

multi-tasking mayor

Even as one of Hawai'i's busiest men, Kirk Caldwell makes time for fitness.

By Danielle Douglass

Mayor Kirk Caldwell faces a constant challenge of scheduling time for exercise. Despite the countless meetings, commitments, and emergencies that come with leading a major city, Caldwell acknowledges that staying fit is just as important as brushing his teeth. With his hectic and unpredictable schedule, he's mastered the art of fitting in exercise where he can.

"I try to squeeze in a run if I have a break at work. Or if a meeting is canceled, I go out and jog from my office to Ala Moana Beach Park or Kaka'ako," says Caldwell, 63. "When I get back to work, I feel more energized and I can go for the rest of the day."

Even when there's no opening in his schedule, he'll walk the stairs to his office on the third floor at Honolulu Hale to get in sprints of activity. When he has meetings at the State Capitol, he walks up the fire stairs. Yard work on the weekends gives him solitude and the opportunity to see the results of his hard work. He explains that exercise is as important to his well-being as food, air, and water.

Being outdoors is Caldwell's favorite venue for physical activity. On a recent Saturday morning, Caldwell hit the water for some stand-up paddle boarding (SUP), which is his favorite activity. He got into it after a group of friends invited him along. Before long, he was hooked.

"I love SUP. It's breathtaking to be out there on the Pacific Ocean looking back at Waikiki and the Ko'olaus, feeling the ocean breeze and soaking up some sun," he says.

Caldwell believes that people in Hawai'i find themselves outdoors more because of the beautiful weather, leading to a more active lifestyle. He definitely appreciates this sentiment because when he was attending college in Boston, running in the dead of winter meant sweatpants, a sweatshirt, and a sore throat. He'd think to himself, "this is crazy," but it was exercise. Even in college, health came first and provided the focus and energy he needed to concentrate on his studies.

Being active has always been a priority for Caldwell. When he was 10 and growing up on the Big Island, he walked 50 miles with his parents and a group of Peace Corps graduates who were preparing to go to Asia. The walk was a national fitness challenge that President John F. Kennedy started in 1963 to encourage physical activity. It left a lasting impression on the young Caldwell. "I remember getting blisters, but it was the first time we did something together about health," he says.

Caldwell's parents instilled a love for fitness in him, which is a value that he and his wife, Donna Tanoue, passed down to their daughter. These days, Maya, 21, is attending college in Boston and stays fit doing yoga. She tells Dad that he wouldn't be able to do some of the moves, but he thinks otherwise. As with other aspects of his life, he welcomes the challenge. **15**

