



FIT Health & Fitness Review!

In This Issue:

May 2007

- FIT Client of the month! Rachel Yorke
- "Roles of a Coach" by Johnny Nguyen, BS, FIT Exercise Director
- "Exercising in the Heat" by Scott Kolasinski, MS, FIT Metabolic Director
- "Fitness Program Design" by Gabe Rinaldi MA, FIT General Manager
- "Muscles" by Johnny Nguyen, BS, FIT Exercise Director
- "The Perfect Client" – by Jen Pliemann BS, CPT

FIT Client of the month! Rachel Yorke

Age: 28

Goal: To Win the Indio Grand Prix

Results: 30,000\$ Grand Prix Champion 2007

Likes: Reading, Riding, Working-out

Dislikes: Falling off her horse, negative people

Client Comments:

I reflect back on July 20, 2005 and it was a day that I am not likely to forget for the rest of my life. I was in Pebble Beach showing in a 1.30m open class. I remember thinking, "I work at a great barn, Maple Leaf Farm. I work for two amazing people, Cathy and Alex Mendez and I am doing something I love, ride and train horses."

In a split second, I came off the horse, fell to the ground, and had my skull pierced with an inch and a half metal stud that had been inserted into the horses shoe for better traction. I laid on the ground for what seemed like an eternity, was heavily sedated, taken to Monterey Hospital, and the 1st person I saw when I awoke was my mum who had flown in from NZ that night. I incurred 6 large skull fractures and 4 smaller ones; I broke all 4-ear bones, shattered my eardrum, had breaks in my chin and cheek, and bruised nerves in my skull. The right side of my face was paralyzed and lost hearing and my balance was disrupted.

I think life is hard but you kind of have to make the most out of the cards you are dealt. I had a lot of work to do to get back on my feet and more importantly back in the tack. Twelve weeks after the accident Cathy encouraged me to go and visit Thom and Tracey at FIT.

Thom set about assigning me endless tasks to complete and



I was working out 5 days a week for a couple of months as I went about trying to achieve what Thom had challenged me to do. The accident made it very difficult to balance and so I started off with a lot of coordination work, both hand and eye and also trying to put one foot in front of the other without falling over. Training followed with a lot of rep work: lunges and back squats and stepping up on boxes. Thom introduced me to my new "best friend", the rower, for strength training chased by the UBE machine and bike. I moved into Olympic weights and unassisted pull-ups which was pretty cool. I still can't jump up and down too much, which is funny because I jump horses for a living, but that will come in time.

Coming off an injury is hard but it has made me stronger. Working out has made me a better rider because everything I have learned at FIT is useful in the show ring. Prior to the accident I was not a strong rider. Many times coming off of a big jump I would collapse in my upper body and it would take me a stride or two to get back in the saddle. Now I can land off of a 5' x 5'3 Oxer and be back in the saddle! The bigger the courses are the more technical, tighter and harder to ride, and being strong both physically and mentally allows you to work at full capacity.

So as I look back, 5 surgeries, 5 plates, 12 screws and 1 rod, I think I may just about be put back together. Over the last 16 months I have made FIT part of my life and routine. I want to thank Thom, Tracey, Frank, Manny and the Dougherty brothers and everyone else at FIT for helping me back on my feet, helping me back into the tack! July 20, 2005 was a day to remember!

"Roles of a Coach" by Johnny Nguyen, BS, FIT Exercise Director

Coaching, Training and their Role Dynamics

On any given weekend, millions of coaches suddenly come alive, tuning in to Sports Center in living rooms across the country, barking commands and orders as if they themselves should be coaching the game. On the fields of little league, soccer and touch football games, you find more coaches whose full-time jobs are anything but coaching. Some make great coaches for the kids. Others trade punches in front of them. Then there are high school, college and professional team coaches, and they all vary in talent and effectiveness, from the truly devoted to the drunken has-beens.

