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MAX FACTS

THE OFFICIAL NEWS LETTER OF AOMSI

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Kolkata Conference & Fitness Issue



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Message from the President



Warm greeting from office of AOMSI

Dear friend colleagues and junior trainees. It is an absolute delight to address you all through news letter from head office . My last three months of journey as President of our prestigious association has been delectable and remarkable with so many activities happening in the last quarter.

Starting with our some state conferences, wonderful and spirited cricket tournament in Jabalpur and presently going on Next gen esthetic Themed conference in Udaipur. The journey has been so successful and fully enjoyed by members.

On Feb 13th AOMSI head office Initiated International OMFS day. Saw member and Institution across India celebrating with thousands Community people have been screened and educated about our Slogan about “Oral Cancer early diagnosis and prevention” .

To provide highest quality of training, association have been working hard to train 40 young just completed MDS trainees, by paid fellowships in different parts of the country. By consensus & sheer grit we will strengthen this training by the way of quality of training in each Centre. Dedicated TMJ training centers and more esthetics will happen to take our association to the new level in Subspecialty training progress.

Improving and dedicating SSS Social Security Scheme, medical indemnity policies among members for their benefits and service has been taken up new terms and will see progress in both of these services in the coming months ahead.

This year you will also see the PG master class in the offline physical mode in 5 parts of the country to give maximum benefits to the student trainees. Soon the centers will be announced and registration will be started.

To improve our faculty to expose and learn more from international centers, the AOMSI head office taken effort by the way of funding at least 3 faculties from India to go outside country. See the regular website and notifications regarding the same for guidelines for selection of faculty. I request all members of our esteemed association to register for midterm conference in Agra and National conference in VIZAG, AP to make those two events a great success.

As a team AOMSI we will meet, greet and learn soon when we meet in person.

Jai Hind.

Dr. Manikandhan Ramanathan
President, AOMSI.

Message from the Hon General Secretary



Dear Esteemed Members of AOMSI,

As we step into another promising year, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each one of you for your unwavering support and dedication to our specialty. The past year has been a testament to our collective efforts in advancing Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, and I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead.

We began this year on a high note with the Annual Conference in Kolkata, which was a resounding success. The event brought together experts, academicians, and practitioners from across the country, fostering meaningful discussions, groundbreaking research presentations, and hands-on skill enhancement sessions. The enthusiasm and engagement witnessed at the conference reaffirmed our commitment to excellence in maxillofacial surgery. I sincerely thank the organizing committee, speakers, and delegates for making it an unforgettable event.

Building on this momentum, we recently celebrated International Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons Day on February 13, 2025, with a focused campaign on Early Detection and Prevention of Oral Cancer. This initiative, extending until World No Tobacco Day on May 31, 2025, has gained tremendous participation across states, institutions, and the dental fraternity. Through screening camps, educational programs, public awareness campaigns, and collaborations with key stakeholders, we are working towards making a tangible impact in the fight against oral cancer.

I take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to our new President, Dr. Manikandan, and the new executive team, as they embark on this journey to steer AOMSI towards greater heights. With your continued involvement, we aim to expand training programs, strengthen research initiatives, and elevate the standards of patient care in maxillofacial surgery.

As we move forward, I encourage all our members to stay actively engaged in AOMSI's initiatives. Your passion and dedication are the driving forces behind our success, and together, we will continue to make a difference.

Looking forward to another year of growth and achievements!

Warm regards,

Dr. Girish Rao

Honorary General Secretary

Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons of India (AOMSI)

Message from Editorial Team

Dear Readers!
Season's Greetings.

First and foremost from entire team of Maxfacts Newsletter, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all our Members of prestigious AOMSI for the support and appreciations for our Newsletter throughout the year 2024. It was well quoted by Lord Buddha- "To keep the body in good health is a duty... otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear".

This edition of Maxfacts is dedicated on fitness of our precious Maxfax Surgeons. As we all go through long tiresome working hours, infact at times for the well being of our patients we often skip our meals, may develop anxiety and ignore our mental and physical health. As Surgeons we all know the consequences of this but still somehow may be because of time constrains or unavoidable circumstances most of us are not able to dedicate regular fitness schedule for same.

Hence in this issue we have covered few prominent fitness freaks of our association and their insights on work life balance and how they maintain a healthy lifestyle and fitness of their body and mind.

We have also covered glimpses of well organized 48th Annual Conference held at Kolkata along with some more activities held in the month of December 2024 & January 2025.

We will soon release next issue of this year covering exceptional activities done across the country on International Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon's Day and lot more.

Best regards,
The Editorial Team



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SPOTLIGHT *Interview*

Dr. Nilesh Pagaria

What inspired you to start your fitness journey and how did it fit into your life as a surgeon?

I have always been a sports person. Back in my days at Ramaiah, I played cricket and even captained the Ramaiah cricket team. However, as I got deeper into my medical education and practice, the demanding schedule took a toll on my health. I developed hypertension, snoring issues, and, at one point, even experienced a cardiac event. That was a wake-up call for me—fortunately, not too late.

I decided to take control of my health by following a structured nutrition plan and incorporating regular workouts. At that time, I weighed around 105 kilos, but through consistent effort, I brought it down to 74-75 kilos and have been maintaining it steadily ever since.

Fitness is now an integral part of my life. I have a deep passion for sports—I play badminton, watch cricket, and love weightlifting. I also cycle regularly and participate in marathons. Staying active is something I genuinely enjoy, and I am highly motivated when it comes to fitness.

For me, a day without exercise feels incomplete. If, for some reason, I miss my workout, I feel frus-

trated and restless. That's why I consider at least one hour of exercise every day as non-negotiable.

How do you fit these routines into your life as a surgeon?

At the end of the day, you take care of your patients, your work, your finances, and your family. But you, being the centre piece of everything, must take care of yourself first. Nothing happens automatically—you have to make it happen.

Once your biological clock sets a fixed workout time, everything else naturally revolves around it. You don't necessarily need to take out extra time because it becomes part of your routine. In our field, true emergencies are rare. If someone tells me they have an emergency to attend, I know exactly what they mean. I've seen more patients than most, and the last real emergency I attended was 8–10 years ago. With modern hospitals and advancements, the number of urgent cases has further decreased, making it easier to schedule personal commitments.

You have to prioritize fitness—it won't happen on its own. No one is asking for a 4–5 hour workout. Just one hour a day is enough. If I don't have an hour, I make sure to fit in at least 30 minutes. If I

miss a session one day, I adjust my schedule to make up for it. My goal is a minimum of six workouts a week, and once it becomes a habit, it's as natural as eating on time or pursuing a hobby.

Some people find time for singing, others for drinking—fortunately, I don't spend time on that. But being the centerpiece of my family and work, I believe I deserve to take care of myself. If you burn yourself out, what's left to recover? The body needs that jolt for recovery.

I see so many surgeons complaining of back pain, but at 47, I have no such issues—touch wood! The idea that surgeons have no time for fitness is a myth. Once you integrate exercise into your circadian rhythm, it becomes effortless. If you wake up at 7 AM every day, you no longer need an alarm. Similarly, once your workout becomes part of your daily routine, your body will naturally push you to do it.

Do you remember your first workout?

I can't remember the exact first day of my workouts because I have always been active. However, the real game changer for me was nutrition. I've always worked out, played sports, and stayed physically engaged—I've never gone completely inactive for four or five months at a stretch in my 47 years of life. But fitness isn't just about playing sports, weight training, exercise, or yoga. It's a combination of workouts, proper nutrition, staying active, and sleeping well. It was around 2015–2016 when I truly started focusing on putting all these elements together.

I still remember a particular moment that really hit me. My first coach—who lives near my house and office—came to see me when I told him I wanted to start a transformation plan. Coincidentally, one of my juniors, a young doctor, was sitting in my chamber at that time. She was about 8–10 years younger than me, had learned a lot from me, and respectfully addressed me as "Sir."

