

NW FITNESS MACHINE

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**PLYOMETRICS
WORKOUT**

INTERVIEW WITH **WSU**
ALUMNI AND TOURING
TENNIS PRO
ELISABETH FOURNIER

ZUMBA
THE GLOBAL
BRAND HEARD
'ROUND THE
WORLD

10
COMMON EXCUSES
FOR NOT GETTING
IN SHAPE

Photography By: April Greer

**WA State Fitness Expo
July 11th & 12th 2015**

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The Authority on Northwest Fitness

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Elisabeth Fournier

Getting her first tennis racquet at the age of five, Elisabeth dreamed of one day becoming a professional tennis player. Starting lessons at the age eight, Fournier trained with various coaches, but significantly remembers, and is grateful for her first coach, John Tokos. He had trained her to hit a one-handed backhand.

Years later, the dream of turning pro never died. Fournier recognized the benefit of earning a college scholarship as the perfect opportunity to earn a degree and to gain optimal experience in match play to improve her skillset to turn pro. Elisabeth, native to Canada, visited Washington State University earned a scholarship to play tennis at Washington State University. She chose WSU as she fell in “love” with the team and campus during her recruiting visit. In addition, coach, Lisa Hart, and Elisabeth got along wonderfully from the initial, interest phone call. Her most significant collegiate victory was defeating Stanford’s #1 player, Hillary Barte, during her sophomore year at WSU. At that time, Barte was ranked 8th in the country. Fournier’s style of play is full court. Her strategy is to “mix things up” in order to make her opponent feel uncomfortable. Plus, Fournier’s biggest weapon is speed and athleticism.

Photography By: April Greer

PRODUCT FEATURES

New Products & Apparel

What words of advice does Elisabeth have for other athletes with similar aspirations? Fournier states, "It's all a question of how much you are willing to put in to get what you want. Nothing comes easily, but more importantly you have to enjoy the challenge that comes with shooting for a high goal."



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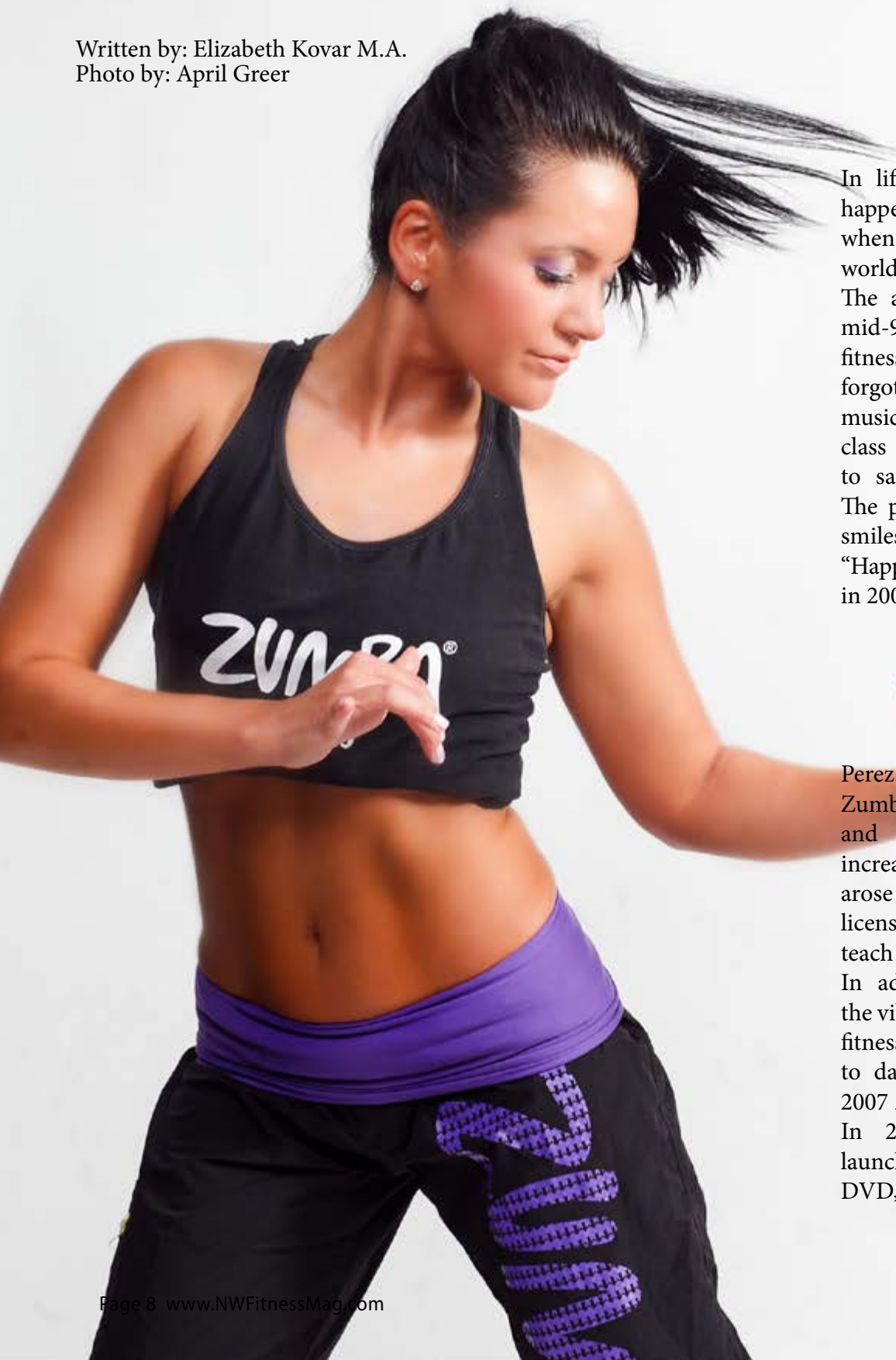
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ZUMBA

The Global Brand Heard 'Round The World

Written by: Elizabeth Kovar M.A.
Photo by: April Greer



In life, mistakes are bound to happen. So what do you get when a mistake turns into a world-wide phenomenon? The answer is Zumba®! In the mid-90's, Columbia native and fitness instructor, Beto Perez, forgot his traditional aerobic music one day and improvised class with a dance-like routine to salsa and merengue music. The participants, gleaming with smiles, loved the class, and that "Happy Accident" became reality in 2001.

Perez created the trademark, Zumba®, and started with DVD's and infomercials. As demand increased, the Zumba® Academy arose in 2005 to certify and license Zumba® instructors to teach classes at fitness facilities. In addition, Zumba® launched the vibrant and chic Zumba® wear fitness clothing and accessories to dance fitness lovers, and in 2007 Zumba® went international. In 2008, the company also launched the top-selling home DVD, Zumba® Fitness Total

Body Transformation System. And if this was not enough, in 2010 Zumba® became the first fitness brand to introduce a video game workout for the Wii, Xbox and PS3 gaming systems.

Zumba® offers various Zumba® classes to include: Zumba® Fitness, Zumba® Toning, Zumba® Gold, Zumbatomic®, Aqua Zumba®, Zumba® in the Circuit, Zumba® Gold-Toning and Zumba® Sentao. Today, Zumba® is more than a workout, it is a global lifestyle brand that Zumba® enthusiasts crave.

One of Zumba®'s mantra's, "Ditch the Workout, Join the Party", continuously proves the reputation of its' brand with fitness studios filled with sparkling smiles, neon colored clothing and ear-piercing "Woohs" heard throughout the class.

Most facilities at minimum offer the original Zumba® Fitness class, which seems to be the most popular class. The classic Zumba® session is a cardiovascular "fitness party" where dance and aerobic movements are choreographed to world-beat music. Zumba®'s claim to motivation is thanks to the all-inspiring, global music utilized to keep hips shaking and hands waving.

