

WITNESS FITNESS

the 'Elite' way
to get in shape

GARTH MCLEOD LETS LOOSE A SMILE THROUGH CLENCHED TEETH. Dripping with sweat, he chuckles along with trainer Laurie Carver. The two have just finished a cardio boxing exercise, a non-stop deluge of punches and kicks coming from McLeod on mark from Carver's supportive taunts. McLeod catches his breath, but only for a short moment. To keep his heart rate up, Carver has him jog back to the gym where they will continue their strenuous training session with constant movement and intense focus on different muscle groups.



"This is hard work. It's absolutely exhausting, but I wouldn't have it any other way. I am a results driven person and with Elite Fitness, I achieve results with greater efficiency," says McLeod. The Bellevue training studio has done amazing things for McLeod, who manages his bed and breakfast in his native New Zealand from his home in Kirkland. McLeod says he's more in shape now in his mid 40s than when he was in his 20s, all because of his determination and the unique approach to training at Elite Fitness. "Passion infuses the gym, and when you're there you feel like you are a part of it," he said.

THE SKINNY

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, roughly three out of five Americans carry an unhealthy amount of excess weight and only 30 percent of Americans get the physical activity they need to remain healthy. Dave Johnson, along with his team of trainers, is determined to bring fitness to the lives of local citizens.

Johnson is president at Elite and he and close friend and fellow trainer, Alex Wasserman, are co-owners of the business. The personal training studio offers a professional, team approach to training. The studio features all the state of the art equipment of larger gyms, adequate floor space, and an upbeat atmosphere. >>

the philosophy

Johnson explains the Elite Fitness philosophy with the acronym **T.A.S.E.**

Team – trainers work as a team to help clients realize their fitness goals; also refers to the team of local alliances with massage, physical therapy, nutrition, and chiropractic services

Accountability – the fitness partnership is a 50-50 relationship. While trainers provide the knowledge and guidance, clients must make use of the provided tools to help them realize their goals. Heart rate monitors, food logs, and periodic fitness evaluations, which includes body composition and weight checks, strength tests, and a cardio test.

Systems – refers to the circuit training methods and techniques used by trainers; the gym uses state of the art equipment in a variety of ways, but trainers often mix it up by taking clients outdoors to the nearby park where they can shadowbox or push benches and over to the Meydenbauer stairs to add more umph to the cardio exercises.

Enjoyment – Johnson maintains that working out should be fun. The staff uses high energy and music (client's preferences) to create a stimulating workout that shuns mindless chitchat and boring routine.

THE WORKOUT

Elite Fitness uses an efficient 60 minute, circuit training approach. With this style, you can expect a decrease of body fat in a safe, effective manner, and increases in:

- cardiovascular endurance output
- muscular strength and tone
- core endurance
- flexibility

<< There is a marked difference, however: the idea that the team training method outweighs working out with a single trainer. We rotate trainers between clients. For example, if a client trains with us three days per week, he or she will have a different trainer every time,” said Johnson. One would think this method could become impersonal, and miscommunications could surface between trainers about a client’s schedules or goals. Not so, explains Johnson. “Our team is extremely knowledgeable about every client that trains here, and we have frequent meetings about our clients, their goals and their methods of training.”

According to Johnson, 91 percent of his clients join Elite Fitness in order to gain some sort of confidence, whether it be “to lose weight” or “to get in shape.” The remaining nine percent are athletes, are in need of rehabilitation, or those who want personalized range of motion exercises, such as the elderly.

Every new client undergoes an extensive consultation before the start of training. Trainers discuss goals, injuries, athletic history and roadblocks. No matter the fitness level, the consultation process is always consistent. Once the consultation is finished, trainers put together a detailed plan that includes an array of exercises and health and nutrition tips. Unlike other gyms, Johnson doesn’t allow his trainers to sell supplements, insisting on exercise and proper nutrition to do the job.

Johnson agrees the road to fitness can be a gradual one. “Baby steps are important, especially with mental habits. We try to give clients the tools to motivate themselves.” He recalled a story about one of his female clients, Ana Southwick of downtown Bellevue, a mother who desired >>

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Pilates at Pro Sports Club

PRO SPORTS CLUB - Since opening its doors in 1973, PRO Sports Club has grown into one of the premier health clubs in the United States. The club is continually voted the "Eastside's Best Family Health Club" by Citysearch.

