

SPECIAL FEATURE

NETWORK MEETS ... PETER STIRLING-BENSON – NEW MANAGING DIRECTOR FOR FITNESS FIRST AUSTRALIA

Network recently met with Fitness First Australia's new MD, Peter Stirling-Benson, to gain an insight into the thoughts and visions of the man who has stepped into one of the most prominent positions in the Australian fitness industry.

Congratulations on your new role with Fitness First. You have a wealth of business experience with household-name companies including TV1, Galileo and Ticketek, but you don't have a background in fitness. How do you feel this may advantage, or disadvantage you in your new role?

I've led three organisations now, my first CEO role was launching TV1 during the launch of the Pay TV industry in Australia in 1996 – so that was very much a start-up. Then I went on to run Galileo, a travel technology company which the airline owners ultimately wanted to sell at a competitive price. At Ticketek my role was to turn the business around, and transform it into the much more marketing driven organisation it is today. In contrast, Fitness First owns the service it provides – we are not an intermediary – so that's probably the biggest change from my previous role.

To answer the question of what I can bring to this business, it's very much my experience of leading service businesses, typically market-leaders, with powerful brands, servicing customers in a competitive environment – always understanding that Australians hold freedom of choice very dear to their hearts. For example, Australians are typically well-travelled, and they'll come back to Australia from overseas and they'll say 'We remember that lovely meal we had in Paris, that fantastic show we saw in London – and we want it here'. The fact that we're down here in the bottom right-hand corner of the world absolutely makes no difference whatsoever. I think the customer expectation of good service is right up there

with world standard – and if one wants to play in that space in Australia, one has to be very cognisant of that. And when one is a leader, as Fitness First is, then one also has to be very aware of the importance of being innovative. If one isn't innovative, then someone else more deserving will come in and take the lead! These are some of the principles I have learned in my previous roles.

That leads me to my next question; how does Fitness First plan to deal with the impending arrival of the cheap, low service, 'box' style clubs which have been growing in the US?

At the end of the day, if I can make an analogy, if you look at the airline industry and Ryanair/Jetstar, there is a way of new players coming into the market and appealing to a brand new segment. I would argue that the box clubs wouldn't appeal to your typical Fitness First club member, so it's indirect competition. The thing I like about indirect competition is that it expands the awareness of fitness in Australia, and there's also every reason to believe that someone who is a member of a box club may move up into a Fitness First environment in due course. The low service end is not a place which Fitness First has any plans to occupy, but it's a valid business space that will serve to grow the fitness market, which has got to be a good thing for everybody.

And at the other end of the spectrum, how does Fitness First plan to deal with the arrival of other mid-range chain clubs, like Virgin Active?

In relation to a direct competitor, such as Virgin, Fitness First's strategy will not be



driven by competition, but by our desire to be the best in our class. We want to have the best clubs, in the best locations, offering the best service and the best value for money. So long as we're fulfilling those criteria then competitors will come and some will go. So from our point of view, we'll keep all our competitors on the radar of course, but we're mainly focussed on what we want to be and what we can become.

What are your immediate plans for Fitness First?

In the short term one thing that I would argue is that, if you have a happy workforce, you're in a very good position to have a happy membership. And extrapolating that point, we have a relatively young workforce at Fitness First, so I'd like that young workforce to say, within a very short period of time, 'working at Fitness First is just getting better and better – it's just a great place to work'. I think a stable and happy workforce makes for a happy membership.

So how would you plan to achieve this happier workforce, through more training?

Yes, I certainly think that training is part of it – mentoring, coaching, and career development – I think all those things play a

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very, very important part. And obviously we need to pay to competitive levels, so we're always keeping a very sharp eye on that. The second piece is that I'd like our staff to engage members on a personal level. As I mentioned earlier, we have well placed, well maintained clubs with first rate equipment and first rate facilities, so I think we can go forward by engaging our members in-club on a more proactive basis. So that's a second key objective.