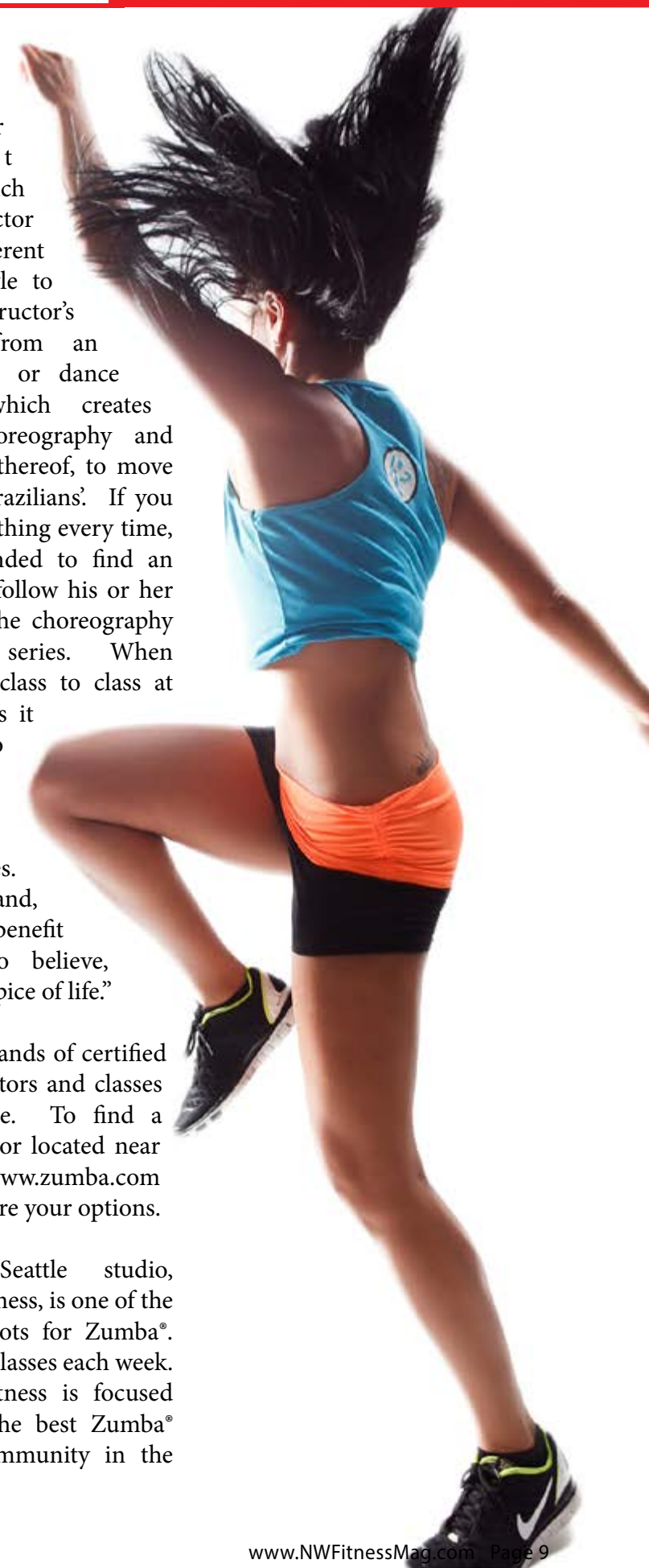
Zumba® is not a one-size-fits-all workout. They welcome all fitness levels and walks of life to join the fun. However, unlike other popular, choreographed classes such as Body Pump or TurboKick, no one Zumba® class

is identical.

Zumba® is an instructor dependent workout, which every instructor brings a different energy and style to the class. Instructor's may come from an aerobic, fitness or dance background which creates variety in choreography and ability, or lack thereof, to move hips like the Brazilians'. If you enjoy the same thing every time, it is recommended to find an instructor and follow his or her class to learn the choreography in rounds or series. When skipping from class to class at various facilities it is challenging to understand the moves, as every instructor's "round" varies. On the other hand, that maybe a benefit for those who believe, "Variety is the spice of life."

There are thousands of certified Zumba® instructors and classes held nationwide. To find a club or instructor located near you, visit the www.zumba.com website to explore your options.

One local Seattle studio, Community Fitness, is one of the premier hot spots for Zumba®. Offering many classes each week. Community Fitness is focused on providing the best Zumba® classes and community in the region.





The hiring of new instructors is selective on skill and personality. "Our entire Zumba® staff have extensive dance backgrounds. Whether it is classical dance training, dancing in their birth country or even cheering professional basketball teams. They all bring a different approach to the core format of the class which is what makes them special," states Tricia Murphy Madden, Fitness Director at Community Fitness.

With their variety of instructors, time slots and styles, there is a class for every fitness level. From novice to experienced exercisers and hip-shakers, each individual can create Zumba® to be a low-impact or higher intensity workout. For example, a person with sacroiliac joint dysfunction, or other various lumbar-pelvic issues, must caution excessive spinal rotation, twisting and lateral flexion movement. In essence, Zumba® is still an achievable and healthy workout, but regression, or modification, to specific dance moves is recommended.

For those with crunchy and achy knees and hips, and who commit to Zumba® long-term, it is advisable to wear dance shoes rather than the traditional running or walking. Zumba® wear offers male and female dance shoes.

What is the difference? Located on the bottom of the dance shoe is a "pivot point" under

the metatarsal and calcaneus area of the foot, which assists in the turning and rotational movement. Packed classes start to heat the room with moisture and humidity. Once hardwood floors get tacky, the rotational movements "get sticky" with regular shoes, which causes achy knees and unhappy hips.

In the fitness industry, fads and trends happen incessantly. Zumba® is one of the most popular trends, and continues to expand globally. On a local level, visit www.communityfitness.com to view the group exercise schedule for on-going Zumba® classes and events. "We provide an entire community of people who participate and have created a warm Zumba® culture like nothing you can find anywhere else. It is a true Zumba® Community." States, Murphy Madden.

BIO: Elizabeth Kovar M.A., Seattle resident, is the fitness coordinator at the Lynnwood Recreation Center. Elizabeth is a freelance fitness and travel writer; in addition to a personal trainer and group fitness instructor. With international work and study experience within India and Australia, she studied yoga within five different countries. She is also a workshop presenter for BOSU and AFAA.

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TRAVIS DOERGE

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Travis Doerge:

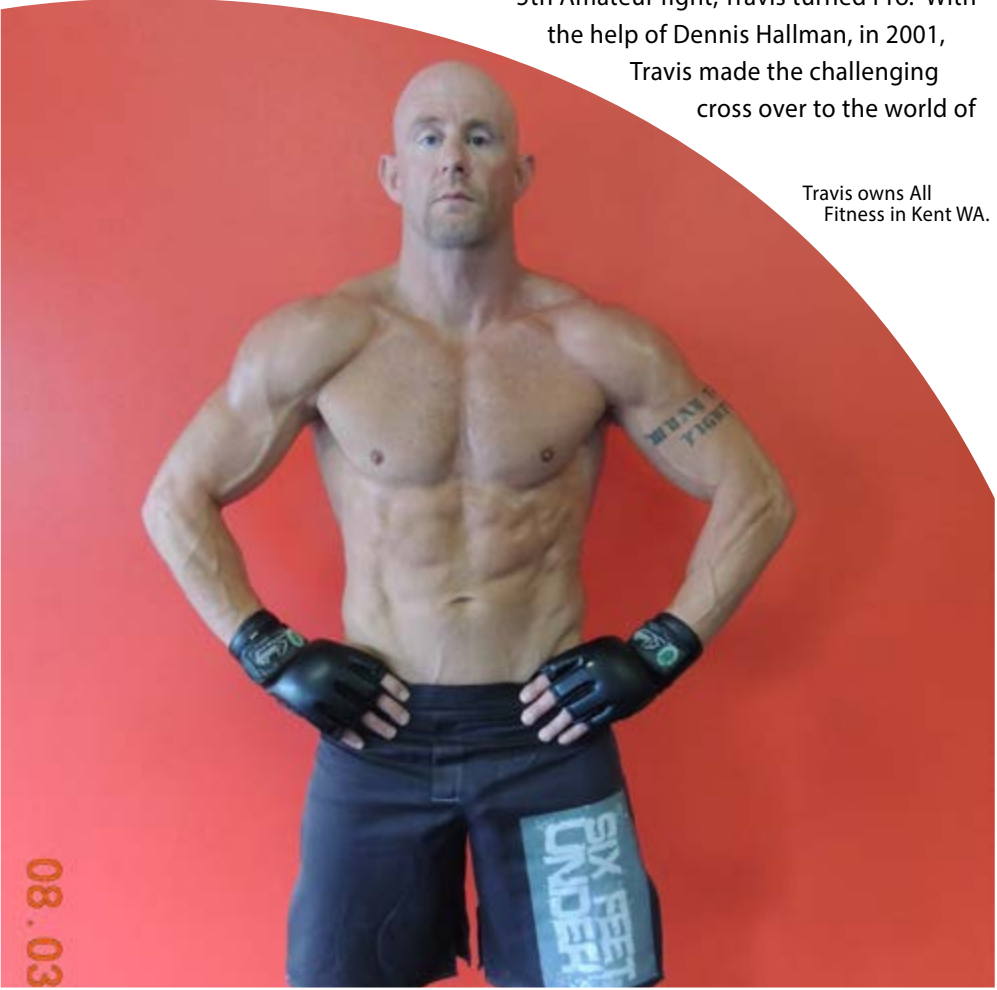
- North American Kickboxing Champion
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- Canadian Muay Thai Champion
- Washington State Kickboxing Champion
- Formally 18th in the World in Kickboxing
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- Strikeforce Veteran
- WEC Veteran
- IFL Veteran
- 20 years fight experience
- 2x Regional no-gi Champion BJJ