Coaches can be great for many reasons, fueled on by wonderful charisma and the tireless capacity to motivate and inspire. They coach by encouragement rather than by



ridicule, pushing the individual with positive guidance rather than with demeaning rhetoric. These coaches employ both real-world experience and theoretical knowledge, balancing both appropriately, while keeping an open mind to other training styles, as no one style is the best. These are the coaches that still influence some parts of your life, years or decades later, long after the coach-athlete relationship.

Other coaches, however, are as useful in their coaching position as a lampshade is on the sun. These coaches are placed into the coaching job through the infamous work-placement program called It's-Who-You-Know-And-Not-What-You-Know. They had "connection" that routed them through personnel, or they once participated in the sport, which helped greased their way in, but neither of which necessarily qualifies them to coach the sport. And yet there they are, barking commands and orders, running the show on dogmatic philosophy and rigid arrogance.

The National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) is a respected certifying body that requires members to have a college degree (or to be in the process of completing one) in order to test for the Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) certification. Most colleges now require their strength coaches to possess this certification in addition to a college degree, preferably in the exercise sciences. These college strength coaches typically work long hours with lots of travel, but their salaries often don't match the hours and serious nature of their work.

Training people is a matter that one must take seriously. Strength coaches and personal trainers not only change peoples' games and lives but also literally change their bodies – they prescribe training programs that cause neurological and organic alterations, occurring under the skin but visible to the eye. The stimulus for these changes is comparable to surgery; that is, while fitness training is done without a scalpel, it has every intention to change the structure and function of the body. A surgeon with a scalpel in hand has the same intention. And just as surgery is inherently risky, so too is exercise. A scalpel can cut a muscle; a barbell can wreak a tendon.

Of course, fitness training isn't brain surgery nor is it as pressing as a triple bypass. But training involves forces that can build up the body and improve its function, or break it down and disable it.

Coaches and trainers, therefore, need to understand proper progression, which is entirely based on exercise principles that have been established over several decades and discussed extensively in hundreds of textbooks. A coach or

trainer that loses sight of these principles has to contend with increased risk of injury to his athletes or clients, as well as their loss of motivation or surrender to burnout. When you continually struggle with inappropriate weight or intensity, you lose motivation simply because you always feel defeated... assuming, that is, you haven't suffered an injury before hand. Or the opposite: A coach or trainer, who doesn't exploit the amazing adaptability of the human body by pushing and progressing it at the right time, can fail to produce result. And what kind of motivation can that provide the athlete or client?

It comes back to understanding exercise principles – those that have been established not just by scholars but also by practitioners, not just in theory but also in application, and not just with intelligence but also with sensibility. Furthermore, there is a need to understand individualism, the fact that everyone is different and responds to exercise differently. Great coaches and trainers inject these principles into their training programs, rather than navigate solo by a dogmatic formula and gut feeling. And as far as I'm concerned, in the training world gut feeling is merely causal association, which is an element of intellect that is as primitive as the appendix organ, or as useless as the belief that rubbing a rabbit foot would bring luck with Webvan stock in 2001. This is the twentieth century, the age of information, not of luck, prayer or guesswork.

By the same account, many coaches and trainers unwittingly use causal association. If doing crunches work the stomach, then a thousand crunches will give you washboard abs. So a large portion of the workout session is devoted to hundreds of repetitions of crunches at low metabolic cost, while neglecting the more metabolically expensive exercises that help burn the layer of fat off the belly. Another causal association is that if exercising is challenging, then anything challenging must bring fitness result. So balancing on a wobble board, which is neurologically challenging, is suddenly the new exercise fad. Well, playing a piano is neurologically challenging, too, but I won't draw a link between this activity and physical enhancement; so, a balancing exercise cannot get me excited about burning off the cheese that I washed down with a bottle of cabernet sauvignon. Give me back squats and pull-ups, any day.

