president, continues to speak and write. The Idle American, begun in 2003, is one of the nation's longest-running syndicated humor columns. Contact: 817-447-3872. Email: newbury@speakerdoc.com. Website: www.speakerdoc.com.