Coach of "Six Feet Under MMA Fight Team" based out of Renton WA.



> Born in Olympia, Washington Travis Doerge began playing sports at the age of 5. His affinity for contact sports began when he was in the 7th grade. From that point forward you could most often find Travis playing Football, Basketball, or Baseball and excelling at them. He was deemed MVP each season for each sport. After high school, Travis moved to Arizona to pursue higher education. While living in Arizona, in his down time, Travis enjoyed

watching Martial Arts movies. This choice of entertainment led to a new interest in area of MMA and in turn, learning the discipline of the Art. Travis trained at a local Kickboxing gym until he relocated to the Seattle Area. Upon his return in 1992, Travis searched out a new Kickboxing gym where he met Maurice Smith and began training under his guidance. Within 1 year Travis was fighting for the Washington State Kickboxing Championship. After his 5th Amateur fight, Travis turned Pro. With the help of Dennis Hallman, in 2001, Travis made the challenging cross over to the world of



Travis owns All Fitness in Kent WA.

Log onto NWFitnessMag.com to get the latest info on the Redemption III MMA & Kickboxing Cage Fights. July 11th 2015, Puyallup WA. Get your tickets online.



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> MMA. After his 4th MMA fight, Travis was fighting for the WEC Championship. Since then, Travis has had over 25 Kickboxing Fights and 17 MMA Fights. These fights have been in several locations across North America including top tourist destinations Atlantic City, NJ; Victoria, BC; and San Jose, CA. Travis' fighting talents and expertise doesn't stop there. Currently he Owns All Fitness in Kent and is the Coach of the 6' Under MMA Fight Team based out of Kent. Even still, Travis is extremely active in the MMA Community and continues his training and conditioning for his own upcoming fights. Travis is currently organizing an incredible fight card for The Redemption III at the WA Fitness expo, July 11 th in Puyallup WA.



Hike of the Month

Tuck and Robin Lakes

By: Daniel Lupastean

Activity Type: Hiking
Nearby City: Roslyn
Length: 15.6 total miles
Elevation Gain: 3,700 feet
Skill Level: Strenuous
Duration: Day-hike or backpack overnight
Season: Best midsummer through fall
Trailhead Elevation: 3,300 feet
Top Elevation: 6,330 feet

Happy trails,
Dan

Hiking time to Tuck 2hrs 51mins

At last, my first overnight hike of the summer. With summer being in full swing, I decided to make this month’s hike of the month worthwhile. My first initial plan was to do Enchantment Lakes, but with the clock winding down towards the end; the Enchantments ended up being completely reserved and I didn’t want to take my chance on the lottery draw. As my plan went south, I ended up doing a very similar hike people call mini Enchantments. To reach Tuck & Robin Lakes, you must pass through the historic town of Roslyn. Once you pass the little historic coal mining town, you continue to drive towards the Deception Pass trailhead. As the pavement comes to an end, you will continue on a dirt road for about 1 hour until you reach the (Deception Pass 1376) trailhead. Once I finished my 1hr long drive on this slow dreaded dirt road, I reached a parking lot full of cars. With the Northwest Forest pass hanging on my rear view mirror, I gathered my gear and started my hike at 11:47am. The

first part of this hike is fairly easy with no real elevation gain. In about 40 minutes, you will reach a lake called Hyas Lake. I didn’t stop there and continued up the trail towards Tuck Lake. The trail starts to climb gradually after you pass Hyas Lake about 1hr or so into the hike. As I started to gain more elevation, the trail started to get really steep and reminded me of hiking Mailbox Peak. In some parts of the trail, you will have to use both hands to climb over rocks and tree roots. The hike to Tuck Lake is about 2 miles off the main trail of Deception Pass. I reached Tuck Lake about 2.38pm. The views are simply incredible of Tuck Lake. The lake was completely snow free with massive rocks and trees surrounding the lake. I didn’t stay long at Tuck Lake as I wanted to reach Robin Lakes before evening came around. The hike towards Robin Lakes is also a bit tricky. I found the main trail by bushwhacking up the side of the mountain by well-marked stone cairns. Once you hit the main trail to Robin Lakes, your climb will continue

to become more steep. There are some points in the trail where you will have to look out for the stacked stone cairns because the trail will disappear into all the granite rock face of the mountain. I reached Robin Lakes from Tuck Lake in about 1hr 20mins. Although the hike to Robin Lakes is only 1.7 miles from Tuck Lake, most of the incline is fairly steep. As I continued to look at the amazing views of Robin Lakes and the surrounding jagged mountain peaks, I spotted 3 mountain goats near the base of Robin Lake. After about 10 minutes the mountain goats made their way up to where I was without any kind of hesitation. As curious as the mountain goats were with my presence, they made circles around me and some other-fellow hikers I met at Tuck Lake. Although we outnumbered



If a goat approaches you, slowly move away to keep a safe distance.

If a goat decides to follow you, be prepared to chase it off by waving your arms, yelling, or even throwing rocks to scare it off

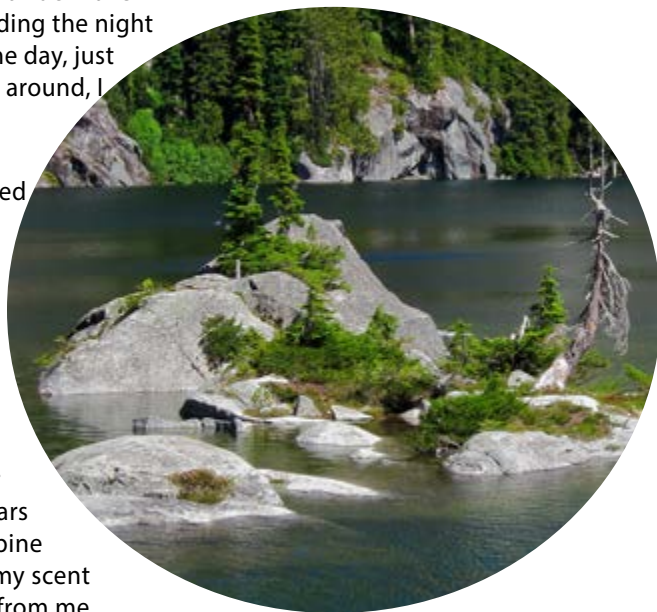
Mountain goats love the taste of salt, so please urinate off the main trail and away from your campsite at least 50 yards



the mountain goats 4 to 3, I dare not take any chances getting gorged to death by their fierce sharp horns. As my blood pressure remained normal, I took this opportunity to capture some pictures and videos of these magnificent creatures. Two of the goats were armed with horns and one goat was actually a baby, always following her mother close behind. As the mountain goats continued to get closer to us, we decided as a group that it would be best to head back down to Tuck Lake before any of us got traumatized with one of the sharp horns from the goats. Although I didn't get to stay much at Robin Lakes, the scramble up to the lakes was well worth the excitement and experience of these mountain goats. I then waved good bye to the goats and started to make my way back to Tuck Lake. I reached Tuck Lake about 5:40pm and decided it would be best to set up camp. With camp all in place, I managed to fix myself a meal and then do some exploring around Tuck Lake with what light was left in the day. I ended up spending the night at Tuck Lake next to the 3 people I meet earlier in the day, just before my ascent to Robin Lakes. As 10:30pm rolled around, I decided it would be best to hit the sleeping bag.

