Frederick William Kasch began his pursuit of an adult fitness program at San Diego State in 1958. Under his supervision, exercise classes (jogging or swimming) for middle-aged adults from the San Diego Community were led by students and faculty who monitored heart rates and measured other parameters, such as flexibility and strength. The program participants were tested twice a year for lung capacity, blood chemistry and body fat composition.

In 1964, physician Dr. John Boyer joined the Adult Fitness Program (AFP) as Medical Director. Together he and Fred expanded the AFP when they established the Cardiac Rehabilitation Program. It was the first in San Diego and possibly the first in the United States. The programs served as teaching and research tools for graduate students and led to the Kasch-Boyer long-term research studies on the effects of exercise and fitness on middle-aged men, including those with cardiac disease. Their pioneering research showed that exercise and physical conditioning play important roles in cardiac rehabilitation and in improving and maintaining the fitness and health of all people.

Look magazine (14 May 1968) featured an article on the program and the promising results from the studies on adult cardiac patients who lived in the San Diego area.
How much jogging is good for your heart?

New tests that measure the limit of your heart's endurance are booming exercise as a boon to health

BY ROLAND H. BERG
PHOTOGRAPHED BY EARL THEISEN

The two men pictured above are jogging for different reasons. One is trying to recover from a heart attack; the other, hopefully, to prevent one. On the right is Carlton M. Thompson, a 57-year-old engineer who suffered a coronary seizure nearly three years ago and, for the past two years, has been jogging his way back to health. The younger man on the left is John L. Boyer, a 40-year-old physician who has never had a heart attack and hopes to prevent one by jogging.

Every evening, after a full day’s medical practice, Dr. Boyer supervises—and joins—more than 200 men and women in San Diego, Calif., who regularly exercise after work. It's part of a community physical-fitness program started by San Diego State College's Dr. Frederick W. Kusch, director of Physical Education, and Dr. Boyer, associate director. The program is running well.
Asst. Sue Thompson    Dr. Boyer    Dr. Kasch    Cardiac Patient
↓    ↓    ↓    ↓ (Sue’s father)

Sue Thompson, 24 (above and left), leads post-cardiac group, including her father, in preliminary warming-up exercises. Every five minutes, the members (below) stop jogging to take pulse beats in their necks and to get checked on the electrocardiograph.

Ex-heart-attack patient Carlton Thompson (above) tests his capacity for exercise by pedaling a bicycle while wired to an xcc. Daughter Sue, an assistant trainer, checks results with Dr. Boyer (center) and Dr. Kasch. Each of the 34 other heart patients in the exercise group at San Diego State College gets the same test.
EXERCISE CONTINUED

With proper conditioning, even heart-attack patients can learn to “exercise through their pain.”

Most of the joggers are healthy, but out-of-condition—working people between the ages of 35 and 65. Some, like Carlton Thompson, have had heart attacks, diabetes, asthma or high blood pressure. Thompson belongs to a special group of 35 men, all of whom have diseased hearts. He was volunteered into the coronary jogging club by his daughter Sue, a graduate student in phys ed at San Diego State and one of the trainers. All 35 have their physicians’ consent.

The 35 heart cripples begin each session with 30 minutes of setting-up exercises followed by an hour of alternate running and walking. “A slow warm-up is the key,” explains Dr. Boyer. “It permits blood vessels to expand and deliver more blood to the heart.” Every five minutes, the coronary stops to take their pulses and check their electrocardiograms. Even if they feel pain, as long as pulse and ECG remain normal, they continue to exercise. None has had ill effects. Before joining the jogging group, each man takes stress tests on a bicycle ergometer that measures the limit of his heart’s endurance. The surprise is how much exercise diseased hearts can take.