Much more than just a health club, its immaculate 272,000 square-foot facility is home to a range of sport specific courts, state-of-the-art pools and exercise rooms, restaurants and a resort-style spa. There are a variety of programs, classes and activities such as triathlon training, kids' gymnastics, martial arts, and even dodgeball. For more information, call 425.885.5566, or check out the plethora of fitness options at www.proclub.com.

THE LITTLE GYM - Get your kids off to a healthy start with The Little Gym. Professionally developed, non-competitive curriculum has been designed to build motor skills while having fun, and simultaneously fostering enhanced emotional, intellectual and social skills. Programs include movement, music, gymnastics, sports, exercise, games, listening and cooperation for children ages 3 to 12. Each child receives individual attention and progresses at their own pace. There are several locations throughout the Eastside. For more information, visit www.littlelegym.com.

THE YOGA BARN - Many gyms offer Yoga, but this local business specializes in it. Yoga reduces stress. It improves flexibility and muscle tone, increases circulation, relieves chronic pain and alleviates anxiety-related disorders. Best of all, it cultivates physical awareness, refreshes your energy, and offers a little vacation from the everyday grind. With studios located in Issaquah and Fall City, your fitness fix is just a short drive away. Contact 425.427.0038 or visit www.yogabarn.com for more information.

KRAV MAGA EASTSIDE TRAINING CENTER - Krav Maga is the official self defense and fighting system of the Israeli Defense Forces and various police departments throughout the U.S. Word is Brad Pitt used this approach to get into shape for his role in the feature film "Troy." Learn more about Krav Maga at www.kravmaga.com.



FITNESS FOR EVERYONE

Personal training may not be for you. Everyone is different. Lucky for you, the Eastside offers an abundance of fitness options for everyone.

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to get back into shape. She set the goal of running the Seafair Half Marathon this summer, and used her family as inspiration - "imagine what my family would think of me," she said. With the dedicated help of the Elite Fitness crew, the Eastside mother is on her way to realizing her goal and is pleased with her results.

A big challenge that Johnson and Elite Fitness face is finding the right team that can adhere to the gym's high standards. "It's more than simple qualifications with our trainers. Recruitment for us is year-round. There are no independent contractors. We look for supportive people who are interested in working in a personal, intimate atmosphere," he explained.

Under Johnson's and Wasserman's leadership, Elite Fitness has experienced a 100 percent growth increase since June 2006. Johnson praises his trainers for their performance. "The job of my trainers, basically, is to retain our clients. And they do that with their dedication to their clients' health and well being," he said.

LEADING THE WAY

Leadership in Elite Fitness is obviously important to Johnson. He pinpoints the beginnings of his desire to become a leader to his upbringing in Port Orchard and his athletic endeavors when he was young. He developed his leadership skills through sports, and that's where he came to realize the importance of fitness. He continues to be an avid basketball player, and has even won several slam dunk contests, most notably winning the prestigious Hoop It Up NBA Dunk Contest in 2003 and facing current New Orleans/Oklahoma City Hornets player Desmond Mason in an exhibition dunk contest. >>

when you go

Elite Fitness Training is located in Bellevue at 136 102nd Ave. SE, Suite 101. The training team includes Dave Johnson, Alex Wasserman, Laurie Carver, JP Ramirez, Lara Buchan, Kevin Wallner, Travelle Gaines, and Paul Ignacio. Call 425.451.3444 to set up an appointment or visit www.elitefitnessbellevue.com for more information.



Dave Johnson & Alex Wasserman



<< Johnson, now 30, has been a personal trainer for 11 years. Before starting Elite Fitness with Wasserman, he ran the Redmond Athletic Club for several years. He couldn't be more excited in sharing his knowledge to help others realize their fitness potential. "For a personal trainer, passion is definitely requisite. You have to want to inspire. And naturally you have to develop the skills for yourself along the way before you begin to work with others," he said.

Johnson plans to continue developing his relationships with his clients and trainers on the Eastside. "I love the Eastside and my clients. When it comes down to it, though, people are people. Sometimes they're going to need a push to get healthy, and that's what we're here for."



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PHOTOGRAPHY