When my coach arrived, he asked me to stand up

to assess my physique. Then, in Hindi, he bluntly said, "Bhaiya, aapka toh belt dikh hi nahi raha." (Brother, your belt isn't visible at all) I felt so embarrassed, especially with my junior sitting right there! That moment was a turning point.

Suddenly, I was reminded of that Royal Stag advertisement—"Men will be men." It just flashed in my mind. But looking back, I'm glad that moment happened. It pushed me to take fitness seriously, and today, I have maintained myself well. It's funny how life comes full circle—now I'm here giving this kind of interview about my fitness journey.

There's always a starting point, and that was mine.

What are the key things we need to know about nutrition in this profession?

The first thing to understand is that we don't have to give up anything—except alcohol and smoking. Secondly, sugar is not inherently bad for health, white rice is not unhealthy, bread is not poison, jaggery is not a miracle food, and dry fruits are not a necessity. Dairy products are not harmful, gluten is not a toxin, and chicken is not essential for survival.

What I'm trying to say is that you can eat whatever you want, as long as you are mindful and don't go overboard. Having a samosa occasionally is not bad. Just because idli is considered healthy doesn't mean you can eat ten idlis at once. Portion control and mindful eating are key.

Maintaining a sustainable protein intake—around 1.2 to 1.5 grams per kg of body weight—is important. This protein can come from any source: chicken, mutton, soy, paneer, whey protein—whatever suits you best.

As for daily meals, I don't follow a rigid or overly complicated diet. If nothing is cooked at home, I'll make Maggi or pasta. If that's not possible, I'll order food from Zomato. The key is being mindful of what I eat, not avoiding foods unnecessarily.

Potatoes are not bad. No single food is responsible for the world's health problems. The real issue is overconsumption or extreme restriction. Overeating is bad, and so is undereating. Just like speeding or driving too slowly is dangerous, maintaining a balanced intake is what matters.

You don't have to cook everything in olive oil or hunt for exotic superfoods like avocados. My daily meals are simple—morning tea or coffee, breakfast of poha or upma (or whatever my wife makes), and a hospital canteen lunch of roti, rice, dal—typical Indian food. In the evening, I enjoy tea with Parle-G biscuits because I love them. At night, I eat whatever is available at home, and if I feel like it, I'll have ice cream or cake. I celebrate birthdays and enjoy sweets, but I keep portions in check. If I eat a lot of sweets one day, I balance it out by eating lighter the next day.

Nutrition isn't a big deal. The problem is that the world is full of myths, and people love labeling things as "good" or "bad." For the record, I eat burgers and pizzas occasionally, and that's completely fine. Happiness also comes from food, so it's important to enjoy what you eat.

Keep it simple. If you complicate things unnecessarily, they become difficult. The same applies to surgery—some people mess up even simple impactions, while others handle complex facial surgeries with ease. If you approach things with simplicity, they stay simple. If you complicate simple things, they become complicated.

This is a great takeaway for all of us, and I'm sure anyone reading this in the future will think, "Oh wow, I didn't know it was this simple!"—and that's exactly the point.

How has being physically fit impacted your performance as a surgeon and your approach to patient care?

Definitely! One of the biggest advantages of being physically fit is that I don't experience any pains or discomfort, allowing me to perform seven-hour

surgeries without any issues.

Fitness and mental health are not two separate things; they are one and the same. If your physical health is not in place, your mental health cannot be in place either. This is a simple but crucial truth. Unfortunately, the market is flooded with people trying to profit from mental health solutions, but the reality is that a person who engages in regular physical activity—whether it's running, swimming, or any form of exercise—doesn't need external help or treatment for mental well-being.

A clear and strong mind comes from a strong body. Of course, there will always be ups and downs in life and in practice, but to navigate challenges effectively, you need a solid mindset. And that strong mindset comes from having a strong body. When you work out regularly, you develop resilience—both physically and mentally.

I can confidently say that fitness plays a huge role in maintaining a positive outlook on life. No matter what setbacks come your way, you develop the mindset of "Okay, this is part of life. Let's move on."

There's so much talk about mental health today—people selling yoga, meditation, NLP, and various other techniques. But I firmly believe that nothing compares to spending an hour in the gym lifting heavy weights. It gives you the best form of mental clarity and focus—better than any therapy or hypnosis. The best thing you can do for yourself is to hit the gym and work out.

What does your typical workout routine look like, and how do you keep it interesting?

Because I'm into sports and cycling, I make sure to keep my fitness routine dynamic. Right now, I'm in training for a competition where I'll be cycling from Delhi to Kathmandu. Every 4 to 6 months, I take on challenges like this. Last year, I cycled from Manali to Khardung La, and this year, I'm doing the Delhi to Kathmandu ride. In September, I'm

planning to take on the Shimla to Spiti route, which is considered one of the toughest cycling routes in India.

Mountains are unforgiving, and endurance challenges like these push my limits. For instance, during the Manali to Khardung La ride, I lost around 6 kilos in just 6-7 days!

As for my typical daily routine, it's quite structured:

Wake up at 6:00 AM
Gym by 6:45 AM
Leave the gym by 7:50 AM
Back home by 8:00 AM
Workout six days a week

If I have an early morning surgery—especially pediatric cases that start as early as 5:00 AM—I adjust my routine. On those days, I either go for a walk in my society in the evening, use my stationary bike at home, or do skipping. I also have multiple pull-up bars installed at home, and I make sure to complete around 50 to 100 pull-ups on such days.

Some days, when I'm really exhausted, I allow myself to rest. But overall, I keep my routine simple and consistent. I avoid using lifts whenever possible—my house is on the 4th floor, and in hospitals, I take the stairs as much as I can, ensuring I climb around 20-25 floors a day. I also aim for 8,000-10,000 steps daily to stay active.

When it comes to food, I keep my diet in check. If I indulge on one day, I balance it out the next. The key is to stay consistent while keeping things simple.

Have you faced any funny situations in your fitness journey?

Oh, absolutely! Whenever you participate in marathons or cyclothons, you end up with some unforgettable experiences. One recent incident stands out.

We were on a cycling trip with a target of 310 kilometers. After completing about 100 kilometers, I felt like giving up. I told myself, I can't do this anymore. At that moment, I was lagging behind, and in cycling, even being 500 meters behind means you're practically lost.

The lead cyclist of our group—who also happens to be the fastest cyclist in my town—noticed I was struggling. I thought he had stopped for a break or something, but to my surprise, he said, I'm waiting for you. From 85 kilometers onward, he stayed with me, never riding ahead. He paced me and kept me going, all the way to 300 kilometers! And when we were about to finish, around 285 kilometers, he simply said, Sir, now you go ahead and finish alone.

It was such a humbling experience. Moments like these truly define sportsmanship—where one athlete lifts another up and keeps them going.

Now, if you're asking for a funny incident, I have one from my Manali to Khardung La cycling trip.

There was a lady in our group who was struggling with the ride. The terrain was brutal, the air was thin, and she was really having a tough time. Our tour leader kept telling us things like, Just 15 more minutes or Only two more turns, trying to keep our spirits high. But anyone who has cycled in the mountains knows—"15 more minutes" is never just 15 minutes!

Frustrated, she finally snapped and told him, Stop lying! From now on, don't tell me how much distance is left! We all burst out laughing.

Later, I asked her why she was struggling so much. The tour leader quietly told me, Sir, she refuses to use the restroom in the woods. She's too embarrassed to go.

Now, imagine this—we were riding for 8 hours a day in the middle of nowhere! I looked at her and said, It doesn't work like this. If you want to experience this journey, you need to embrace every part of it.

To lighten the mood, I told her a story from six years ago, when I was in Kenya for wildlife photography. I had taken some laxatives (big mistake), and in the middle of the Masai Mara jungle, I had an unbearable urge to go to the restroom. There were wild animals all around, and I had no choice but to step out of the car and go right there, in the wilderness!

