



Health & FITNESS

Looking for the latest fitness fad? They're all here

By JESSICA APPOLO
Post Staff

BACK MOUNTAIN - Every weekend television viewers are overwhelmed with the latest health and fitness infomercials, from veteran Richard Simmons to the newcomer Billy Blanks. They all promise the tools to a better body and a better attitude. But you don't have to turn on the tube to find them; they're available right here in the Back Mountain.

This year the fitness buzz is Tae Bo, a kickboxing craze started by World Martial Arts Champion Billy Blanks. This workout combines a series of self defense and boxing moves set to music and has celebrity followers like Brooke Shields and Carmen Electra. Back Mountain martial arts instructor Gary Barnes knows all about this kickboxing craze. He has cross trained the Lehman girls soccer team with this method for two years. The Lady Knights have described it as the most intensive and most fun cross training they have ever completed. Cardio-kickboxing classes are everywhere, but Barnes Kenpo Karate holds classes at the school and at College Misericordia.

For those of you seeking an alternative workout that involves a lot less sweat, Tai-Chi is gaining some new attention. Tai Chi is the ancient Chinese practice of "mov-

ing meditation". The benefits of this workout include improved circulation, stress reduction, and muscle toning. Paul Kurlancheek, of the new alternative store Mind, Body and More, knows the benefits of Tai Chi firsthand. When Kurlancheek was 30 years old, he was diagnosed with a severe knee problem and was offered little relief from traditional medicine. Calcium deposits and water on

the knee prevented Kurlancheek from doing most everyday things because of the limited range of motion.

After exhausting traditional methods and even acupuncture, with no improvement, Kurlancheek turned to Tai Chi. Today Kurlancheek has full range of motion in his knee and very few twinges of pain on rainy days. The calcium deposits have dissolved.

Kurlancheek testifies that all his physical symptoms began to dissipate with the practice of Tai Chi. Not only is Kurlancheek a 17-year student of this technique, he's also an instructor at St. Therese's Church in Shavertown every Thursday morning. Kurlancheek expects to open another location of Mind, Body and More in Tunkhannock some time in April.

New workout machines and calorie burners are constantly being introduced to gyms. Get to the gym early or plan your workouts around off peak hours if it's the Elliptical training machines that you want to try. This machine offers a low impact total body workout. Most gyms only have one or two of these machines on hand. Students and members of the Penn State University, Wilkes-Barre campus gym are able to benefit from this new cardio machine.

Another fitness craze that will leave you dripping is a Spinning class. Spinning is a modernized stationary bike that uses visualization of all terrain drills. These classes are not for beginners. Spinning is a challenge for those

already in great shape and requires a strong mental attitude to follow along with the imagined courses. It's a first time experience that won't be forgotten soon. This is an intensive workout that can burn nearly 700 calories in a 45 minute session.

Spinning was created by "Johnny G" of California. A true spinning class must be instructed by a certified teacher and taught on Schwinn "Johnny G" spinning cycles. The nearest spinning class in the Back Mountain can be found at Smith's Country Store in Beaumont, where Jonah "Skip" Smith teaches all ages and levels from competitive high school athletes to seniors up to age 82.

Finally, a workout that never goes out of style and can accommodate all fitness levels ... walking. The new phrase is "power walking." Power walking means keeping a fast, quick pace, breathing under control, being able to speak but not able hold a casual conversation. Power walking also involves pumping the arms and changing the course. Power walkers hike asphalt hills, country paths, city blocks, tracks, parks ... anything while keeping the heel-to-toe pace. Stretching and adding short jogging intervals intensify the levels. Meditation and problem solving are great alternative ways to keep the mind active during the workout.

FIVE NATIONAL FITNESS FADS and where to find them in the Back Mountain

National Tae Bo by Billy Blanks instructional/exercise video set	Back Mountain Barnes Kenpo Karate Cardio-kickboxing class Gary Barnes, instr.
Tai Chi "moving meditation"	St. Therese's Church Tai-Chi 10 a.m. Thur. Paul Kurlancheek, instr.
Elliptical Machine Elliptical Motion/glider "cardio/toning workout"	Penn State University Lehman Campus Gym
Spinning Class "power cycling and visualization"	Smith's Country Store Beaumont
Power Walking race walking, arm swinging alternate	Anywhere Off-road, street hiking, terrain and level indoor/outdoor tracks...

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