I see causal associations drawn frequently in the training industry. Some trainers and coaches build their entire training program around balancing exercises, to the point that some gyms look like a training ground for a circus of seals and elephants. Other coaches and trainers think that bodybuilding is the only method that brings fitness and improved sporting performance. Some coaches believe that doing biceps curls with 30-pound dumbbells while using

moderate tempo will build arm strength to support the Olympic-lifting jerk, which is typically executed with several hundred pounds at eye-blinking velocity. In other words, if curling 30 pounds works the arms, then it must follow to reason that the arms will then be strong enough to support several hundred pounds of barbell overhead, ballistically! The association is there, isn't it?

It is human tendency to define cause-and-effect. This tendency allowed us to evolve as a tool-using species, eventually developing technology that allowed us to further evolve as an advance society. Drawing associations is a crucial skill, but it can also make some of us draw casual connections between things that often have little or no relationship: weight training and the dumb jock; back squats and bad knees; the athlete's heart and cardiac dysfunction; black cats and bad luck, etc.

Of course, I can't fault a few coaches and trainers for the lack of qualification, or for training arrogance or causal associations, unless I also fault myself on occasions. But there is no excuse for any of us to think that a black cat crossing the street will bring bad luck, or to think that we can create an optimal training program devoid of exercise principles, train people without compassion for the human body, and dispense a formulaic program without regards to individualism.

"Exercising in the Heat" by Scott Kolasinski, MS, FIT Metabolic Director

When exercising in a hot environment (an environmental temperature of 30 degrees Celsius or more), even a little loss of fluid will impair performance and increases the possibility of suffering a heat injury. Everybody responds differently to heat stress, and the effects should not be underestimated.

While exercising for longer than an hour in the heat, we won't be able to totally avoid dehydration, but the following recommendations can help to offset large fluid losses:

- Thirst is the body's natural dehydration indicator. If you are thirsty, then it is too late, you are already dehydrated – avoid feeling excessively thirsty.
- Drink adequate amounts of water daily. The general guideline is one liter for every 1000 calories you consume. Therefore, if you are sweating profusely, you need to drink more to replace fluid loss.
- For every pound that is lost, drink two cups of water. To determine how much weight you've lost, take weight



measurements before and after profusely sweating or following the end of your day.

One important consideration with regard to hydration is urine output. Dark urine can be a sign of significant dehydration. Drinking fluids containing sodium may decrease urine output, particularly when dehydration becomes significant (less than two percent of body mass). A low amount of sodium can be found in sports drinks because it improves taste and stimulates thirst. Drinks like this with added electrolytes (like Cytomax and Hammer Gel) may be the best choice for significant dehydration. During long, hot exercise, sports drinks with standard sodium concentration may be ideal because studies have shown less fluid is consumed as taste decreases. The ideal sports drink depends on your sensitivity to the type of sugar source, your fitness level, the duration of exercise and the temperature and humidity of the environment.

Drinking fluids with a carbohydrate concentration of less than 8 grams (like soft drinks, energy drinks and fruit juice) during exercise delays gastric emptying and slows fluid delivery. Therefore, sports drinks are the best choices during long, hot exercise, especially where fluid demands are high, such as running, cycling, basketball, etc.

Be aware hydration is also necessary for proper digestion of food and cellular metabolic processes. Proper hydration impacts health on an assortment of levels.

"Fitness Program Design" by Gabe Rinaldi MA, FIT General Manager

In the fitness and strength and conditioning industry program design refers to the structure of the short-term and long-term training plan. This month I am going to share my general thoughts on program design. This might give you some insight into some of the factors your trainer considers when deciding what you should be doing in the gym.

The most important factor to consider is the purpose of training. Most people who exercise do so for one or more of the following reasons:

- Increase fitness to the highest level possible
- Reduce the risk of disease / become as healthy as possible
- Lose fat
- Gain muscle
- Improve sport performance
- Rehabilitate an injury
- Reduce the risk of a future injury (prehabilitation)



Let's take a closer look at each of these reasons someone decides to exercise.

