

Jo's journey



Jo Ball wants to “walk the walk” -- the fifth annual Whitewater Adventure (formerly Whitewater Walk).

She says: I have been a great starter of exercise and diet programs over the years but never really finished any of them. I know a lot of people are in that same boat.

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In my last entry I spoke of watching *The Biggest Loser* on television. In that show, a lady was trying to finish a 5k walk. She was having such a hard time, but was determined to finish. She was the very last person to come in and a couple of the others went back and actually held her up so she could cross that line. She did finish! Good for her! It's not about coming in first; it's about finishing the race. When she crossed that line, she was overjoyed. She made a remark that went straight to my heart and soul. She said, “I made it! I could never even walk through a grocery store without using a cart”. She described me perfectly. For years I have not been able to walk any distance at all without holding on to my husband's arm or taking a cart all the way from the parking lot and through the store. I have a balance problem caused from Meniere's Disease. It is a debilitating condition that can take over your life if you allow it to. It is not life threatening but it is a life changing disorder. Without notice, you may find the room spinning and you become totally helpless. It's embarrassing and also very scary at times. This condition held me back from doing a lot of things that required walking or even driving. After years of living with this problem and just caving in without a fight, of course, my health suffered.

From the very beginning of this journey, I have struggled with this problem. It is particularly bad when the pollen is up. Allergies seem to play a part in it. My doctor has worked with me to find a solution by treating the allergies but there has not been a lot of research done concerning Meniere's because it is not life threatening. So, I decided to find myself a walking stick that I felt comfortable with. My son gave me one and that stick has been a blessing. I have seen walkers and hikers using a walking stick so I feel very good about using it.

My husband, G.I. can't walk long distances because of a back injury, but he is able to ride his bicycle. We decided we would ride/walk the Whitewater Trail all the way to the River View marker and back to cover the 3.1 miles required for a 5K walk. What a great time