Hearing this, she laughed so hard that it completely changed her mindset. From that moment on, she rode with us without hesitation, embracing the adventure fully.

These trips always bring out the best in us. They teach us resilience, teamwork, and the beauty of pulling each other up when needed. And the friendships you make? They last a lifetime—even if you don't talk regularly. Every year, when Facebook memories remind you of that trip, nostalgia kicks in, and suddenly, you're messaging your old cycling buddies, reliving those incredible moments.

That's why I always go on cycling trips alone—I never take people I already know. I don't invite anyone, and I don't tell anyone I'm going. New journeys, new people, new experiences—that's what makes these adventures truly special.

What advice would you give fellow surgeons who want to start a fitness journey but feel constrained by their schedules?

No alcohol and no smoking. Absolutely no exceptions. These habits don't belong in a surgeon's life.

Make fitness a priority. Engage in some form of physical activity at least 4 to 5 days a week—whether it's the gym, running, cycling, swimming, or any other sport.

Follow a balanced approach to food. A moderate and conservative diet is always better than extreme restrictions. Eat everything—but in moderation. Enjoy sweets, rice, or even indul-

gences like kharabath or KFC, but be mindful of quantity. However, there is no such moderation when it comes to alcohol and smoking—these are non-negotiable.

I say this not just as a surgeon but also as a fitness coach who has worked with many professionals in our industry. The fundamental principle we follow is zero tolerance for smoking and alcohol.

These three simple rules will help any surgeon maintain physical endurance, mental clarity, and overall longevity in their career.

Sprinting across

Morning workout or night workout?

Oh, any time!

Cardio or weights?

Both are good, but my preference is weight training. For Indian women, weight training is a must.

Favorite sport to play?

Sports teach us the fighting spirit, but like every Indian, I worship cricket.

Surgery day or leg day—which is tougher?

A strong leg day makes my surgery easier.

One guilty pleasure snack post-workout?

Parle-G with tea.

Coffee before a workout—yes or no?

Absolutely! Three times black coffee.

One fitness mantra you swear by?

One hour, five times a week.

Most challenging fitness goal you've achieved?

About four years ago, I participated in a national fitness competition where 40,000 people across India competed to lose weight and fat. I achieved less than 8% body fat and ranked among the top 200 participants—that was my peak.

Another proudest achievement was as a fitness coach. I trained a person who was completely immobile and helped her not only walk again but also lift weights. Eventually, she became a coach on the same platform I coached on. That is my biggest achievement.

What else is your favourite thing to do? – I love wildlife photography. Recently, I've developed a passion for drone videography—it's my new toy at home!





SPOTLIGHT *Interview*

Dr. Rahul Thakkar



What inspired you to start your fitness journey, and how do you fit your routine into your life as a surgeon?

For me, the biggest fitness inspiration was my father. He was a dedicated yoga practitioner and a deeply spiritual person, maintaining his practice for 45 years without a single break. While yoga may not be an intense workout, it is a holistic exercise that benefits the mind, body, and soul.

No matter where he was—whether traveling by train or plane—he would find a way to meditate and keep up with his routine. He would wake up at Brahma Muhurta every single day, listening to Rabindra Sangeet and Indian classical music, always beginning his mornings with positivity and energy. He would often say, "This is my morning high!" He truly lived a full and fulfilling life, and his disciplined lifestyle played a major role in that.

I always wanted to follow in his footsteps, but like many of us in medical training, I lost track of my fitness goals during the demanding years of residency and practice. However, when I entered my 40s, I realized that if I wanted to continue performing long surgeries, especially cancer surgeries, I needed to be fit—not just for myself, but also for my family and patients.

As surgeons, we owe it to our patients to be at our physical and mental best. Late-night parties and unhealthy habits take a toll, making it impossible to give 100% in the OR. Fitness isn't just a personal choice—it's a professional responsibility.

Do you remember your first workout after years of training? What kept you going?

Yes! When I first saw people running long distances—effortlessly covering kilometers at a stretch—I was amazed. Meanwhile, I could barely run 500 meters without gasping for breath!

So, I started with slow walks, gradually increasing my pace. Then, I ran 2 km, then 5 km, and eventually built up to 10 km. One day, someone suggested, "Why don't you run a marathon?" So I did!

I have now completed numerous half-marathons, and my last marathon time was under 2 hours, which is considered a great time. Over the years, I also incorporated meditation into my routine, and now my next goal is to combine endurance with strength training. I firmly believe that fitness is a lifelong journey, and I am committed to staying on that path.

What challenges do you face while balancing your fitness routine with the demanding life of a surgeon?

That's a very good question. As surgeons, our schedules can change every single day, making it challenging to maintain a consistent fitness routine.

One of the biggest challenges is night calls. After being on call overnight, staying motivated and waking up early for a workout becomes extremely difficult. Proper rest is crucial, and exercising without adequate sleep is not ideal. Luckily, I have a small team, but I aim to expand it further so that responsibilities can be shared more effectively. A larger team would allow for better workload distribution, ensuring that night calls don't completely disrupt my fitness routine.

Another challenge is surgical workload management. Since most of my work is in oncology, I prefer to handle one case per day. However, there are days when I need to accommodate two cases, and I try my best to avoid overloading my schedule unless absolutely necessary.

Typically, my OTs are scheduled for the late afternoon, and I aim to finish by early evening. By 7 PM, I am out for my evening walk, listening to music and unwinding after a long day.

Balancing surgery and fitness is tough, but prioritization and time management make it possible.

How has your fitness journey impacted your performance as a surgeon?

Being physically and mentally fit has significantly improved both my performance as a surgeon and my personal life. Since I believe that fitness is essential to taking care of my patients, I've made it a priority. This has not only benefited me but also motivated my entire family to be more physically active.

As a surgeon, I've noticed that my stamina, focus, and enthusiasm have improved with age. I feel as

energetic and passionate as I did during my post-graduate days. When I step into the operating room, I look forward to my surgeries with renewed enthusiasm. My morning workout and meditation set the tone for the day, making surgery feel like an extension of a meditative practice.

It reminds me of what my father used to say about the 'morning high'—that sense of clarity and energy you get after a disciplined morning routine. For me, fitness has replaced late-night parties, and I wouldn't trade it for anything.

Are there any similarities between the discipline required in surgery and fitness?

Absolutely! Both require consistency, focus, and a strong mindset. Once you incorporate fitness into your circadian rhythm, it becomes second nature—just like surgery. If you commit to a habit for 100 days, it becomes addictive, in the best way possible. Someone once told me, "If you can stick to a workout for 100 days, it's very difficult to stop."

Just as people can develop unhealthy addictions, they can also cultivate positive ones, like fitness and discipline. Over time, these habits reinforce each other, making both surgery and fitness effortless and deeply fulfilling.

What does your typical workout routine look like?

My morning routine is at least one hour, but whenever possible, I extend it to one and a half hours. My evening routine is 20 to 30 minutes, primarily a relaxing stroll with music.

Morning workout:

- Cardio-based—swimming, running, or brisk walking
- Meditation
- Yoga once a week with an instructor
- (Upcoming goal) More structured weight training

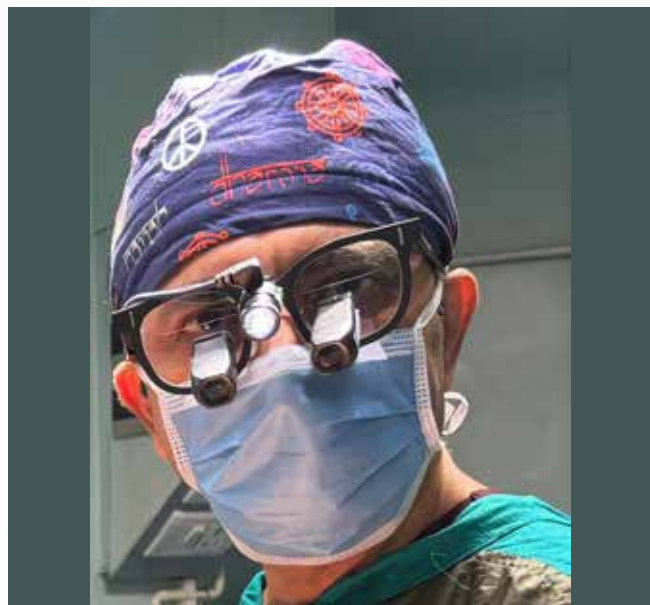
Right now, I do weight training sporadically, but I know it's something I need to focus on more seriously. That's my next goal!