Become as fit as possible

First we must define fitness. I think the best definition of fitness comes from CrossFit; i.e., your fitness is determined by your competence in each of the 10 recognized fitness qualities; i.e., cardiovascular / respiratory endurance, stamina, strength, flexibility, power, speed, coordination, agility, balance, and accuracy. By this definition an elite marathon runner might have exceptional endurance and stamina, but have horrible performance on the other fitness qualities and would therefore not be considered fit. The CrossFit approach to developing fitness is to use constantly varied high intensity functional exercises prescribed in a random fashion to optimize all 10 qualities. Functional activities are typically full body or multi-joint movement patterns that are useful in life. High intensity in this philosophy refers to heavy weights or doing as much work in the shortest amount of time possible (high average power output). The constantly varied part of the equation refers to a lack of structure for sets, reps, exercises, order of exercises, routines, etc. This broad and constantly varied stimulus better prepares one for the many unforeseeable challenges in life. The random part of this philosophy is that the program intentionally lacks structure. Structure tends to favor certain fitness qualities or patterns. Proper nutritional intake, recovery, sleep, and minimized stress are all essential. Someone new to this training should probably start with about 3 days per week and then build to 5 to 6 days per week. Extremely fit individuals can build up to even higher levels, but this takes years of adaptation.

Reduce the risk of disease / become as healthy as possible

I believe this goes hand and hand with becoming as fit as possible so long as we follow the definition of fitness given above. We must also consider the starting point for the client. In terms of health we want to move towards the CrossFit training philosophy, but it may take some time. Elite athletes are not what I would consider as healthy as possible, but most elite athletes train with specific qualities in mind at the exclusion of others. This is required for sport, but not health. Proper nutritional intake, recovery, sleep, and minimized stress are all essential to optimal health.

Lose fat

Proper nutrition is critical here. Your training in the gym can be absolutely perfect, but if you are eating poorly, then you won't reach your goal of losing fat. Proper nutrition is a

topic for another article, but quite simply eat lean meats (assuming you're not a vegetarian), a variety of veggies, some fruit, nuts, good quality oils, and cook as much of your food as possible. Eat the proper amount of Calories for you (enough to get the required nutrients and have energy to live and train effectively, but lose fat slowly and consistently) and you will be well on your way to your goal. In terms of training a mixture of anaerobic (without going into lots of specifics this is basically higher intensity shorter duration stuff) and aerobic (lower intensity) exercise should be done, but an emphasis should be placed on the anaerobic stuff and interval training. The exercises performed should be multi-joint functional movements that will improve health, fitness, and performance as well. Some example exercises for fat loss are squats, deadlifts, kettlebell swings, wall ball, slam ball, pull-ups etc. A variety of rep and set schemes should be performed. Training 3 times per week is a happy medium for many people, but the more frequently someone can train the easier it is to lose fat. Remember, there is such a thing as too much training.

Gain muscle

Once again nutrition is critical if your goal is to gain muscle. In order for your body to lay down new muscle tissue you must be eating more than your body needs to maintain your current weight. This means that it is tough to gain muscle and lose fat at the same time (unless you're completely new to training or taking performance enhancing drugs). Assuming you have your nutrition in order, then you should train with multiple sets and exercises for each muscle group. Different people respond better to different rep schemes, but in general bodybuilders train at lighter weights than strength athletes. A typical rep scheme might be somewhere between 8 and 12 reps, but there could be value in going higher or lower occasionally. The muscles should be given a few days to recover and therefore most bodybuilders will split up their workout plan by training different body parts on different days. This approach may yield a routine where the person trains 4-6 days per week.

Improve sport performance

The type of training to improve sport performance depends on the sport. For example, a sport like mixed-martial arts requires the fighter to be equally well rounded at nearly all the 10 fitness qualities listed above. A 100-meter sprinter does not need to be good at all 10 fitness qualities. In fact, if a 100-meter sprinter trained for endurance then they would negatively impact fitness qualities that are important for their event such as speed and power. As such, the exact method of training for sport performance depends on

the athlete's development and their needs based on the sport. In most cases a long-term annual plan is developed and the training program is written to peak at certain times of the year. This planned variation is called periodization and is an attempt to optimize everything that needs to be optimized at certain points in time (for example, right before the championships). A simple model of periodization could be working on hypertrophy (muscle size) for 3 months in the off season, then strength in the pre-season, and moving towards power as the season starts. In most cases athletes will use techniques such as Olympic-style weightlifting, plyometrics, sprint drills, powerlifting methods etc. to train in a functional manner. Athletes tend to train frequently because their goals require a highly refined neural muscular system and this is best accomplished when skills and movements are trained often. Most athletes will train 4-7 days per week.