There has been some media attention recently regarding 'poor' service that some members have received at the hands of reception and membership sales consultants. As the biggest player in the market, Fitness First will inevitably come in for criticism and a negative image in some areas of the media and public – as is the way with the 'big boys' in every market. Does Fitness First have any plans to address this?

As the market leader – and we do have a high profile – we inevitably receive a lot of media attention. Regarding the recent headlines (when one member tried unsuccessfully to sue Fitness First over the issue of breaking contract), I see it this way: We have over two million visits per month from our members at Fitness First; so two million times a month, members are voting with their feet and enjoying what we offer. If the media want to go and find a disgruntled member or ex-member of Fitness First, like any organisation of our size, they will find that person. At the end of the day, what I'd like to do is balance things out, and communicate the very good things that Fitness First does, which we plan to do more proactively.

For example, our Adopt a School program with our partners MBF, whereby we effectively offer our facilities to school children who receive fitness instruction – all free of charge. I don't think that anybody would doubt that if in your earlier years you're made aware of, and you enjoy, the benefits of sport, fitness and good health, that habit can stay with you for a lifetime. I speak from personal experience; I was very much encouraged as a child to be fit and it does have a positive impact for the rest of your life. So I think the importance of education in dealing with growing obesity is really key. We have, at the other end of the scale, hospitals desperately trying to come to grips with obesity, but prevention is so much more powerful.

So you see Fitness First as having an educational role in this area?

Clearly, the government, business and insurance companies are starting to understand the benefits of preventative medicine. However, I think a lot of people are simply not aware of the dangers of overeating and not exercising – and they are very real dangers. You hear statistics now of many children having diabetes, a very serious condition, which was not the case thirty years ago. So we all have our part to play together, in working out how we can best communicate that message to the public and give them the tools and the ability to really take personal responsibility for not only themselves, but their children and families. I think that the fitness industry can play an increasing role through lobbying government; to my mind the most pro-active way that we can go forward is to present and articulate that message. And you know, we come into that lobbying space with a certain amount of experience and expertise which is well worth sharing. And I'd like to think that over the next few years Fitness First and the Fitness Industry will become increasingly vocal, increasingly proactive in that regard, as I believe Fitness First and Fitness Australia is striving to be now.

You say you had the benefits of fitness instilled in you from an early age and that the message stuck with you throughout your life. Were you a member of a gym before you started in this role (I assume you get complimentary membership now!)?

I've always been a keen sportsperson, and have typically played both team and individual sports, but my earlier enthusiasm for sport comes from the fact that my father was a doctor, a heart specialist, and he was absolutely a visionary in understanding the importance of good health, fitness and diet, as well as no smoking – at a time when smoking was commonplace. And I'm also the offspring of a Norwegian mother who certainly didn't believe in sticky date pudding and the kind of desserts the English get off on! So she had her kids' diet very much under control. So, for me it is about how one is raised. Kids pick up on good habits so there is a huge prize for parents leading by example. So yes, I've been a keen sportsman all my life and it's certainly one of my motivations for working here. I think that if you weren't passionate about fitness at Fitness First, quite frankly you'd be found out pretty quickly! I have been a

member of health clubs at different times of my life; for an individual in a busy day who wants to exercise regularly, you can't beat a health club that is conveniently located and operates at convenient hours. And when you experience Fitness First, our cardio and strength equipment, group fitness classes and the access to personal trainers – it's a whole new world. I think we're playing our part in expanding the individual's horizons as to what fitness really can be. It's a fantastic way to feel good.

Returning to the future of Fitness First, do you plan to continue the rate of growth that has been occurring in recent years?

Firstly, I'd like to acknowledge the extraordinary success the team has had to date in establishing Fitness First as a market leader, at the same time raising the whole profile of fitness in Australia. It's a fantastic achievement. Moving forward we want to maintain momentum and expand in every state in Australia. I don't think I can say fairer than that!