The next morning, I woke up around 7am and started to gather up my gear and make my way back to the car. I left Tuck Lake around 9:30am just before I said my farewells to my camping neighbors. With the sun out in full swing I started my descent back to the base of the mountain. Upon heading back, I encountered a few hikers going to different locations of the main Deception Pass trail. As my weekend couldn't get any better, I managed to encounter a porcupine. To my surprise I have never spotted a porcupine in the wild, with the 22 years that I have lived in Washington State. As the porcupine made its way across its log, it managed to pick up my scent once it hit the main hiking trail. With a little spook from me, the porcupine scampered off and started climbing a tree out of harm's way and into safety. Might I add, these little spiked creatures are great tree climbers. I captured some video and great pictures of the little bugger. I quickly got back on the trail and started my way back to the car. I arrived back at the car at about 1pm in the afternoon.

As always make sure you carry your basic 10 essentials and give yourself enough time to enjoy your hiking experience. For those looking to do an overnigher at Tuck Lake as I ended up doing, make sure you bring enough gear to have a pleasant overnight hiking adventure. Although its summer and the weather is hot during the day, I would highly recommend bringing a warm jacket for the night, as cold wind temperature tend to drop.



Standup Paddle Board Yoga: The New Mind-Body Exercise

Written by: Elizabeth Kovar M.A.

Every year in fitness, there are new inventions or class ideas to bring a fresh perspective to one's workout. In the last several years, Standup Paddle Board Yoga is one of those "fresh inventions" to where the board is your mat, and nature is your focal point. Plus, the combination of paddling to and from the practice location produces a full-body workout all while keeping the core strong and stable to avoid falling off the board.

WASUP Yoga, located in the Ballard neighborhood, conducts seasonal stand up paddleboard yoga. Established in 2011, lead instructor, Hasna, met Andrew Drake while shopping for a bathing suit at the existing Surf Ballard. Drake, interested in offering yoga classes, and Hasna, current yoga instructor, exchanged business cards and organically created Washington Standup Paddleboard Yoga.

Standup Paddle Board sizes various amongst different lengths and widths, which is dependent upon the weight and skill level of the individual. Typically, the novice requires a longer and flatter board to offer more stability. In addition, standup paddles contain an "elbow" in the shaft to maximize efficiency with each stroke. Whether you are sitting at a desk or standing a

paddleboard, posture is key to almost every activity in life. Paddlers must keep toes facing forward, feet hip distance apart, soft bend at the knees and chest upright with strong and broad shoulders. Similar to riding a bike, once forward momentum increases, so does stability. Yoga on land versus the board differs greatly. First, the movement of water below the board consistently challenges the balance and the frame of mind. If the board has a built in handle, this is known as the "Point of Balance" while paddling and during a yoga practice. When upright, keeping your feet level with the handle and hip distance apart offers a place of stability. The points of balance are always on the right and left side of the board. While incorporating poses such as warriors and wide-legged forward folds the feet are placed in a wider stance with one foot on each side of the board to remain balanced. This differs to land yoga where the feet are in alignment with each other; however, on the board, the more narrow the stance the more challenging.

Second, in fitness there are various balance challenge variables to progress or regress an exercise. These variables are commonly used on unstable surfaces such as





a BOSU, SPRI-360, Versa-discs and the same knowledge is applicable to paddleboards. These balance challenge variables include: contact point, visual affect, movement and external stimulus.

-Contact Points refer to anything that supports the body to remain balanced. On the board this may include body parts or the paddle. The more parts of the body that remain on the surface of the board, the better the balance, which also makes the exercise easier. In addition, incorporating the paddle in an exercise to where it touches the board will add another contact point to assist the balance.

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-Visual Affect in exercise stimulates the proprioceptive and sensory receptor systems due to the fact that the visual feedback has been eliminated. Yogis may incorporate visibility or focal points to aid or challenge the balance. The focal point concentrates on one spot, which assists in balance; where as watching a boat motor on by challenges balance and concentration. The other visual affect is visibility. Dirty sunglasses or closing the eyes completely increases the balance challenge while relying on the sensory organs.

Movement refers to the range of motion of an exercise, which may

incorporate low or high degrees of motor skills, which challenges the balance. On the board, not only are there challenging yoga exercises that require more movement, but the movement of the board itself adds another dynamic of mental concentration and physical control.

-External Stimulus refers to any outside force exerted or used during an exercise. In paddleboard yoga, incorporating the paddle with poses will increase the balance challenge. For example, when in tree pose, raising the paddle overhead utilizes concentration to balance and maintain strong arms overhead. In addition, strong wind may act as an

external stimulus, which creates the body to want to move away from the center of gravity and balance point.

Finally, going beyond the four walls of a room instantly incorporates an assortment of views all while connecting with nature. "Every class is different. You are part of nature during this experience and some days you see seals, salmon and bald eagles. Some days the weather is better than others, but we embrace the Seattle weather," states Hasna. In one word, Hasna describes the experience as "esoteric".

Beyond a physical practice, there is a deep connection, with yourself or possibly the earth, during a SUP yoga practice. "Connection is the number one thing we seek all the time. When we are peaceful and serene we are in connection. When we are stressed and distraught, we are disconnected." The connection naturally happens without trying. During my experience, I was enthralled, while in a forward fold, that the water was actually the sky. It was surreal and felt like a dream.

Novice and experienced paddlers and yogis are welcomed to classes. "Small progressions make the class successful. For beginners we start slowly to build confidence before moving to your edge." From relaxing to advanced poses, students can go "full board" in their practice, as long as you are willing to experience the water if the balance nose-dives.

Got fear of the water? "Seeing vast expansive water maybe scary,



but it is important to comfort people to the board and exercise." Students must remember that they are able to create their practice to cater their desire or ability. "We are able to see student's fears, and the instructor must help recognize it and move that fear toward intention," claims Hasna.

Plus, instructors of paddleboard classes are not able to coast along with only instructing yoga asanas. "Instructors must analyze the weather patterns such as the currents, tide levels and winds," states Hasna.

Hasna hires instructors who are friends or within her yogic network. Paddleboard yoga brings a fresh perspective to working out. In my opinion, it definitely beats staring in the mirror with a set of dumbbells in hand, Happy paddling.

Elizabeth Kovar M.A, personal trainer and yoga/fitness instructor, earned Yoga Alliance 318 hours in Ashtanga yoga & Chakra Meditation from the Ayurveda & Yoga Retreat and Hospital in Coonor, India. She studied yoga in five different countries, and learned through some of the best names in the yoga industry. Her Master's Thesis "Creating Yoga Programs for People with Movement Disabilities" was implemented on a 12 week research study for people with Stage 1-2 Parkinson's disease with the University of Toledo Physical Therapy and Neurology Department. She resides in Seattle, WA and is the fitness coordinator at the City of Lynnwood Recreation Center. Elizabeth is also a freelance fitness / travel writer, workshop presenter and instructs an online Yoga 1 & 2 course for Walla Walla Community College.