How do you manage nutrition amidst the demands of life?

Managing proper nutrition is just as important as maintaining a fitness routine, especially in a demanding profession like surgery. My first fitness mantra is: eat home-cooked food and avoid processed food. I also minimize oil in my cooking. Even though I am vegetarian, I focus on increasing my protein intake as much as possible. Carbohydrates are never an issue in an Indian vegetarian diet, but protein requires conscious effort. I personally do not take supplements, not because I believe they are necessarily bad or good, but because I prefer to rely on a balanced, natural diet.

Additionally, I follow a structured three-meal-a-day routine:

- Heavy breakfast – to fuel the day ahead
- Light lunch – to stay alert and active through work
- Medium-sized dinner (around 7:30 PM) – allowing me to sleep comfortably by 9:30-10:00 PM



Of course, this routine is customized for me, and others should adjust it based on their work hours and lifestyle.

What is your go-to pre-surgery or pre-workout meal?

I mix it up depending on the day. My preferred pre-workout or pre-surgery meal includes:

- Egg whites in the morning
- Traditional South Indian breakfast (like idli, dosa, or upma)

These meals provide the right balance of energy and protein, keeping me fueled for both surgery and workouts.

Can you share a memorable experience from running your first marathon?

Running my first marathon was an unforgettable experience. In many ways, marathons and surgery are similar—both require discipline, patience, and endurance.

When I train people, I always tell them: "For the next 40 years, we have to keep doing the same thing—so pace yourself, start slow, and enjoy the journey."

In a marathon, the start should be slow, gradually building up momentum. The ideal race is one where you finish strong with energy still in reserve.

The same applies to a surgical career. I have seen many young surgeons rush in with nervous energy, wanting to learn everything at once. However, I have learned that the fastest way to success is to go slow and master the basics. Everything will fall into place naturally—just like in surgery.

For example, when performing a neck dissection, you don't search for the internal jugular vein or carotid sheath. Instead, you simply stay within the investing layer of deep cervical fascia, and the anatomical structures will reveal themselves in

due time. Similarly, in life and career, if you focus on doing the basics well, opportunities will come to you naturally.

Finally, I believe that high moral and ethical values are just as important as physical fitness. There's no point in being physically strong if one lacks integrity and ethical grounding.

Have you ever faced a funny, surprising, or unexpected situation during your fitness journey?

Yes! One memorable moment was during a reunion with my school friends. They were all amazed and said, "Oh wow! You're running marathons now?" It made me feel really special because, in my marathon group, running is just a routine thing. But among my old school friends, it felt like a big achievement! Their admiration and surprise reminded me how far I had come in my fitness journey.

Lastly, what advice would you like to give?

One piece of advice I would give is this: Prioritize sleep. I think sleep is highly underrated, but it plays a crucial role in both fitness and overall well-being. If you want to have a productive and energetic day, you need to ensure a good night's sleep.

Another important habit is to start your day with physical activity. It doesn't have to be intense—even a simple workout, walk, or meditation can help set a positive tone for the day. In fact, I often say that surgery itself is a form of meditation. If you don't have separate time for meditation, at least engage in some physical activity to start your day right.

As we age, energy levels tend to decline, but if you stay fit, this never becomes an issue. An evening walk (even just 20 minutes) can help you unwind and relax. Ending the day with a small prayer or a moment of gratitude also brings a sense of peace and fulfillment.



Rapid-Fire

Morning workout or night workout?

Morning.

Cardio or weight training?

I'd say both, but if I had to choose—cardio.

Favorite sport or fitness routine?

I love running.

Which is tougher: a surgery day or leg day?

Leg workout! After leg day, you can't even walk.

A food you can't live without?

I think I've moved beyond that—I don't believe there's any food I can't live without.

Coffee before a workout—yes or no?

If it's a race day, definitely before!

One fitness mantra you swear by?

Discipline and dedication.

The most challenging fitness goal you've

achieved, and what's still on your dream list?

My first marathon was a big achievement. Now, I've made it a tradition to run in different places whenever I travel for conferences or vacations. I love exploring new places with a morning run, enjoying nature along the way.

If not a surgeon, would you consider a career in fitness?

I cannot imagine being anything other than a surgeon. If I had the choice, I'd want to be a surgeon for the next seven lifetimes!

Any superfood you'd recommend?

Almonds and walnuts.



SPOTLIGHT *Interview*

Dr. Tejas



What inspired you to start your fitness journey?

I started my fitness journey in 2015 when the first edition of the Indore Marathon was introduced. It was a 10-kilometer run, and at that time, I had never seriously considered running. However, I thought, "Why not give it a try?" So, I decided to practice and see how long I could run without stopping.

Since I had no prior knowledge about running, I watched YouTube videos to learn about warm-up and cool-down exercises. Eventually, I completed my first marathon with a mix of running and walking. After that, I joined a group of marathoners under the Academy of Indore Marathons, where I

trained under a professional coach.

The training sessions started at 6:00 AM and lasted for about an hour and a half. To make it work, I had to wake up by 5:30 AM or even earlier. One thing I realized was that training in a group was incredibly motivating—we pushed and inspired each other. That's how my fitness journey truly began.

Later, I got into both running and cycling, finding a group of friends who shared the same interests.

Over time, I ran several half marathons and completed two full marathons. In cycling, I participated in BRM (Brevet de Randonneur Mondiaux), an endurance cycling event from France, covering 200 km and 250 km. On regular days, I usually cycle 30 to 50 km.

Unfortunately, last November, I suffered an injury while playing badminton with my son. I had to undergo surgery and have been in recovery since then. Currently, I am in the third month of recovery and using a walker. Physical therapy is about to begin, but I'm not allowed to run for six months. So, for now, all running, jumping, and high-impact sports are on hold.

However, I'm determined to get back to fitness. If everything goes well, I plan to start training again in May and aim to run the Mumbai Full Marathon next January.

As the Head of the Department at a dental college, my work hours are from 9 AM to 4 PM, followed by private practice in the evenings. This schedule makes it impossible to fit workouts in later in the day, so I prioritize fitness in the morning. I maintain a routine of sleeping early and waking up early to accommodate my workouts.

Although I am currently in recovery, I'm looking forward to resuming training and coming back stronger. For now, I'm focusing on rest and rehabilitation, ensuring a smooth recovery before gradually easing back into my fitness journey.

Do You Remember Your First Workout, and What Keeps You Motivated to Continue?

Yes, when it comes to fitness, the most important factor is self-motivation. First, you need to be internally driven, and second, having a group of motivated people around you makes a huge difference. If you ever lose motivation or start skipping workouts, your fitness community can pull you back in, encourage you, and keep you accountable.

I believe fitness is similar to surgery in this way—it's a team effort. Just as you cannot perform a perfect surgery alone and need skilled, disciplined assistants, maintaining a fitness routine also requires the right people around you. Being surrounded by motivated and disciplined individuals helps improve both surgical skills and fitness levels.

What Challenges do you face in Balancing Fitness with a Demanding Schedule

One of the biggest challenges is dealing with fatigue. After an intense morning workout of one to one-and-a-half hours, you feel fresh for the first half of the day. However, by the afternoon, tiredness can set in, and you need to find ways to recharge.