Rehabilitate an injury

The type of training done to rehabilitate an injury depends on the exact injury. Typically many of the movements are done to isolate the injury site and seek to restore optimal function. As the rehab program progresses movements become more dynamic and athletic until the individual returns to pre-injury status or hopefully even better. Unfortunately in some cases people never return to their pre-injury status, but the body is a remarkable machine and is able to compensate in many ways so an individual can in many cases still enjoy physical activity.

Reduce the risk of a future injury (prehabilitation)

This refers to training in an attempt to decrease the likelihood of sustaining an injury in the future. The exact type of training will depend on the person and their lifestyle or sport. Generally speaking the training should develop strength and stability in every joint in the body while at the same time optimizing mobility. Movement patterns should be chosen that train the nervous system to properly control the body in a variety of situations encountered in life and sport. Injuries often occur during rapid deceleration of the body or when things don't go exactly as planned. These movements can be trained with proper technique in a controlled environment and then the intensity can be raised as proficiency develops. When training occurs in this fashion, then injuries can be minimized. Unfortunately we can never guarantee someone won't get hurt, but proper training certainly helps.

Final Thoughts

This is just a very general representation of some of the things we consider as trainers working with a wide variety

of clients. Every trainer might have a slightly different concept of program design, but at FIT we tend to use a large variety of functional movements and we seek to improve technique, increase intensity, develop work capacity, optimize lifestyle, and reduce the risk of injury with all of our clients. The exact implementation of this is left up to each trainer and their client. Please ask your trainer (or me) for more information if you want clarification on this topic.

"Muscles" by Johnny Nguyen, BS, FIT Exercise Director

The goal of the first single cell organism is movement, by internal fluid mobility and by external displacement. Along the way, movement became more complex for the sole purpose of survival, and so the single cell morphed into multiple cells, and this continued for millions of years until what we end up with are billions of cells in each of us, doing their magic to keep us breathing in the air, erecting skyscrapers, driving in rush-hour traffic, and walking into the sunset on a white-sand beach.

The magic that facilitates locomotion originates in the system of nerve cells, the center of them packed tightly into a global complex of neural network called the brain, descending from which is a spinal cord that moderates information to and from the thousand of nerve tentacles that sprawl into almost every corner of the body, some of which directing our legs to walk along the ocean.

The nervous system is the master that tells our body and all its organs what to do and how to do it. Some of these organs include the heart, liver, kidneys, and muscles, the very drive-system that allows mobility.

Without muscles, we'd be a sack of bones, tissues, and blood. This is as exciting as being a vegetable. Sadly, though, many people who are stuck in a sedentary lifestyle aren't too far removed from a vegetative state. Muscle wasting comes with advancing age and is hastened by inactivity, leaving the body to resemble a sack of, well, potatoes. And to make the situation more burdensome, our society is in the business of convenience, and as such we enjoy the reward of getting more from doing less, but it ultimately promotes an inactive lifestyle that brings on prematurely deconditioned muscles. Therefore, it is important in our culture to keep muscles healthy and functional through physical training.

From hunting and gathering to walking everywhere as part of a day's work, if we consider that movement was such a



natural part of human evolution, then health clubs and gym memberships seem so contrive in the grand scheme of humanity; but they are for the most part good medicine for a society that weaves so tightly into its social fabric the living room couch. So get up, get to the gym and work those muscles.

There are three types of muscle tissues. They are smooth, cardiac, and striated.