CBD/Cannabidiol

KANNAWAY



Cannabis-Infused Energy Chews and Skin Salve Ointment? Why MMA Star Brandon Vera and Other Athletes Are Saying Yes.

Fitness and Cannabis - Two words that haven't normally been associated with one another in the past.

But that's exactly what some athletes have been utilizing in their journey to find the perfect compliment to their daily

workout routine.

In the past few years, more and more research has come to the forefront regarding the use of CBD, the "other" side of the cannabis plant. Put simply, the primary effect of THC is "getting high", whereas the primary effect of CBD - otherwise known as "cannabidiol", a naturally occurring compound of the hemp plant - is for use in health and wellness products.

In the world of competitive sports, however, there have been questions about the use of CBD as it



pertains toward random drug tests and whether or not it would be of use in the world of athletics.

Brandon Vera, an International Superstar in the world of MMA, utilizes products from a company called Kannaway that he stands behind.

And it's not just lip



Brandon Vera Professional MMA Fighter

Brandon's position as a superstar MMA fighter means he is constantly subjected to drug tests, and he's passed all his tests.

Going a step further, Brandon is subjected to much more than that. With constant workouts that involve sparring, getting hit, and pushing

the limits of his body, he takes a daily beating.

So it might come as a surprise that instead of utilizing other products, he leans on Kannaway's "Cannabis Beauty Defined" Salve for relief after his daily workout routine, KannaKick Energy Chews for a boost when he needs

it, and Kannaway's HempVap for daily CBD intake.

KANNAWAY - CBD - CANNABIDIOL

All in all, it seems like Kannaway's products have had a very positive effect. Sustained energy from the KannaKick chews, a body salve for muscles, joints, and skin, and the HempVap are all getting great reception

from athletes and the general population.

Cannabis and Fitness? Hmm... sounds like it might just be a great idea to try them yourself.



“Sustained energy from the KannaKick chews”

service: Brandon is the face of Kannaway's KannaKick product line, a cannabis-

infused energy chew that provides a sustained, time-released energy boost and contains all-natural ingredients.

Kannaway's products are more than a marketing gimmick, though. Their "Beauty Defined" line comes from something called an "Ancient Eastern Royal Bi-Bong Formula". This formula involves the use of wild-harvested Eastern herbs and minerals, and, until recently, this formula was exclusive to the Korean Royal Family.

Even if you're already familiar with CBD, the combination of CBD with this formula might

just be something you've never heard of before.

The fact that it is being embraced by athletes, the media, and the general population as the "next big thing", though, seems to indicate that its effects have been positive. Fortune magazine recently called Kannaway one of the top 5 companies in the

Cannabis space. USA Today recently reviewed Kannaway's "Beauty Defined" line and gave it an incredibly positive review. Reuters, Fox News, Univision, Telemundo, Caribbean News, and many other news outlets have covered Kannaway.

CBDStrong.com

Visit the Kannaway booth at the WA State Fitness Expo

By: Amy Lenoir

CBDStrong.com



BE GREEN & SAVE GREEN AT THE FARMERS MARKET

WHY SHOPPING LOCALLY WILL SAVE YOU MONEY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Written By: Sofia Sabeti

1. Promotes Sustainability & Supports Environment sustainability. Chances are you've heard this term thrown around in the media and public arena in recent years, as more awareness is being brought to the effect(s) that our current way of living might wreck the environment. Sustainability is not, however, just another trend that Hollyweird and the National media have concocted to stir up a frenzy. By definition, sustainability "creates and maintains conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony," and as it relates to this topic, sustainability is "the method of harvesting or using a resource so that the resource is not depleted or permanently damaged." To sustain simply means to continue or "keep it going," which in this case the "it" in question is our food source. So how might choosing to shop at a farmer's market act as a more sustainable option than breezing through your local supermarket?

Local family-run or small-operation farms utilize many sustainable farming practices as opposed to food grown conventionally. To start, most local farms are growing for quality over quantity and have a longstanding reputation with

the community they serve. Since they are less concerned with mass production, family operated farms tend to use less water than conventional ones, don't require expensive and resource depleting irrigation systems or canals, and employ proper crop rotating techniques so as not to deplete the soil. Local farmers grow their crops more heavily based on the seasons and local climate versus providing a continual demand of a few prominent crops. With the rapidly declining condition of our soil both in America and worldwide, crop rotation and crop diversity is arguably the most important sustainable practice that local farmers use. By taking care to replenish the soil

by planting certain crops in the off-season which add vital nutrients and minerals to the ground, they ensure that their land will produce the highest quality food year after year. For instance, many farmers plant legumes to add nitrogen back into their soil after being striped by other crops. In addition, many farmers who raise free-range livestock use their green manure as fertilization for their soil, creating a symbiotic relationship between creature and matter. Farmer's also bolster their soil in other ways such as companion planting, which is an organic method of planting crops together in such a way that supports and encourages growth, pest control, and natural fertilization through strategic planting. Some of the benefits of companion planting include, discouraging crop eating pests while attracting plant allies, possible higher yields of crops,

better taste and nutritional value, and planting two crops together in such a way that one protects the other by nature of its structure, as in planting tall sun-loving plants with lower shade-loving ones. One example of companion planting that I use in my organic garden is planting borage around my snap peas and tomatoes to attract bees and increase pollination, thus producing a higher fruit yield of my tomato plant. Another benefit of choosing farmers markets over conventional stores is that local

from a plant for next year's crop.

As you may have already deduced, most if not all of the sustainable practices mentioned support and benefit the environment. Sustainability and positive environmental impact (awareness) go hand in hand and work synergistically to ensure that we are not only affecting our planet in a positive way, but also that the next generation and those to come can enjoy the same benefits and resources that we do. One of the

most obvious impacts that local organic growing farmers have on the environment is their limited use of pesticides as compared with conventional growers, which is largely due in part to utilizing many of the sustainable practices that have previously been discussed. The conservation of water, improving the quality of the soil, and recycling waste materials to use as compost and

fertilizers are all self-explained environmentally friendly practices.

The next most significant impact that local farmers have on the bigger picture of our National effect on the environment is through the minimal amount of greenhouse gases they contribute. By traveling much shorter distances to distribute their product, local farmers

contribute a much smaller amount of greenhouse gases emitted during transport as compared to the large, sometimes cross-country distances that most food grown conventionally have to travel. Shorter (fewer) distances (miles) traveled to deliver their food results in less gas used, and also less dependence on oil. By keeping the food they grow supplied to a smaller radius of possible consumers, there is less pollution contributed to the environment, and shoppers are more likely to get food picked at its peak as well as guaranteed to be as fresh as possible. Food that is fresh and picked at the height of its ripeness is also shown to be higher in nutritional value than food that is picked well before its prime, shipped across thousands of miles in ever changing conditions and climates, and then left to sit for days, weeks, and maybe sometimes months until it finally reaches your kitchen table. Doesn't it seem more practical to buy directly from the farmer who planted, nurtured, and then harvested the food you may enjoy at your next meal, than to buy food that has been handled countless times, shipped across the country, and then stacked amidst the depths of your grocery store waiting to be bought?

2. Affordability

Very rarely in life are you able to come across a circumstance where you can both, in a manner of speaking, "have your cake," (or in this case zucchini, watermelon, or plum) and "eat it too." Well, I



farmers mostly use heirloom seeds versus using genetically modified or "GMO" plants. The benefits and implications of choosing heirloom over GMO are many, which is an entirely separate discussion, however, a few key advantages include, bee colony support which increases pollination, less pesticide use, less chance of allergens in food, and supports age old process and nature's way of providing seed

am about to tell you that if you begin shopping at your local farmer's market for even just a small percentage of your food, you will find such to be the case. Who would be opposed to scoring delicious, quality produce, dairy products, artisan foods, and other items at a better price than what one might find elsewhere, all while boosting the local economy and supporting local business and agriculture, what some may argue as the backbone of America. "If the farmer's market is such a great value, why don't more people shop there?" you may ask. Well, the problem lies in that many are misled to believe that farmer's markets can be much more expensive than shopping at a conventional grocery store and that it is only for the very wealthy or "hippie" type people, when really quite the opposite is true! The farmer's market is a great place to bring your entire family, and many markets even accept WIC, SNAP, Senior Vouchers, and other social programs. "Well I never carry cash, so I'd rather shop at the grocery store so I can use my debit card," is a common excuse used against proponents of local markets, however, many markets are now accepting Visa and MasterCard transactions.