Another challenge is managing multiple responsibilities—handling academic duties at the college, treating patients in the evening, and ensuring quality time with family. Balancing professional and personal commitments is essential, but I find that the thought of spending time with my family—my children, spouse, and parents—keeps me going.

Additionally, proper rest plays a crucial role. Endurance sports, like running and cycling, require extensive training, which leads to muscle soreness and wear and tear on the body. Recovery is just as important as training, so getting enough sleep and maintaining a proper diet are non-negotiable. Even for someone doing just an hour of exercise daily, rest is vital for sustained performance and injury prevention.

The key to balancing everything is to keep rest, nutrition, and training in harmony while staying mentally focused on long-term goals.

How Has Being Physically Fit Impacted Your Performance as a Surgeon and the Way You Approach Patient Care?

Physical fitness comes with the added benefit of

mental stamina and agility, which are crucial for a surgeon. As a marathon runner, I know that endurance is not just about physical strength but also about mental resilience. Similarly, surgery requires long hours of focus, precision, and the ability to manage multiple patients with varying conditions.

Being physically fit has significantly impacted my life as a surgeon. It has improved my stamina, allowing me to withstand long surgeries without feeling drained. My mind stays sharp even after an exhausting day at the college or an intense academic session.

Running is not just about working the legs; it benefits the entire body by releasing endorphins—the "happy hormones"—that keep me rejuvenated. While muscle soreness and physical fatigue can be managed with proper rest, the mental clarity and alertness gained from fitness are invaluable.

My ability to stay focused and observant, even in minor details, has been noticed by my staff and students. Whether it's paperwork for the Dental Council or catching subtle signs in a patient's condition, staying physically active has helped me maintain sharpness and efficiency in my work.

Overall, fitness plays a crucial role in keeping both my body and mind in top form, enabling me to provide better patient care and excel in my profession.

How Does Your Typical Workout Routine Look Like?

I wake up early in the morning to fit my workout into my routine. To keep things interesting, I constantly change my workout patterns because doing the same exercise every day can become monotonous.

- **Sundays:** We plan a long run, covering a greater distance than usual. Afterward, we hang out with our fitness buddies and have breakfast together.

- **Some Sundays:** We go for long cycling trips to natural spots, where we enjoy a small picnic before riding back. These rides usually cover 60–100 km in total, making it a fun yet challenging workout.
- **Other Days:** I mix things up with swimming or gym workouts since we have access to a club. Yoga & Flexibility Workouts: Occasionally, my wife encourages me to do yoga for stretching and flexibility, which also helps with relaxation and meditation.

The key is variation—changing the type of exercise ensures that no single part of the body is under continuous stress while allowing different muscle groups to rejuvenate.



How Do You Manage Nutrition Alongside Physical Fitness?

Proper nutrition is crucial to sustaining high levels of physical activity. I don't believe in extreme dieting or excessive calorie restriction. Instead, I focus on replenishing the reserves I deplete during workouts.

- **Balanced Diet:** I ensure a mix of proteins, carbohydrates, and healthy fats to maintain energy levels throughout the day.
- **Light Dinner:** I prefer an early and light dinner, which prevents bloating and makes it easier to wake up for my morning workout.
- **Lunch:** A well-balanced meal with more protein and moderate carbohydrates.
- **Avoiding Unhealthy Snacking:** While tempting snacks like fried foods can be hard to resist, I try to avoid them. However, I do allow myself a treat on Sundays after a good workout.

What Is Your Favorite Pre-Workout or Pre-Surgery Meal?

- **Pre-Workout Meal:** My go-to meal is a peanut butter and jam sandwich with a cup of coffee. However, if I'm in a rush, I grab a banana and coffee to wake up my mind and body without feeling sluggish.
- **Post-Workout Meal:** After a good workout, I focus on high-protein foods like:
 - Sprouted moong dal (green gram) or chilla (besan pancake)
 - Protein supplements
 - Electrolyte-rich beverages to replenish sodium and potassium lost through sweat

For pre-surgery nutrition, I follow a similar approach—ensuring I've had a protein-rich meal beforehand to maintain stamina and focus during long procedures.

The key to sustaining both fitness and a demanding surgical career is a well-balanced routine, nutrient-rich diet, and enough rest to aid recovery

and maintain peak performance.

Can you narrate a funny incident or story from your Fitness Journey?

This isn't exactly a funny incident, but it's a memorable one. I was participating in a 200-kilometer cycling brevet that had to be completed within 12 hours. We started early in the morning at 6:00 AM from Indore with a group of cyclists. There were hydration points along the way, and the plan was to cycle 100 km, have lunch, and then cycle back within the time limit.

By 4:30 PM, I had already covered 180 km, with just 20 km left to finish the ride. However, fatigue



was setting in. I was riding alongside my cycling partner when suddenly, a two-wheeler crashed into me on a bridge. I fell hard, and my cycle was badly damaged. I got injured but was still determined to finish the race.

A marshal following the group arrived with emergency support and asked if I needed help. I requested a replacement cycle, and they provided one. I tried riding it for a few meters, but my injuries made it impossible to continue. Eventually, I had to be dropped back, which meant I didn't get the medal for completing the race.

That last 20 km haunted me for a long time. But I didn't let that defeat stop me. A year later, I trained again and successfully completed the 200-km brevet, finally earning my medal. This experience taught me that setbacks are just part of the journey—whether in fitness, surgery, or life. What matters is getting back up and trying again.

The Importance of Setting Goals in Fitness

I've learned that setting specific fitness goals keeps motivation high. If you decide, "I will run a marathon three months from now," you will train every day with a sense of purpose. On the other hand, if you just say, "I'll go for a walk daily," the motivation often fades, and it becomes easy to skip workouts.

That's why goal-setting is crucial. It keeps you disciplined, prevents boredom, and ensures long-term consistency.

What advice would you like to give for Those Struggling to Start Their Fitness Journey

- "I don't have time" is an excuse. We all have 24 hours in a day—finding just one hour for your health is possible if you prioritize it.
- Fitness is essential for longevity. As maxillofacial surgeons, our profession demands physical and mental endurance. Staying fit helps us

maintain stamina, sharpness, and overall well-being.

- Preventative health is key. I have always wanted to avoid hypertension pills or diabetes medications. Many people reverse these conditions with consistent fitness and a disciplined lifestyle.
- Find like-minded people. Surround yourself with fitness buddies who will push and motivate you to stay active.
- Be honest with yourself. It's easy to sneak a sweet from the fridge when no one is watching—but your body keeps track of everything.

Ultimately, consistency is the secret to success—whether in fitness, surgery, or life.

Rapid Fire Questions

Morning workout or night workout?

Morning workout.

Cardio or weights?

A mix of both.

Favorite sport to play and watch?

Swimming (to play), Cricket (to watch).

Surgery day or leg day – which is tougher?

Leg workout day!

One guilty pleasure snack you absolutely love?

Non-vegetarian food.

Coffee before a workout – yes or no?

Occasionally. Not daily, but on sluggish days, it's helpful.

One fitness mantra you swear by?

Regularity.

Most challenging fitness goal you've achieved?

Running a full marathon.

Next fitness goal?

Running the Mumbai Marathon on 26th January 2026.

If not a surgeon and fitness enthusiast, what would you have been?

Still a doctor! Medicine runs in the family—both my parents and grandfather were doctors. Maybe a fitness coach as well.

One superfood you'd recommend for busy surgeons?

Almonds, walnuts, and raisins.

I also love encouraging other runners and cyclists—whether I'm running or just watching, I always give a thumbs-up to those pushing themselves!





SPOTLIGHT

Interview

Dr. Richa Angik

What Inspired You to Start Your Fitness Journey, and How Do You Fit It into Your Life as a Surgeon?

During post-graduation, I was completely focused on my profession—wanting to prove myself and gain knowledge. Then came marriage, kids, and settling down, and naturally, my body started changing.