There has been speculation that the company will go public and shares be made available – can you confirm, deny or elaborate on this?

If I elaborated on that, I can guarantee that I'd get it wrong. The economic outlook is sufficiently volatile that I will simply say we are here for the long term and we are committed to growth.

Which leads me on to ask, how do you think the tougher economic times we are facing will affect Fitness First and the fitness industry as a whole? (i.e. is there a danger that members will drop membership because they view it as a luxury?)

I think typically, the fitness industry is relatively robust in tougher economic times. Anyone who argues that their health is a luxury, I think should ask themselves again!

There's no doubting that environmental issues are more prominent in consumers' minds than ever before. As a large business whose interests lie in improving quality of life, FF is well placed to lead by example. Fitness First has a green policy, but what further changes would you like to see implemented?

I think that we're very keen to play our part – and to be perfectly frank in my first few weeks here it's not something that I've got my head around yet. I think you raise a very good point – we do want to raise the fitness and wellbeing

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of our members, and be a responsible citizen, but the critical thing is that we back this up with specific initiatives and I'll be working on that over the next few months.

With the growth of Fitness First (from 11 to 84 clubs in the last 8 years), how do you plan to staff the 50+ group exercise classes per club that need to be run? Instructors report finding it more and more difficult to get covers for classes, and with the current framework of qualification it's very time consuming to train new instructors. Other than Fitness First's Finishing First program, does Fitness First have anything else in mind to increase numbers of Group Ex instructors?

One option we're looking at at the moment is to encourage personal trainers to spend a percentage of their time in group exercise, and also to encourage those in group exercise to work as personal trainers. For a member personal training can appeal, group exercise can appeal, or maybe a mixture of both. I think it's very user friendly when a member can speak to an individual who has a practical understanding of both, so that's certainly one key initiative we're looking at right now.

Staying in the group exercise arena, apart from the donations already made to Operation MUSIC's fight, does Fitness First have any other plans or ideas to combat the unreasonable music tariff increased proposed by the PPCA so that it doesn't negatively impact on group fitness, and indeed every member of every club (due to the PPCA proposal

that every member is charged \$4.54 per month, regardless of whether or not they attend group ex classes)?

At this point, that's where we see our contribution – to ensure that when the hearing is conducted in March and April of next year, that the very best case is put forward to challenge the PPCA. So, yes, that's our focus – to vigorously challenge the PCCA's position through Operation MUSIC.

Will the change in management and structure affect ground level staff?

I have talked about my passion for Fitness First being a great place to work, and Fitness First clubs being a great place for members – and all my decisions ultimately will work back from those two key perspectives. In many ways I see staff and members as one community – if one is happy, the other will be happy, and vice versa. At the end of the day, if you talk about changes affecting front line staff, my response would be yes – positively affected.

On an operations level, would Fitness First consider reintroducing the role of the gym instructor, so someone can service the new members who wander around the gym floor not knowing what to do, but who don't necessarily want to pay for personal training on top of their newly acquired cost of gym membership?

The short answer to that question is, yes! I think that it's absolutely something that I'm looking at in the context of the relationship and rapport we want to have with our

members. Exercise is challenging for a large percentage of the population and for a new member, walking into a club can be an intimidating experience, so we need to address that. We offer a broad range of services and each and every member needs to be very comfortable and confident about what we have to offer. It is also important that as they grow in experience they use the facilities in a proactive way that engenders continued improvement. Looking at floor coverage in Fitness First is an attractive way of delivering that.

So, do you have a personal vision of where you want Fitness First to be?

Absolutely. Fitness First has worked very hard and very successfully to reach the position as the market leader. Something very dear to my heart is that we innovate, we continue to evolve, and we do so in a way that resonates with our members. In other words we adopt a very member-centric view of the world.