Concerning the actual prices of the various produce and foods offered, most vendors sell at prices that are very comparable or often competitive to what you may see at the grocery store.

Since food travels less distance, the farmer's themselves are often the ones who travel to the various



markets, therefore cutting out the middle man and cutting costs even more for the consumer. Another method of scoring even greater deals at the farmer's market is to first do a walk-through of the market, scanning the prices of all the vendors and seeing who might offer the best price for a particular item you are shopping for. Often, shoppers make the mistake of buying from the first vendor they stumble upon, but it is better to do a preliminary walk around and that way if you see a lower price elsewhere you can score a bit more savings, or be able to reference another vendor's price list if you are up for a little bit of haggling with the farmers. The latter will also make the market experience a

bit more exciting and give you a great sense of satisfaction if you are able to obtain a better deal than advertised to the rest of the market-goers.

As your trips to the farmer's market become more regular, you will start to develop a friendly relationship with the vendor's from week to week, as it is not a rare occurrence for frequent market-goers to be on a first-name basis with their farmer's. Not only will this deepen the bond between the farmer's and the community they serve, but by developing a relationship with your favorite farmer's it can lead to even deeper discounts on the foods you may buy, as many of the farmer's give special prices to their favorite customers and take even more care in helping them pick out the best of their crop. Personally, I have experienced this additional benefit at my favorite market which I would visit every Saturday morning. Little gestures like making small talk with the seller's, taking interest and asking



questions about their farm and methods, and learning new phrases from those whose first language was not English, all helped me develop a relationship with a few farmers who I quickly became favorites of and consequently enjoyed benefits such as free flats of berries, buy one get one free, and always a little extra "thrown in" just for me. Of course, I was genuinely interested in these farmers and their lives and I wouldn't advocate being nice with the wrong intentions, however, I definitely was not complaining about the added bonuses. It



should also be mentioned, that if you buy in bulk such as by the case, or in larger quantities, farmers are more likely to cut you a break for your larger purchase, and are more often than not willing to negotiate on their listed price. My ending advice: if you don't ask, you won't receive, so don't ever hesitate to suggest a different price if you feel it could be fairer or even if you are short a dollar or two. Lastly,

I would really like to emphasize just how affordable shopping at your local farmer's market can be with a few examples of my own from a recent trip. One of the most common, and often most frustrating, excuses I hear for not eating more fresh fruits and vegetables, is that it is too expensive to eat healthy. I would venture to guess that some of your coworkers are not unlike mine, who often buy one or two dollar microwave meals, and eat at least a couple of these a day, along with other "cheap" alternatives such as canned beans, hot dogs, etc. On a recent

trip to the farmer's market, I came away with several huge bags of produce, all for barely five dollars. Some of the prices I paid were as follows: five medium cucumbers for \$1, tomatoes \$1 per pound, rainier cherries \$2 per pound and bing for \$1.50 per pound, garlic five for \$1, huge zucchini 2 for \$1, plums for \$1 per pound, nectarines and peaches \$1.50

per pound. Sensing a trend? For anyone who says that shopping at a farmer's market or merely eating healthy for that matter is expensive, I challenge to compare the prices and quality of the produce at their local farmer's market with what they might find at any large chain conventional grocery store. I think most would be surprised at the outcome and also the affordability of choosing these locals markets. What is

more significant, however, is not only the savings you might accrue in your monthly grocery bill (budget), but also the broader impact that choosing to shop locally has on the economy, and on the nation as a whole. By taking steps to return to our nation's prior status of self-sustainability through creating strong communities that are fostered by local farmers and their interactions with the environment and the people they serve, we may be able to change the direction of this national epidemic of degenerative and diet-related diseases and looming drought that are plaguing our country today. The future of the health of our nation, our food supply, and our resources, all rely on a simple choice that starts in your kitchen. It may seem small, but the choices you make regarding where you buy your food radically affect the outcome of our future, both physically and economically, as an individual, as a community, and eventually as a nation. The next time you grab your grocery list and head out the door, where will you choose to shop?

ELEVATION TRAINING

Elevation Mask Training By Ali Crosbie

Training and living in environments over 8000 ft above sea level can increase ones red blood cell production. In turn increasing endurance at normal altitudes. Elite and professional athletes alike have known this training trick for years. Unfortunately reaping these benefits means uprooting and moving away for months on end. A feat most of us cannot do. However, advancements in technology has brought the same benefits of High Altitude Training down to sea level. It's simple, yet effective and best of all, no traveling to the Swiss Alps required. One such apparatuses is the ELEVATION Gas Mask by Training Mask, LLC. MMA phenom "Prince" Albert and his Advocates of the training mask claim they increase an athlete's endurance by both making the lungs work harder and decreasing oxygen supply to mimic high altitudes.

1 Masks add pulmonary resistance on the lungs. Masks cause the lungs to work up to 9 times harder than it would during normal exercise. This increased workload is said to strengthen the diaphragm and increase the surface area of alveoli. Alveoli are tiny grape-like sacs where gas exchange takes place in the lungs (oxygen and carbon dioxide). The larger the alveolar surface area, the better the gas exchange in the lungs. In turn every breath you take more oxygen gets into the bloodstream.

2 Masks increase red blood cell production in the body. Limiting the amount of oxygen to the body is said to trigger

the hormone erythropoietin (EPO) into increasing the production of red blood cells to aid in the oxygen delivery to the muscles and vital organs. Essentially, boosting total blood volume allowing oxygen to be moved more efficiently through your bloodstream. When the athlete then performs in normal oxygen environments they not only experience an increase in endurance but recovery time is also shortened.

3 Elevation Training Mask helps condition the lungs by creating pulmonary resistance, your diaphragm is strengthened, surface area and elasticity in the alveoli is increased. Elevation Training Mask may help get your breathing under control and help with lung stamina; it can be used during running, cycling (stationary for beginners) and other workouts.

If you train with less oxygen you can eventually go on for longer! Elevation Training Mask is great because it regulates how much air you can breathe in, making it so that you breath less oxygen, in turn making the air thinner (due to the low oxygen intake it's similar to altitude training).

Following are the changes that significantly boost Athletic Performance when using Elevation Training Mask.

- Increases in Lung capacity as your lungs

have to work 9 times harder to get the oxygen in.

- Increases anaerobic Thresholds
- Gas exchange becomes more efficient
- Energy Production levels rise
- Mental and Physical stamina increase



Elevation Training Mask mimics the effect of High Altitude Training. When top athletes want to improve in their performance, they go to high altitude levels to train, and when they come back to sea level to race, they are performing much stronger, faster, and have more endurance due to the type of training they have been doing prior to the event.

With reduced oxygen consumption the human body changes in several ways. The production of red blood cells and new capillaries (small blood vessels) increase the transfer of oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body. An important natural hormone involved in this process is EPO (erythropoietin). Some say GMT is also fantastic for anyone suffering from asthma, as most asthmatics tend to over breathe, with the gas mask on they will learn to control their breathing, and some say it can even cure it if done on a regular basis.