At one point, I realized I was constantly tired after long days of surgery, and my kid would ask, "Why are you getting so tired?" That question hit me hard. I understood that while I was giving my all to my career and family, I wasn't giving any time to my own body.

So, I started going for walks. Eventually, I learned about a 10-kilometer run happening in Jamshedpur and decided to train for it. At first, I was exhausted, but I felt a noticeable difference—despite long work hours, my body no longer felt stiff or rigid.

One major realization came when I developed pain in my right arm from constantly carrying my baby after long hours of surgery. When I consulted doctors, some suggested frozen shoulder, while others mentioned cervical issues. But in reality, it was just a lack of exercise!

That's when I truly understood the importance of fitness—not just for endurance but for overall

body function and longevity as a surgeon. Since then, I have prioritized exercise in my daily routine, ensuring that no matter how demanding my profession is, I make time for my health.

Balancing Fitness with Multiple Roles as a Woman
As women, we juggle multiple roles—being a surgeon, a mother, a wife, and handling various responsibilities. Initially, prioritizing fitness was challenging, but I found a way to incorporate it into my routine.

Since I didn't want to miss dropping my daughter at school, I started waking up half an hour earlier. By the time my daughter was getting ready, I was already prepared for my run or workout. Instead of taking personal time after sending her to school, I shifted that "me time" outdoors—for walks and runs.

Over time, I found companions who were also busy professionals—radiologists, entrepreneurs, hoteliers—all balancing demanding careers. This companionship made fitness addictive, as we held each other accountable and set collective targets. Eventually, what started as a 30-minute session turned into an hour-long commitment by just reducing a little sleep.

Do You Remember Your First Workout? How Did You Stay Motivated?

Fitness is addictive—whether it's gym workouts, running, or any exercise, the energy release leaves you feeling refreshed.

Initially, I was skeptical about participating in a 10-kilometer run, wondering if I could complete it. But once I started running, I saw people around me pushing themselves, and I realized—it's all a mind game. Your body follows what your mind decides. About 30–40% of endurance is mental, not just physical.

Once I set my alarm, my body adjusted to the routine and began craving that grind. I firmly believe that aging is not just about years—it's about how active your muscles are. The body

doesn't remember your age, it remembers the last workout you did.

After successfully completing 10 kilometers, I realized I could do 21, then 42 kilometers. Setting small goals and gradually increasing them became my strategy.

Involving Family in the Fitness Journey
I made fitness a family affair. When I trained for my 42-kilometer marathon, I told my daughter, "I will complete my 42 kilometers, and you will finish your syllabus."

This turned into a mutual challenge—I had to prove to my daughter that I could finish the marathon, just as she had to finish her studies. Setting these personal and family-based challenges made a big difference.

Staying physically fit is essential for agility, health, and longevity—and ultimately, it allows us to fulfill all our responsibilities better.

How Has Being Physically Fit Impacted Your Performance as a Surgeon and Your Approach to Patient Care?

There was a time when I would finish a surgery, return to my clinic, and feel shoulder stiffness and pain. I had developed a habit of relieving pain through massages or painkillers, which was not a sustainable solution.

Once I incorporated gym workouts, yoga, and regular exercise, my body strength and endurance improved significantly. Even dedicating just four days a week to fitness made a difference. The key was to cut down on distractions—less social media, less TV, and instead, invest that time in my well-being.

Now, I no longer experience shoulder pain when handling instruments or retracting tissues during surgery. My stamina and endurance have increased, allowing me to work long hours without fatigue.

Being fit isn't just about looking younger—it's about feeling younger, maintaining muscle strength, and preventing post-surgical body aches.

Are There Similarities Between the Discipline Required for Surgery and Fitness?

Absolutely! Both require commitment, consistency, and discipline.

Overcoming Laziness

Just like stepping out of a warm blanket on a cold morning is tough, pushing yourself to exercise requires mental strength.

Similarly, as surgeons, we must be punctual and prepared for every surgery and appointment.

Respect for Time

In fitness, when you commit to a workout with a group, being on time is crucial because your partners rely on you.

In surgery, we must respect patient appointments and be early or on time to ensure smooth workflow.

Energy & Mental Clarity

A morning workout keeps you mentally fresh, so you don't feel trapped in a clinic or surgical cabin all day.

This reduces stress, fatigue, and body aches, improving overall patient care and decision-making.

Many of my long-term patients have been inspired by my fitness journey. Especially women patients, who now actively follow my workouts and runs, realizing that fitness is essential for every role we play.

What Does Your Typical Workout Routine Look Like?

I keep my workouts varied and engaging:

3 days of running (5–7 km on weekdays, 10–20 km on weekends)

Stretching & strength training (pre- and post-workout)

Swimming in summers for full-body endurance
Badminton tournaments (organized by Rotary & social groups) for agility and hand-eye coordination

Family workouts & treks on holidays, ensuring my child stays involved in fitness

This combination keeps workouts interesting and ensures I never feel bored.

How Do You Manage Nutrition to Balance Surgery & Fitness?

Proper nutrition fuels both my surgeries and workouts.

Pre-workout fuel:

Coconut water & banana for instant energy
A light snack to keep me going

Post-workout:

A small tea session with friends (not excessively sweet but good for the heart & mind)

Homemade Indian meals – suji ka halwa, poha, or idli for balanced nutrition

Eggs, dal, rice, and vegetables for protein & carbohydrates

I strongly avoid alcohol and smoking, as they counteract the benefits of exercise. Instead, I believe in being high on life naturally.

At night, I avoid heavy meals, sticking to light rice, dal, or daliya, ensuring a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

Memorable Running Stories & Funny Experiences

When participating in full marathons, we often come across runners who aren't fully prepared, and that can sometimes lead to unexpected situations.

During one of my marathons, at around the 15-kilometer mark, I saw a lady collapse from exhaustion. She was almost losing her pulse, and while searching for help, I found another dentist nearby. Together, we assessed her condition, offered immediate assistance, and fortunately, she revived without needing emergency care. She even completed the race after recovering—an inspiring moment that reminded me of the resilience of the human spirit.

Another amusing incident happened later in the race. A friend of mine saw another participant collapse and assumed they needed CPR. Without hesitation, she rushed over to help, only for the man to wake up in shock and say, "Madam, I was just resting! Please don't give me CPR!" We all had a good laugh about it for the rest of the marathon.

These experiences make long runs memorable and exciting, and they reinforce the importance of staying fit and knowing how to handle emergencies.

Advice for Surgeons Who Want to Start Their Fitness Journey

Regardless of age or gender, many surgeons hesitate to prioritize fitness due to responsibilities like family, work, and long hours. However, I believe that small efforts can lead to big changes.

Time Management is Key:

Dedicate 30 minutes to yourself—whether it's through walking, running, yoga, or high-intensity workouts.

If you're short on time, accumulate small breaks throughout the day—ask your spouse, children, or

colleagues to support you.

Start Small & Stay Consistent:

Begin with light exercises and gradually increase intensity.

Online workouts (like HIIT sessions on YouTube) can be an easy way to get started at home.

Embrace the Surgeon's Discipline:

As surgeons, we thrive on hard work and precision—apply that same discipline to fitness.

Fitness isn't about just looking younger; it's about feeling energetic, pain-free, and active in daily life.

Set an Example for Your Family:

My daughter proudly tells her friends that her mother is a runner—this motivates me even more!

When kids see their parents staying fit, they too develop healthy habits.

The first step is the hardest, but once you begin, there's no looking back!



Quick-Fire Fitness & Lifestyle Questions

Morning workout or night workout?

Morning

Cardio or weights?

Cardio

Favorite sport to play & watch?

Badminton

Surgery day or leg day—which is tougher?

Leg day!

One guilty pleasure snack or food you love?

Pizza! I love having pizza, especially after a long run. Saturdays are my special pizza days with my daughter.

Coffee Before or After Workout?