Smooth muscles are considered involuntary muscles, because they generally don't listen to what we consciously tell them to do. These muscles go on about their business, digesting food within the intestines and moving along undigested material, transporting air within the bronchi while turning away unwanted guests, routing blood within the vessels and directing how much goes to where, and guarding the doorway to the soul by adjusting the size of the iris in the eye. And it's good to know that smooth muscles also control the bladder so we don't pee our pants. These muscles do their work silently, and they can keep going long after we've fallen asleep.

Cardiac muscle is found only in – you guessed it – the heart. Like the muscle in our legs, the cardiac muscle responds positively to exercise, increasing not only in fiber size but also, as a whole, enlarging the cardiac chambers, favorably allowing the heart to achieve a lower work rate and greater stroke volume while under load. The cardiac muscle is also involuntary, automatic and rhythmic, and the only muscle that doesn't take a coffee break for the duration of your entire life. There is no other muscle that has greater endurance than the one you have beating in your chest.

Striated muscle tissues are known in Gray's Anatomy (the book, not the television show) as "striped muscles," because of their compartmentalized structure. Each muscle fiber resembles a locomotive train, sectioned the entire length of the fiber. Muscle fibers are packaged in bundles within bundles, all the way down to the microscopic level where they house contractile filaments called actins and myosin. When triggered by a nerve impulse, a sequence of chemical reactions occur, ending ultimately in these contractile filaments clawing at and sliding over each other to create a mechanical contraction. A twitch occurs and then a movement, and we skillfully negotiate the gentle slope on the white-sand beach. Striated muscles are voluntary. Unless we've had one too many shots of tequila, we can control striated muscles at will.

Because striated muscles originate from, attach to, and, therefore, move the skeleton, they are often called skeletal muscles. Both the muscular and skeletal systems give us

our humanly shape, and while the skeleton gives the muscles leverage to pull on for mobility, the muscles give the skeleton the load it needs to build and maintain its strength and density. Strong muscles help to produce strong bones, and strong bones allow the muscles to work optimally – a symbiotic relationship that we'd be wise to nurture and strengthen through physical activity.

About 700 skeletal muscles are found in the human body, and a healthy person can control them without consciously activating a single one. Generally, we just focus on a task, and the body automatically selects the appropriate muscle or groups of muscles to do the job. Whether it's pouring a glass of water, carrying a grocery bag or snatching a barbell, muscles are recruited to various degrees. And while most of us may think that carrying grocery is an easy task now, this won't be the case in our golden years when carrying even our own bodyweight becomes challenging, because without continued conditioning, muscles naturally weaken with age, and diminish. As much as it is poetic to age gracefully, it is the ability to walk into the sunset on a white-sand beach without a walker that creates a far more poetic scene. Exercise gives us this chance to enjoy the last few warm days in life's late season.

Until then for many of us, exercise keeps our muscles strong, lean, and functional, protecting us from injury, and exercise ultimately helps us to defend against the ravages of disease. Give us our health clubs and gym memberships.

"The Perfect Client" – by Jen Pliemann BS, CPT

The perfect client walks thru the door of FIT five to ten minutes prior to a workout with a smile on his/her face, gives me and everyone else in the group a hug or a high five, and immediately asks "what do we get to do today!!??" The perfect client asks if we can "stop talking and get started." He/she gives 110% every time he/she is at FIT. I have yet to hear a complaint about what we are doing for the day. The perfect client stops mid squat as I praise his/her efforts and says, "aw, thanks Jen, thanks for telling me good job." He/she looks in the mirror at the end of a the hour, turns to one side and pats his/her belly, turns to the other side and looks to me with little tears in his/her eyes and exclaims, "JEN, I JUST LOOK AMAZING!!!" At the end of the hour, I can't WAIT to see the perfect client again.

Six months ago I found four perfect clients: FITBuddies. For those of you who have not seen us in action or heard about us (you can hear us a mile away every Wednesday



from 4:30-5:30pm), FITbuddies is a group of individuals with characteristics of Down Syndrome and Autism. I was recently asked for an update on the progress and success of the group. After six months, I feel I could write a book on these four unique individuals. The stories above about the perfect client are truly representative of a typical hour, but there is so much more.