By: Ali Crosbie

Athelte Model: MMA phenom "Prince" Albert



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<http://rsc.org/Education/Teachers/Resources/cfb/transport.htm>
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10

Common Excuses for
Not Getting in Shape

By: Tiare Vincent

When was the last time you told yourself you would go to the gym, and then that turned into “I’ll go to the gym tomorrow” then eventually you forgot your gym existed? Much too often people see the gym as something to fear or dread, whether they are too tired from so many hours working or in school, or the kids schedules overtake their lives? Or maybe money might be tight this month and it will have to wait for a better time? Maybe you feel that you are so far off the edge of getting back in shape that its better to just throw out the scales and mirrors and pretend its not an issue. All of these are excuses. Getting your body in shape takes time and effort but like everything else that you want in life, you must try in order to succeed. Excuses only keep you from getting what you want.



**“Working
out is
boring...”**

1

“Working out is boring...”

Working out may become boring if you do things that do not interest you. A gym is not the only place to work out. Figure out what you love to do and incorporate it into a workout. If you do sign up at a gym, there are usually a variety of included classes to choose from like Kickboxing, Pilates, Zumba, Yoga, Strength-Training and Cycle or Bootcamp classes. Other options would include co-ed sports teams, hiking, running, walking, swimming, kayaking, surfing, snowboarding... I’m sure out of everything, you can find one passion to throw yourself into. Try not to think of working out as pain, and think of it as a way to experience new adventures. Sometimes a great way to make a workout more fun is to find a work out partner. This way it motivates you but makes the time fly by being with a friend. Even if you would rather go solo on the cardio machines... go at times when your favorite television shows are on, create a fun playlist for your iPod, or bring a magazine you’ve wanted to read. There are always ways to make working out more enjoyable and it starts with the ability to open your mind and not see it as “work”.

2

“I can’t afford a gym membership”

A gym is not the only way to work out. There are a vast amount of workouts that can be done without any equipment at all. You can go through magazines, and free online programs that will help you with ideas for workouts without even leaving your home. Here in the Northwest, we are blessed with surrounding mountain ranges; try to make the most of it by running or biking the trails as well as planning a list of hikes to complete. Just stepping out your door and walking is a start in the right direction as well as free. Take advantage of Mother Nature and how fortunate we are to have such a beautiful outdoor gym.

3

“I’m too busy”

This one is probably the most common excuse that should be diminished from your vocabulary quickly. You can make time for anything that is important to you in your 24-hour day, and just 15-30 minutes of physical activity is better than nothing at all. A great idea for the busy individual is to carry a planner. Plan your weeks ahead of time and you will start to treat your fitness as a priority. If you belong to a gym, they have most of their classes scheduled weekly, and it’s always a good idea to decide what you are interested in and plan it like a meeting. Plan for your lunch break to go on a walk with other healthy co-workers and try to start slowly by creating daily timeslots for fitness. This is one of the easiest ways for a busy person to make it a task that must be met. Think about how you spend your days...if you spend a lot of time in the week on Facebook or watching television then I assure you, you have time to workout. You should never be too busy to want to take care of yourself.

4

“I’m too hungover”

Being hungover is something we do when we are rebelling teens or living wildly in our twenties. You go out, get hammered, and complain the entire next day wasting it away dehydrated and in bed eating unhealthy food with no concept of self-control. Drinking can be fun but don’t let it prevent you from moving forward with your life. Alcohol is poison to the body and holds a lot of calories that will keep you from your fitness goals. Remember that you can have a fun fulfilling life without letting yourself get out of control by adding alcohol to your life. Moderation is key.



5

“I am too fat to go to the gym...”

In the beginning of everyone's fitness journey starts with a small amount of insecurity...sometimes a lot of insecurity. Remember to tell yourself this: Everyone cares about himself or herself so much that they probably don't even notice you. We are all self-involved and we all care about what others think of us. Sometimes you have to realize that you are your own biggest critic and that the things you notice, others do not. Don't worry about the people around you because they aren't watching you...put your headphones on and get moving! Everyone has to start somewhere.

6

“I always gain it back”

You probably always gain the weight back because you stopped. If you continued small amounts of working out and keeping a healthy diet, it would stay off. You need to see fitness as a change of lifestyle and be in it for the long haul. DO not try fad diets or diet pills because often, when you get off of these unnatural products, the weight will come back and

possibly even make you gain more than when you started. The best way to keep the weight off long-term is to stick with a fitness plan and practice clean eating: which is no white sugar or flour, no processed food, no enhanced artificial ingredients. Try to only consume what would give your body nutrients and energy and the weight will stay off, as well as drinking LOTS OF WATER!

7

“I never see improvement”

Slow and steady wins the race my friend. Repetition and determination will help you reach your goals. It's not about how fast you lose the weight but about how hard you try and have it adapt as apart of your lifestyle. In time it will come off and you will see improvement, just do not give up if you don't see change quickly. Change takes time but in the end it will be worth it. Things that happen too quickly are usually too good to be true and even the smallest bit of progress still is progress. You may not realize how

much your body needs this even if you cannot see it.

8

“I can't stay motivated”

Motivation is the key to success. If you are feeling unmotivated to workout, I suggest you make a vision board of your dream body and dream life. Really sit there and visualize what you want and what your goal is. Sometimes its good to have a healthy fitness-idol that you can aspire to be more like. Put this all on paper and make a list that describes the person you want to become. Hang this up and look at it everyday. Every time you feel lazy about a workout, look at it. Maybe take a picture of yourself at your heaviest as a reminder of why you need to change. See a vision of who you want to become, listen to music that gets you excited. Tell people your goals, and make an effort to motivate yourself to be better than the person you were yesterday.

9

“I'm too tired”

Have you ever heard that saying, “Someone busier than you is running right now?” Well its true. There are thousands of people who have busy lives and are exhausted who find a way to get moving. Even though it may seem dreadful at first, working out can actually give you more energy! You may not

think that is true now because you're not used to it but it does in fact give you more energy, which will create a deeper night's rest, which then gives more energy. When you are moving, your blood flow will improve, and the blood flow carries more oxygen, which brings nutrients to your muscles, which produce more energy. Energy makes energy.

10

“I have kids!”

It's understandable that children take up a lot of energy and attention but this is still an excuse and you should try to adjust your healthy lifestyle with your children. When the kids are watching TV, or a movie or playing, you can fit in some weight training or squats beside them. Maybe you could put them in the stroller and go for a walk or run, you could take them for a hike or to the park. Having kids can get busy, but you can create more activities for everyone to enjoy together that also improves health.

Remember that today is a new day. Yesterday is history and you have an opportunity to make a change rather than an excuse. You have the ability to get what you want with small steps in the right direction. If you start today, maybe in a year you will have the body you have always dreamed of because you started today. NO EXCUSES.



As a personal trainer I've used and heard of many different training systems and techniques, one system that has always delivered results in terms of performance, challenge and satisfaction for the athlete is Plyometric training.

Plyometrics, or Plyos, has been sweeping through the fitness industry for years now. This training style has been making a buzz again because of its fun, explosive, and result driven nature. The athletic and explosive training is a great way to burn calories, sculpt muscle, and most importantly increase performance. Plyometric workouts can include anything from jumping hurdles to jumping lunges. These athletic movements and exercises have shown to increase strength, power, reaction time, sports performance, and overall muscular and neurological conditioning. Aside from the exceptional performance boost athletes get from Plyos, they also get a challenging, high calorie burning, non-traditional workout. So whether your goal is to improve your vertical jump, increase your speed, or just challenge your body and mind in a new way, Plyometric training is the workout you have been looking for!

Plyometrics

Written By: Justin Hickman

Let's first take a look at the history and science behind the athletic training. The training is accredited to Soviet physiologist Yuri Verkhoshansky, who started publishing about Plyometric

Unlike resistance training, Plyos train your brain to communicate with your muscles in a different way.

training in 1964. Since then the training has been used by competitive athletes, Olympic competitors, gym members and all groups in between. The term Plyometrics is comprised

of the Greek words Plyo meaning "more" and metrics meaning "length" because the workouts are geared to give your muscles "more length".