Ideally, it should be avoided, but let's be honest—it's hard to resist! We have a post-workout coffee ritual where whoever finishes first calls the others, and we meet up to chat. We talk about everything except work—laughing like kids, despite being top surgeons, orthopedics, or even multimillionaires. It's the best part of the day!

Most Challenging Fitness Goal & Next Goal

Biggest achievement: Completing a 42-kilometer marathon.

Next dream goal: Cross-country runs (which is tricky due to my schedule) and Ironman. The biggest challenge? I'm not a great swimmer, so that's something I need to work on!

If Not a Surgeon, What Would You Be?

If I weren't a surgeon, I'd be an entrepreneur in the beauty industry.

Superfood Recommendation for Busy Surgeons

Daliya (broken wheat porridge)—it's nutritious,

filling, and easy to prepare.

Mix it with vegetables for extra nutrients.

For taste, add a bit of Maggi masala—even kids love it!

Paired with lots of water, it keeps you energized all day.



SPOTLIGHT *Interview*

Dr. Nehal Patel

What Inspired You to Start Your Fitness Journey, and How Do You Fit It into Your Life as a Surgeon?

I actually started running to lose weight—it wasn't a planned goal or a major decision. But once I started, I fell in love with it. I began with half marathons, then moved on to full marathons, ultra-running, and even Ironman races.

My longest run has been 220 kilometers, from Rishikesh to Uttarakhand—a tough route with altitude challenges and difficult terrain. I've also completed:

- 300 km in the Rann of Kutch desert,
- 160 km in Ladakh,
- A charity run, raising €50,000 for cleft children.

As for balancing fitness with my profession—fit-

ness and discipline go hand in hand. The same dedication and time management required for training reflect in my surgical career. Running helped me become a better surgeon by improving my focus, endurance, and mental clarity.

Do You Remember Your First Workout? How Did It Go?

Oh yes! I couldn't even run 300 meters when I started. But I kept pushing, and my first half marathon was in Goa in 2009. I wasn't sure if I could finish 21 kilometers, but I did—in 2 hours and 10 minutes. That one race made me realize I wanted to go further.

How Has Physical Fitness Impacted Your Performance as a Surgeon?

Running isn't just about physical endurance—it's a mental game too. When we started, we were just a small group of doctors in Surat. In 2009, we founded a running community called "Surti Runners" with 11 doctors.

There's a saying:

- "If you want to run, run a kilometer."
- "If you want to experience life, run a marathon."
- "If you want to talk to God, run an ultra-marathon."

After 50 kilometers, your mind takes over—your body wants to stop, but your mind keeps going. That kind of mental training and endurance helps in surgery too.

What Was Training Like for Ultra Marathons?

For ultra-running, we train the mind as much as the body. We run on tired legs, train in extreme afternoon heat, and push beyond normal limits. People may think we're crazy, but that's what it takes.

It's not just physical—it's about mental resilience. You learn to stay calm under pressure, which is a crucial skill in surgery.

How Has Your Perspective on Running Changed Over Time?

Initially, I was always chasing "the next big goal"—21 km, 42 km, 100 km, 160 km, 300 km. But after reaching so many milestones, my approach has changed.

Now, I don't chase numbers—I just run for myself. Running is like brushing my teeth—it's a habit. I still run 4 days a week, around 10 km daily, to



maintain my fitness and mental well-being.

I may not push for extreme races as often, but running will always be a part of me.

What Does Your Typical Workout Routine Look Like, and How Do You Keep It Interesting?

Nowadays, my training is simple yet effective. I run four days a week and do one or two days of bodyweight exercises for overall fitness.

However, when I was training for ultra-marathons, my approach was much more structured. Prepar-

ing for an ultra-race takes about 8 months, and I divided it into four phases, each lasting two months:

- Base Phase
Building endurance and stamina
- Strength Phase
Developing muscular strength and running efficiency
- Mental Training Phase
Running on tired legs and pushing limits
- Final Preparation
Race-specific training, including heat and altitude adaptation

During my peak training, I would run up to 500–1,000 km per month.

Surat doctor unfurls tricolour near Berlin Wall
Completes 100-Mile Run In 25.6 Hrs
Ashleshaa Khurana

Surat: On Independence Day, Dr Nehal Patel completed the 100-mile Berlin Wall Marathon.

He was the only Indian who had qualified for participating in the event, which involved running through a forest trail —160.59km-long, where, with every meter that the participants cover on the Berlin Wall Trail, they are reminded of a painful chapter in German history.

After all, the Wall Trail runs exactly where until 1989 walls and barbed wire separated people in eastern and western Berlin from each other. The mostly paved walking and biking path is a big lap around western Berlin.

Patel completed the run in

Nehal Patel

25.6 hours and said, “The best part of the run were the last six minutes, as I held the tricolour and completed the run on Independence Day.”

Proceeds from the event will benefit tribal children in Dang, as Patel, is a maxillofacial surgeon for the Duetsche Cleft Kinderlife, Gujarat, which is a non-profit organisation with 10 participating countries that supports the treatment of children suffering from cleft lip and palate deformity absolutely free of cost.



This included:

- Back-to-back runs (e.g., 50 km one day, 20 km the next)
- Heat adaptation training (running at 3 PM in the desert)
- Altitude training (mountain ultras)

Training wasn't just about running. Cross-training

was essential to prevent injuries. If I felt I wasn't recovering well, I would switch to cycling or swimming—which also prepared me for Ironman races.

How Do You Manage Your Nutrition During Training and Races?

Nutrition varies depending on the type of ultra-race. They are categorized into:

- Fully Supported
Aid stations provide all food and hydration
- Partially Supported
Some aid available, but runners carry essentials
- Self-Supported
Runners must carry their own supplies

For self-supported races, I carried an 8 kg backpack with essential nutrition and at least 10,000 kcal worth of food. This was crucial for desert races, where getting lost or running out of fuel could be dangerous.

We divide race nutrition into:

- Solids (energy bars, nuts)
- Semi-solids (gels, mashed foods)
- Liquids (carbohydrate and electrolyte drinks)

One month before an event, I followed a carbohydrate depletion strategy, reducing carb intake to help my body store more for race day. During the race, I relied mostly on liquid carbs for sustained energy.

How Do You Monitor Your Performance?

Ultra-running isn't just about endurance; it's also about efficiency. I trained using:

- Heart Rate Monitors
To stay in optimal heart rate zones
- Power Meters
To measure energy expenditure and improve fat utilization

The goal was to burn more fat for fuel instead of muscle glycogen, ensuring I could run longer without fatigue. It's a science-backed approach where every aspect—training, nutrition, and recovery—is carefully planned.

What Is Your Go-To Pre-Surgery or Pre-Workout Meal?

My daily breakfast remains consistent throughout the year. I usually have eggs along with black coffee—I don't add sugar or milk. Sometimes, I also have fruit or a smoothie.

However, when I'm training for an event, I avoid eggs before a run since they are primarily protein and take longer to digest. Instead, I train on an empty stomach and have my meal after the workout.

What Do You Carry for Instant Energy?

For quick energy during runs, I always carry:

- Energy bars
- Electrolyte drinks
- Bananas or dates (for natural sugars)

During long races, maintaining consistent energy intake is crucial, so I make sure to consume carbohydrates steadily rather than in large bursts.

A Funny or Unexpected Story from Your Runs?

Running and ultra-racing always bring unforgettable moments. Here are a couple of stories:

The Early Morning "Respect"

Every runner starts as a "dreaded early riser." Initially, the local community wonders, "Why is this person waking up at 5 AM and running every day?" But after a month, they just accept your presence—no more stares, no more questions, just an unspoken respect.

The Wine Marathon

In France, there's a race called the Marathon du

Médoc, where every 5 kilometers, runners are offered homemade wine instead of water! The idea is to test how well you can still run under the influence. My colleague actually completed the full 42 km marathon after drinking at every station! It was hilarious to watch.

