

THE FIT-LESS INDUSTRY

Fads, Frauds and Foolishness Exposed

By Chris Cosich

What has become of the notion of exercise? The dictionary defines exercise as rigorous physical activity to develop fitness. It is no coincidence the word is derived from exertion. At least that used to be the case. Gyms and Health Clubs once were a place that you could enter and practically get a contact high of adrenaline, endorphins and enthusiasm before even beginning your own workout. It was electric. Nowadays, too often health clubs have the pulse of a dentist's office.

Exercise has become big business. Health Clubs are no longer owned by those who see fitness as lifestyle. They're owned by corporations. In the 1990's, the Fitness Industry became a tight second to the computer boom. Today, Fitness centers often appear more like a VIP Lounge of American Express Centurion Card members. They are filled with members who seem to perpetually have a towel and water bottle with them but never break a sweat. These fluff facilities abound. In Manhattan alone, three franchises come to mind. They boast state of the art equipment, every amenity that a five-star hotel offers and more.

I understand the philosophy in trying to make gyms less intimidating and more appealing to the average couch potato or martini-lunch executive, but the trouble lies with the fact that the truth has been butchered in the process. Health Clubs cater more to what the clients "thinks" they need to do to get in shape versus the reality. Sessions with a trainer in these clubs range from 70-90 dollars an hour (the going rate) and beyond. Here's the clincher. The house gets anywhere from 30-60% of that. Any reputable trainer worth their knowledge wouldn't work for this. So, you have luxurious facilities staffed with "trainers" who received a certification on the fast track. . .week-end seminars or online courses. Suddenly, people who had an entirely different occupation, possibly only weeks or months earlier, are trusted with a member's physical well-being! I'll reveal this nonsense later in the story.

Like the comedian Lewis Black, whose shtick is teeth clenching angst at the idiocy of certain social or political situations in

America, this is now how I feel about the state of the fitness industry. If I have to stand by and bite my tongue any longer, I'm going to have an aneurysm! Nothing raises my ire more than people who call themselves fitness professionals perpetuating lies, half-truths, and fads that have no basis in scientific or physiological fact. The travesty in America is that people who have an honest desire to get healthier and change their body composition (i.e. lose body fat and elevate lean muscle) are being misled by the newest trends. It's as if the science of getting in shape and staying that way changes on a semi-annual basis like the fashion on a Milan runway model.