When you lengthen and strengthen a muscle through Plyometric exercises you toughen the muscle fibers and condition the nerve cells to create quicker, harder,

and more explosive muscle contractions. A major factor in this is a powerful neurological component. Unlike resistance training, Plyos train your brain to communicate with your muscles in a different way. A traditional repetition has the brain telling our muscles to limit force when stretched. As you hold the stretch the muscle begins to lose power and then 'lifts' the weight through a series of contractions, recruiting the necessary muscle fibers along the way. A Plyometric movement varies in that it trains the muscle to release all the power at once in an explosive surge of energy.



& Improved Workout

Neurons learn that in certain situations your muscular energy is to be released all at once, exploding into a hard, full contraction in just a fraction of a second. This new way of the brain telling the muscle to contract can be broken down into the following:

As you complete a Plyometric movement the muscles involved must go through a series of contractions. These are referred to as the eccentric,



amortization, and concentric phases. The eccentric phase is when the muscle is lengthening. Rather than a slow stretch like a traditional rep where force is being limited, there is a rapid lengthening movement that builds up power, almost like compressing a spring. The muscle builds up energy in this brief pause or change of direction known as the amortization period. This is the where all the power and force accumulated during the eccentric phase peaks and is ready to be signaled for an explosive response. Next is the big bang: The concentric phase. All the energy and lengthening created during the eccentric and amortization phases are released in one explosive

contraction. Your muscle shortens and contracts as you exert maximum force in minimal time. This explosive movement is then repeated for a specified number of reps, creating a rapid and massive energy output from the muscles involved. This explosive stretch and flex of the muscle will create stronger, denser, more efficient muscles. Plyometrics are great for building efficient, explosive, powerful muscles. Plyos are a great workout but can be very challenging on the body. Before doing these exercises make sure you are cleared to train at high intensity and high impact. The basis of the





program is to train with athletic movements. Before attempting a plyo workout, go through a personal checklist of injuries and limitations to see which moves are right for you. Plyos, much like other forms of exercise, put a lot of stress and impact on joints, tendons, ligaments, and muscles. Make sure you are properly warmed up and stretched out before attempting advanced high impact movements. Proper surfaces are just as important. Mats or soft flat surfaces are ideal, rather than concrete or uneven terrain.

I like to start my clients anywhere from 1-4 days of plyos per week. Four days being the maximum for a very performance driven athlete. My most common use is for condition. 1-2 Plyo days can be a great way to mix up training, get in some high intensity cardio, and challenge your legs without heavy

plyos and weights together. Assess and pinpoint your program goals and find a qualified trainer to build a plyo workout that can take your fitness program to the next level!

Justin's Plyo Workout
Cardio and Conditioning
Emphasis: Complete the exercises in a circuit. 1 minute each for a total of 5 minutes. Once all exercises have been completed rest 2-5 minutes. Complete 2-3 circuits.

Power and Strength Emphasis: 3-4 sets of 15-25 'reps' on each exercise. Moderate rep ranges, frequent rest times, max effort and explosive force should be used.

Jumping Lunges
Set Up: Start by stepping into a lunge. The front knee and



heel should be aligned. Try to keep your back flat and chest up.
Execution: Push hard exploding through the front leg and jump into the air. Switch legs in mid air landing with the opposite foot forward. Repeat.
Note: Both feet should land at the same time. Focus on exploding straight up rather than forward like walking lunges.

Jump Squats
Set up: Space your feet shoulder width apart with hands out in front of torso and your toes pointing straight forward.

Execution: Squat down until your knee creates a 90 degree angle. Push off through both feet while swinging your arms down. Go for maximum height. Land and go directly back into a squat.

Leaping Step Ups
Set up: Set up a stair-step or bench that is sturdy enough to hold your weight. Start with one foot on the step. A safe height would be around the knee level.

Execution: Leap up by pushing off the foot on the step. Switch legs in mid air landing with opposite foot up on step. Focus on pushing off as hard as you can with the foot on the step as you repeat this motion.

Pop Squats
Set Up: Start with both feet slightly wider than shoulder width, toes pointing out at a 45 degree angle form straight forward.

Execution: Squat down putting all your weight on your heels. Keep an arch in your back. Quickly pop up by jumping. Repeat. Height is not important, go for an explosive quick jump.

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JERRY AHN



I had gained about 10 lbs in the last 6 months or so due to traveling and a sedentary work style being an aeronautical engineer. When my favorite pants weren't fitting me, I knew that I had to get back into shape. I hired a personal trainer that I knew could help me reach my goal. Initially, I only thought about losing the extra pounds I gained. Then, it came to mind that I needed to have higher goals this time and I decided to reshape my body to be photo-shoot ready in 100 days. It wasn't for a commercial or anything, but for my personal pride and something to look back at when I'm in my 60's or 70's.

Often times people set out improve their fitness level only to give up within days of starting. For many, getting in shape for the sake of getting in shape is not motivating enough to sustain the momentum to succeed. Your ability to self evaluate your motivation level and take the necessary steps to create the desire you need, is a vital

CREATE LEVERAGE WITH GOALS

key to long term follow through. Creating some sort of incentives or rewards that increase your desire may help you stick with your training program. What incentives or tools can you add to your goal list that will aid in your consistency and follow through.

- Plan a get away or vacation.
- Schedule a photoshoot
- Enter some sort of contest or event
- Visualization of the benefits you will receive by sticking with your diet and training program
- Think about how you will feel and the elevated energy level you will have through a healthier lifestyle. How will you in turn utilize this new energy to live a happier life? How will this new level of vitality translate to those around you?

These are just a few ideas. You know yourself better than anyone else and you know what motivates you to take your fitness to a new level. What is going to keep you dedicated?



Inspiring Transformation

Desire - Dedication - Determination

MICHAEL FREEMAN



Weight Loss Story

> NW Fitness Magazine came accross Michael Freeman at a bodybuilding competition. Michael caught my attention not because he had the best physique in the show. He had something far more valuable. He had best attitude I had seen back stage. It appeared as though he was having the time of his life and was incredibly outgoing. This is a guy I have to talk to. Im sure there is more to this guy than a good tan and a big smile. Sure enough, Michael Freeman had lost over 135 pounds and was proud of it. Why shouldnt he be?

WRITTEN BY MICHAEL FREEMAN

I started down a tuff but rewarding journey of losing weight and getting into shape. This first started when I met competative bodybuilder William

Curl. William told me he had been a trainer and competitive body builder for about eight years. I asked if he could help me lose some more weight. I had been working out on my own for about a year and I had lost about 20 pounds. William agreed to help guide me on this journey.

I started following a healthier diet and being very consistant with my exercise program. I lost 50 pounds over a six month period of time.

One day at my gym while working out, I mentioned to someone that I was toying with the idea of competing at the Seven Feathers bodybuilding Classic in October 2010. This person looked me up and down and smirked saying there was no way I could lose enough weight in 18 months to get on stage at the competition. The very next

day another person said the same thing to me. This upset me so much that it created more desire to prove to myself that I could do it.

I discused the idea with my coach. Once again, he agreed to guide me on this path. Getting ready for a bodybuilding competition gave me an opportunity to learn how to take control of my eating habits as well as my activity level. I used this control to influence not only my appearance but also my attitude and energy level. As I lost more weight my energy level continued to increase. I felt like a new man and wanted to share this gift with as many people as possible. I wanted others to experience the same thing that I had.

On 10/16/2010 I stepped on stage for my first ever bodybuilding competition. I weighed in that morning at 239 lbs down from 375 where I started 23 months prior, a total of 136 lbs lost. I received 3rd place in men's novice heavy weight. I may not have been awarded a first place trophy but I felt like I won the

championship.

I'm telling this story because I know there are a lot of people that want to loose weight and struggle everyday. I did nothing special I worked out and ate right. These are all things that anyone can do. I am still working out and plan to keep competing. I am so excited to see what I can do with my body and look forward to all the new changes and challenges. I am so thankful to those who supported me along the way. I also embrace those who doubted me.

I know that there are many people that want to get healthier and in better shape but feel they dont know where to start. I felt this way for so many years. The key is you just have to start and not give up. You will find your way and you will find the answers. Make healthy choices and get active.

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