The German Beer Surprise

In Germany, beer is often part of post-race celebrations, but during one ultra-event, organizers surprised runners with beer at the 6 km mark! Imagine my shock when I saw runners casually sipping beer mid-race—it was a completely new experience for me!

Ironman and the Kind Stranger

During my Ironman race, at 70 km into the cycling segment, my bike chain broke. I thought my race was over. But out of nowhere, a spectator—a total stranger—came to my aid. He helped me fix the chain in a split second, and I was back in the race. Moments like these restore your faith in humanity!

Every race has unexpected, humbling moments, making running a new adventure every day.

Advice for Beginners Who Struggle with Consistency

If I can run, anyone can. I started with just 300 meters, and now I run ultras. The key is consistency.

- Make fitness a habit
Anything you do for 4 weeks becomes second nature.
- Start small
Even 10 minutes a day is enough to build momentum.
- Don't wait for the "perfect time"
Just start; fitness will soon become part of your daily routine.

Once it becomes ingrained in your system, there's no need for motivation—your body and mind will crave movement naturally.

Rapid-Fire Questions

Morning workout or night workout?

Morning.

Cardio or weights?

Cardio. I do bodyweight exercises as well, but I maintain a 70-30 ratio, prioritizing cardio. If you only run and neglect strength training, you won't progress efficiently.

Favorite sport to play or watch?

Formula 1 racing.

Surgery day or leg workout day—which one is tougher?

If you have the right mindset, both are manageable. Discipline in one area translates to discipline in another. If you find running tough, you might start seeing surgery as tough too. It's all about daily improvement.

Books on running you recommend?

I read extensively on running physiology and anatomy. One great book is *Eat & Run* by Scott Jurek, one of the best ultra-runners in the world. He follows a plant-based diet and has set world records while running ultras on a vegetarian diet. I highly recommend it! There's another book I'd like to suggest—I'll share the name with you later.

One guilty pleasure snack?

There are many! But on Saturdays, I allow myself some indulgence. Right now, my weight is higher than my ultra-running days—I'm at 77 kg, whereas I drop to 67 kg when I train. However, I maintain a balanced diet as a habit.

What's your take on coffee?

I love coffee! It's a great pre-workout drink for runners. If taken in moderation, it enhances endurance.

What is one fitness mantra you swear by?

I don't have a specific mantra—fitness is part of my daily routine. I don't need to remind myself to train; it's as natural as breathing.

Most challenging fitness goal achieved?

One of the toughest was my ultra-marathon in 2016. It had a strict time limit, meaning I couldn't afford to walk—I had to keep running. The race lasted 48 hours, and I finished in 44 hours. It was a tough but incredible experience!

Any future fitness goals?

I still run, but for the past four years, I've shifted focus to scuba diving. I'm currently working towards my rescue diver certification in Andaman—it's the highest level for recreational divers.

If not a surgeon, what would you have been?

Maybe a professional runner or an athlete. I love sports, so I would have pursued something in that field. But I love both surgery and fitness, and they go hand in hand—both require discipline.

Essential fitness gear you always have?

Right now, my fitness tracker is my most essential gadget. I've used one for 14 years, and it helps me track my progress.

Superfood you recommend, even on a busy surgery day?

Eggs! I can eat them 365 days a year.

Reflections on the 48th AOMSI Conference: Innovation, Tradition, and Excellence



The 48th Annual Conference of the Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons of India (AOMSI), held in December 2024, was a spectacular confluence of knowledge, collaboration, and camaraderie. Set against the backdrop of a vibrant host city, the event brought together some of the finest minds in maxillofacial surgery, blending cutting-edge advancements with cultural richness.

The pre-conference courses set the stage, offering hands-on experience and in-depth discussions on critical topics in the field. From advanced trauma management techniques to breakthrough innovations in onco-reconstruction, these sessions provided an excellent learning opportunity for young and experienced surgeons alike.

One of the most remarkable aspects of this year's conference was the presence of internationally renowned speakers, who brought fresh perspectives and global insights to the discussions. Their expertise not only enriched the academic sessions but also reinforced the importance of collaboration in advancing the specialty. The sessions covered a wide array of topics, including minimally invasive surgical techniques, technological advancements in facial reconstruction, and evolving treatment modalities in maxillofacial oncology.

A major highlight of our conference was the Trade Section—the backbone that not only finances a significant part of the event but also serves as a showcase for the latest innovations shaping the future of maxillofacial surgery. From cutting-edge tools to groundbreaking products, it was inspiring to see companies stepping forward to share advancements that redefine our field. The trade section wasn't just an exhibit—it was a hub of ideas, collaboration, and possibilities.

Beyond the academic rigour, the conference was a celebration of tradition and culture. The much-anticipated ethnic wear evening was a vibrant reminder of how innovation and heri-

tage can coexist beautifully. Attendees proudly donned traditional attire, adding a unique charm to the scientific discussions and reinforcing the importance of identity in our profession.

The sporting events brought out the competitive spirit in participants, proving that maxillofacial surgeons are not only skilled with the scalpel but also on the field. Whether it was cricket, badminton, or table tennis, the camaraderie and enthusiasm were infectious.

Evenings were dedicated to cultural performances, where delegates enjoyed mesmerising performances, reflecting the diversity of our nation. These events offered a perfect platform for networking and relaxation after intense academic deliberations.

The 48th AOMSI Conference was not just an academic gathering but a holistic experience that celebrated professional excellence, innovation, and culture in equal measure. As we look forward to the next edition, we carry with us not just new knowledge but also fond memories of a well-rounded and enriching event.



FIG 1: ONE OF THE MANY PRE-CONFERENCE COURSES WITH COURSE INSTRUCTORS AND PARTICIPANTS



FIG 2: EC MEETING HELD AT GLASS ROOM AT THE 48TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEONS OF INDIA (AOMSI), 2024



FIG 3: DELEGATES AND ORGANISERS DRESSED IN ETHNIC ATTIRE AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE 48TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEONS OF INDIA (AOMSI)



FIG 4: THE GINWALA ORATION DELIVERED BY DR. KIRAN GADRE AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE 48TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEONS OF INDIA (AOMSI)



FIG 5: ESTEEMED DELEGATES AND ORGANISERS AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE 48TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEONS OF INDIA (AOMSI)



FIG 6: GRAND BANQUET HALL AT THE 48TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEONS OF INDIA (AOMSI)



FIG 7: TRADE FAIR AT THE 48TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEONS OF INDIA (AOMSI)



FIG 8: "MEET THE MASTERS" SESSION IN PROGRESS AT THE 48TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEONS OF INDIA (AOMSI)



FIG 9: TRADE FAIR AT THE 48TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEONS OF INDIA (AOMSI)



FIG 10: SURGICAL SKILL WORKSHOP IN PROGRESS AT THE 48TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEONS OF INDIA (AOMSI)



FIG 11: MESMERISING VENUE OF THE 48TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEONS OF INDIA (AOMSI) AT THE BISWA BANGLA CONVENTION CENTRE, KOLKATA



FIG 12: PANEL DISCUSSION IN PROGRESS AT THE 48TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEONS OF INDIA (AOMSI)



FIG 13: POST GRADUATE PAPER PRESENTATION AT THE 48TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEONS OF INDIA (AOMSI)



FIG 15: ANNUAL GENERAL BODY MEETING (AGM) AT THE 48TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEONS OF INDIA (AOMSI)



FIG 17: CRICKET TOURNAMENT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 48TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEONS OF INDIA (AOMSI) AT THE BISWA BANGLA CONVENTION CENTRE, KOLKATA



FIG 14: ANNUAL GENERAL BODY MEETING (AGM) AT THE 48TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEONS OF INDIA (AOMSI)



FIG 16: THE BAND "HAMELIN" DELIVERING A MAGICAL EVENING AT THE FACULTY DINNER OF THE 48TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEONS OF INDIA (AOMSI)



49th AOMSI ANNUAL CONFERENCE

11th - 13th DECEMBER - 2025
Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh



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