

Gym Rat Rantings

by Bob Ring



The Finer Points of Exercise

Now that I've been exercising at the Fit Center for a couple of years, I feel qualified to share some of the finer points of my exercise education:

Let's take the correct amount of exercise, the number of reps of a particular move. Instructor Jonni says, "We must exercise those muscles to the point of fatigue. That's the best way to strengthen our bodies." I don't know about you, but in my business (aerospace), if you exercise an airplane wing to the point of fatigue, it falls off. Is Jonni touting a weight loss program too?

And then there's Lynne O., whose mantra is, "You must have proper form; this is key to the effectiveness of exercising." Lynne is always saying things like, "Pull up your knee-caps," "Keep your ears over your shoulders," and "Keep your ribs away from your hips." Doesn't she realize that these body parts are connected??? At least until they get fatigued and fall off.

A few exercises are actually combative. Sometimes the yoga class next door does their "laughing" exercise, producing riotous laughter that drowns out Lynne's directions for several minutes. With a gleam in her eyes, Lynne retaliates by telling us to get out the step boards. Soon 30 of us are stepping up and down in cadence on these boards, making a horrendously loud noise, with Lynne in the background yelling, "Harder, louder!" More than once a white flag has appeared through the door from the yoga class.

Some exercises are more complicated than simple stepping. One of Lynne's favorites goes something like this: We stand to the right of our chairs, standing on our left foot, head over shoulders and hips in a straight line, holding weights in each hand. We are then told to raise our right knee, then tap our heel in front; right knee up again, toe to the side; knee up, toe back. Oh yeah, during each move we're supposed to be doing bicep curls with the hand weights. The most surprising thing to me is that most of us can actually do this exercise! Rumor has it that by next month we'll be trying this with our eyes closed and standing one-footed on our chairs.

There's complicated, and then there's impossible. I challenge the Fit Center's exercise instructors with the following (you try it too):

While sitting in a chair, lift your right foot off the floor and make clock-wise circles with it.

While doing this, draw the number "6" in the air with your right hand.

You won't be able to keep your foot from changing direction!