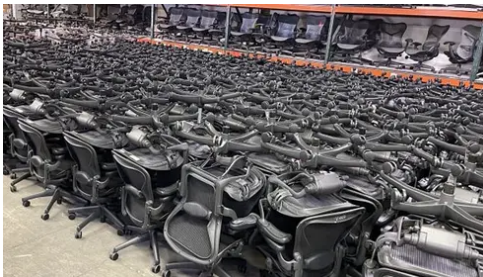


# Heal ‘Thy’ Business: Born To Run

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## Lesson#1: Investing in Long-Run Health

We were all ‘born to run’ is the inspiring message of Chris McDougall’s highly-acclaimed book on endurance running. Which is what made the news of a young healthy 40-something in our neighbourhood who had collapsed from a sudden cardiac arrest while practicing for an upcoming marathon, all the more baffling? While the cause was believed to be his lack of proper training, two weeks later a 35-something in my office collapsed during his morning cardio training in the gym. This guy had been training for years, displayed many marathon awards on his shelf and was known for his grueling daily regimen.

### So what gives?

Dr Michael Gregor, MD in his Amazon-bestseller book “How Not to Die” warns that the beginnings of heart disease may be found in nearly all American children (raised on a western diet of animal-products and processed foods) by age 10! Based on autopsies of over 300 young American soldiers who were casualties of war, it is evident that by the time we reach our 20’s and 30’s, these early fatty streaks have turned into full-blown plaques some with even 90 per cent blockage. So the question no longer is whether or not we want to prevent heart disease, but whether or not we want to reverse it.

### Heart-wrenching Numbers

Which brings us to the real question – How high are the odds of a seemingly fit ‘40-something’ dying of a sudden

cardiac event? The answer, surprisingly, is - very high!

Death Risk Ratings, a website created by Carnegie Mellon University in 2009 calculated the odds and likely causes of a person dropping dead within the next 12-months and ascribed circulatory system diseases (such as heart attacks) to be the leading killer of people in their 40s. A special RACER report studied the incidence of cardiac arrests associated with marathon and half-marathon races in the US between 2000 and 2010. Cardio-vascular (that is, related to the blood 'vessels' of the 'heart') disease accounted for the majority of cardiac arrests. Not surprisingly, the incidence rate of heart attacks was significantly higher during marathons than half-marathons.

Is carb-loading before a run and a protein uptake afterwards good enough to sustain your long-term health and avoid sudden cardiac events? The answer is NO – an acronym for Nitric Oxide gas.

### **Say Yes to NO**

While high-carbs and proteins are the fuels that provide the immediate energy and repair needs of the body, it is equally important that our blood vessels (our internal piping system) be able to rapidly deliver these nutritional fuels (including rich oxygenated blood) to the heart and the muscles. Let's phrase it another way: What use is a fully-loaded fuel tank of a racing car if its fuel pipe is rusted? What good is an asset-rich business, if its potential to deliver operating cash-flow is barely a trickle?

It is in this context that Nitric Oxide (NO) gas produced by our bodies when we eat beets and greens plays a crucial role in enhancing our blood flow. This heart-restorative property of NO was first discovered in the 1980's. Scientific studies observed that the endothelium (the inner lining of our blood vessels) has a magical ability to produce NO (from the nitrate-rich beets and greens we eat) that relaxes stiffened blood vessels under physical stress, allowing more oxygenated blood flow to the heart. Interestingly, this is the same science that underlies nitro-glycerin pills that are prescribed for angina pain. NO gas produced from our food is our body's natural mechanism (similar to a balloon-angioplasty operation) to expand narrowed arteries or veins, as we rapidly climb a flight of stairs or run that extra mile.

So remember: The next time you head out for your practice run, be sure to grab a nitrate-rich green smoothie because the secret to long-run happiness lies not only in your feet but also in your greens.

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