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Amrita Kaur

What is your secret to looking fabulous?

It is about taking one step at a time and focusing on what I can change and not what I cannot.

I look at the positives in negative situations, and make it a point to bring joy to people I meet just by smiling and greeting them warmly. And last, having a fabulous-looking wife helps as well.

Has there ever been a time when you were not fit and fab?

When I was 16, I contracted advanced-stage tuberculosis with a hole in the lung. I was extremely underweight, with many pimples on my face, and had body odour as a result of the side effects of medication.

In 2015, I was diagnosed with stage 3 colorectal cancer. I became skinny and often had nausea due to the side effects of chemotherapy and radiation.

Though I am in remission, I am still trying to regain the full use of my bowel system while facing constipation and diarrhoea. I have no control over how my bowel system will react for the day.

What is your diet like?

I keep a food logbook on what triggers my bowel issues and what is safe to eat.

I do not eat spicy food, dairy products, nuts, broccoli, cauliflowers, popcorn and mushrooms, among other food.

I take soup, white fish and chicken breast, but they are mostly bland, with salad and potato. I drink a lot of plain water and coconut water. My diet is based on how well my bowel system behaved the previous night.

What are your indulgences?

Nothing. Whatever I can eat and not cause bowel irritation is a bonus.

How do you maintain a healthy work-life balance?

I reduced my workload for the past few years to manage my health. A month ago, I resigned as a teacher to seek new opportunities such as taking up a real estate licence.

What are the three most important things in your life?

To be a better Muslim tomorrow than yesterday. To spend quality time with my wife and three kids. To pay it forward to the cancer community by sharing my experiences of rising above adversity with patients, survivors and caregivers.

Exercising to take his mind off cancer

At 57, Arun Rosiah, whose colorectal cancer is in remission, is the oldest finalist at this year's Manhunt Singapore



ST PHOTO: SAMUEL ANG

How has your cancer journey changed you?

I am full of gratitude and more attuned to the needs of people in general. I make it a point to reach out to anyone who may need help, but is not seeking it.

I do not hold grudges for long. Even if I feel it is not my fault, I take the initiative to apologise and move on. I have learnt to appreciate others' perspectives by having empathy and putting myself in their shoes.

I have also become a better husband and father.

What is your favourite and least favourite part of your body?

Every part of mine is a favourite as I treasure being alive with all functioning organs.

Perhaps the least favourite part of my body pre-cancer could have been my rectum, and now, post-cancer, I miss it badly and it has to be my favourite body part.

What are your must-dos before and after a workout?

Before a workout, I do joint mobility exercises using resistance bands to stretch my shoulders. I

also do hip mobility exercises such as butterfly stretch and frog stretch as well as dynamic warm-ups such as leg bends and arm circles.

During cool-down, I stretch.

How important is it for you to keep up with your fitness routine?

It comes naturally to me. I do not really need to put in effort to keep to a routine. For example, I could be standing in a long queue and doing calf raises, or I could be carrying grocery bags while walking and

doing bicep curls with them.

How has your active lifestyle influenced your family and friends?

My two sons and my wife are motivated to stay healthy and fit.

My boys feel the pressure when their friends comment that their old man looks fitter than them.

What is the most extreme thing you have done in the name of fitness?

I ran the Standard Chartered marathon to get a finisher medal

Bio Box**ARUN ROSIAH****AGE** 57**HEIGHT** 1.7m**WEIGHT** 66kg

As a physical education teacher for more than 20 years, Mr Arun Rosiah maintained a healthy diet and exercised regularly. So, it was a shock when he found out in 2015 at age 51 that he had stage 3 colorectal cancer.

He underwent radiation therapy and chemotherapy, and had surgery to remove the tumour, his rectum and 20cm of his colon.

For nine months, he had a stoma bag attached to his abdomen to help him clear his bowels until another operation was done to remove it.

Due to the side effects of the treatment and surgery, he often felt nauseous. He also had weak bladder control, mouth sores and numbness in his hands and feet.

To distract himself from the pain, he participated in a 14-day online global push-up challenge, doing a total of 11,000 push-ups and coming in third place in 2016.

"Gearing my effort towards exercising helped me overcome adversity with cancer. It took my mind off the pain of the effects of the treatment," says Mr Arun, who is married with two sons and a daughter aged between 19 and 25. He quit as a teacher last month and is now a house husband.

Though the cancer has been in remission for five years, he still deals with long-term effects, such as stomach bloating, flatulence and intestinal pains every other day. This is why he does not stick to a fitness routine. "I have no control over how my bowel system will react for the day."

Still, he is determined to lead an active lifestyle. Apart from going to the gym five to six times a week, he walks, jogs and works out with his teacher wife, 52, at a fitness corner.

At 57, Mr Arun is the oldest finalist at Manhunt Singapore 2021. He joined to raise awareness of colorectal cancer and motivate cancer patients and survivors to overcome difficulties by creating opportunities for themselves.

"It is important to have a warrior mindset, not a worrier mindset. This is how even in my darkest moments, I rode through the storm and came back stronger," he says.

for my wife as a present for our 17th wedding anniversary in 2017.

I ran on an empty stomach as I would have had diarrhoea if I had eaten anything before it.

What is one small health tweak that has led to big results?

Listening to my body. If it does not feel like exercising or feels tired, I will take a break.

I will not exercise for the sake of clocking the mileage.

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