In order to understand the progression of this group, I think it is first important to understand my goals and purpose for starting this group. As a trainer, I have some of the basic goals for FITBuddies that I have for all my clients: strength, coordination, flexibility, weight loss (depending on the individual), power, endurance, and so on. We have also made some personal goals that FITbuddies came up with themselves. Some examples include learning how to jump rope, running a mile without stopping, push ups!!, and "getting strong so I can find a 'special' girl" (one of my favorites). This is why my job is easy: I have some of the most motivated clients with fairly simple, straight forward goals.

My goals for FITbuddies extend beyond these "basic" goals. Many individuals with Down Syndrome, a genetic disorder marked by an extra chromosome, face many physical obstacles. These physical challenges can include extreme deficits in motor skills, poor balance, poor overall muscle tone, poor reflexes, and heart conditions (many are prone to CHF, chronic heart failure). Many individuals with autism, a neurological disorder, face either hypoactive or hyperactive sensory responses. These may in turn result in "abnormal" behaviors such as aggressive behaviors toward themselves or others, rocking back and forth, making abnormal noises and many more self stimulatory behaviors. I feel that thru high intensity exercise some of these behaviors can be modified or even eliminated and that these individuals can learn more appropriate behaviors to help regulate their moods.

These conditions are some of the main reason I started FITbuddies. When the average person is told they have something wrong (heart condition, overweight, poor muscle tone, depressive behaviors, etc), they are often told seek physical activity. Their options are endless. There are trainers, gyms, and classes on every corner for them. When a parent is told their child has Down Syndrome or Autism, they essentially receive the exact same advice yet their resources are very limited. This leads me to my final reason for starting FITbuddies. I know I am not going to be the individual that finds the cause of autism or better yet a cure. I know I will most likely not be the one who finds a way to prevent Down Syndrome. I CAN help make people more aware. I feel if people have a better understanding of these disorders and spend more and more time with these

amazing individuals then eventually they will see that they are "just like you and me." That is why I started this group and why I am writing this article.

These individuals and their parents face many challenges and acceptance and awareness in the community is one thing that may make their life a little bit easier. After getting to know these individuals better, you may soon realize you too can learn a lot from the perfect client.

Finally, the big question: has FITbuddies been successful?

Success: "To Laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children...to leave the world a better place...to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded. "

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Stop in for an hour and you will see success. These kids never stop laughing (neither do Michelle or I). They are constantly cheering each other on. The gain in confidence among the group is amazing. This is the most motivating group I've worked with. And yes, I think they make FIT a better place! A few weeks ago, my college roommate stopped in for the hour and is now looking into starting a group in Wisconsin. FITbuddies is growing!

We are working every week to reach our goals: both theirs and mine. After six months, most are finally able to jump rope at least once or twice in a row. Running, overhead squats, sit ups, push ups, and rowing are requested on a weekly basis. I reach my goals by targeting their basic goals. I love it and they do too.

Last but not least, a big thank you to YOU! YOU have helped make FITbuddies successful. Clients and trainers have been nothing but supportive and are constantly checking in with us to see how we are doing. Thanks to Michelle who helps me out every week. I couldn't do it without you! Also, I recently have picked up a new part time job, as many of you know, working as a behavioral therapist for children with autism for I CAN TOO Learning Center. I am still working full time at FIT but now spend the afternoons at individual's homes working with children and their families on the autism spectrum. Thanks to my clients and trainers who have been very supportive during this transition. I am learning more and more everyday and the best part about it, is so are you. I have read more articles and seen more shows on autism since I've started this job and the information is coming from my clients! I love it. I constantly receive emails from YOU telling me about a show airing next weekend. One of my clients even went to the library to make copies of an article for me!!

Thank you, thank you, thank you. This is why I am doing what I am doing.

This, for me, is SUCCESS.

For more information on autism:

www.cureautismnow.org

www.autismspeaks.org

For more information on Down Syndrome:

www.ndss.org

www.ncpad.org

For more information regarding FIT:

Visit - www.focusedtrainers.com

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