

NFL PLAYERS TAKE A HIKE



Sports Illustrated

HE MADE THE CLIMB TO FITNESS

EIGHT YEARS AGO STEVE SILVA, A 5'8" PHYSICAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR IN Randolph, Mass., weighed 425 pounds. Doctors told him he wouldn't live more than five years. Silva's blood pressure was 206 over 135, his cholesterol count was more than 450, and he suffered from gout, a bad back and a degenerative joint disease in both ankles. He could not climb a flight of stairs without gasping for air. This week, Silva, now a 190-pound hunk, will attempt to run up and down the 1,652 steps of the Eiffel Tower 7½ times in less than 2 hours, 1 minute and 24 seconds. The record for the so-called vertical mile, which was set by Dale Neil at the Peachtree Plaza Hotel in Atlanta in 1984.

Silva may not get the record; though he has covered the distance in training many times, his best unofficial clocking is 2:05. But his chances of living long enough to try again are excellent, thanks to a dietary and exercise regimen supervised by Health Management Resources (HMR), a Boston company that is cosponsor, with *l'Association Régionale de Cardiologie de l'Île-de-France*, of the Eiffel Tower climb. Silva, now 39, is HMR's star graduate and, since 1984, its director of fitness.

High school sports kept Silva's weight around 250 pounds, but when he finished college and began teaching, his weight ballooned. He tried every diet that came along and over a 10-year period lost 100 pounds six different times. Each time the pounds not only returned, they also increased.

After enrolling in HMR's obesity treatment program in 1979, Silva went on a 520-calorie-a-day diet of liquid food supplement and remained on it for 9½ months. His physical condition was monitored weekly, and he attended weight-control classes. "But most important, I increased my physical activity," he says. He sure did. To train for the Eiffel ascent, Silva ran 3,100 flights of stairs—46,500 steps—a week.



Silva shaped up to take on the Eiffel Tower.

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