I have a number of ideas which we're working through at the moment. I've got a very capable team here, and something I've learnt over the years is that, be it at TV1, Galileo or Ticketek, a CEO achieves very little on his or her own. What is pivotal is how you engage and engender the enthusiasm of those around you to move in the same direction. I have absolutely no doubt that at Fitness First we will do just that.

Thank you Peter, and best wishes for the task ahead. ■

PT NEWS AND LATEST RESEARCH

RESISTANCE TRAINING FOR KNEE ARTHRITIS

A new Australian report has emphasised the ability of resistance training to increase muscle strength and improve physical function in individuals with knee osteoarthritis, while also decreasing pain.

Previously conducted trials into resistance training and knee osteoarthritis were analysed by a team of researchers led by the University of Sydney. The various trials utilised isometric exercise and equipment including resistance machines, free weights and resistance bands. In the majority of studies, resistance training was found to improve symptoms, physical function and strength.

Over 50 per cent of the studies also showed a decrease in self-reported pain, and in almost 80 per cent of cases self-reported mobility improved following resistance training. Increasing levels of resistance training were also mirrored by an increase in overall activity levels. ■

Source: Arthritis Care & Research



PT NEWS AND LATEST RESEARCH

FAT DISTRIBUTION LINKS TO ARTHRITIS

Meanwhile, another study has found that the way in which muscle and fat is distributed around the body contributes to the limited mobility of people suffering from rheumatoid arthritis.

Researchers from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine led the study which was based on the analysis of almost 200 people with rheumatoid arthritis. Study subjects with more fat and less lean (skeletal muscle) mass on the upper and lower limbs displayed higher levels of disability linked with the inflammatory joint disease.

After speculating that increasing levels of fat could affect the arms and legs' ranges of motion or that it could interfere with muscle function, the study authors said that the most probable reason for the findings was that the muscle was being infiltrated by the fat, reducing its quality.

'Interestingly, in studies of the general population, increasing fat mass has also been more strongly linked to worsening functional capacity than decreasing lean mass, suggesting that efforts to improve physical function require a focus on fat reduction with at least as much emphasis, if not more, than increasing lean mass. In the absence of

interventional trials, these findings suggest that practitioners should encourage muscle strengthening and fat loss in their patients with RA as a method of reducing disability'. ■

Source: Arthritis Care & Research



MENTAL BARRIERS TO FAT LOSS

A recent US study suggests that it is mental, rather than physical, barriers which prevent obese women from exercising to lose weight.

Data was collected from 278 women who took part in a one-year physical activity 'encouragement study' by researchers from the Centre for Obesity Research and Education and the department of kinesiology at Temple University, Philadelphia.

The participants were asked to answer a questionnaire at the outset of the study, three months into it and at the conclusion of the year-long study. Questions related to mental barriers to exercise such as feelings of self-consciousness and self-perceptions of poor health, fear of failure and injury, having

minor aches and pains and feeling too overweight to exercise.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the obese women displayed greater barriers to exercise than normal weight women. Associate professor of kinesiology and clinical psychologist at the Centre for Obesity Research and Education, Melissa Napolitano, said, 'This is the first time we've been able to systematically look at what stops obese women from getting the activity they need. There is an underlying attitude about weight loss, that it's easy if you eat less and exercise more. But if losing weight were easy, we wouldn't have the obesity epidemic we have today'. ■

Source: Temple University



GROUP EXERCISE & MIND BODY NEWS

TAI CHI, THE GENTLE WEAPON AGAINST DIABETES

Australian researchers say that the Chinese martial art of tai chi may provide health benefits for individuals with type II diabetes.

The blood pressure, blood sugar levels and other health measures of 25 diabetic patients who attended tai chi classes over a six-month period were compared with those of a sedentary control group.

The tai chi group displayed lower cholesterol levels, and 'significant' improvements in their physical and social functioning. However, significant differences to blood sugar levels and blood pressure were not recorded – results that the study team attributed to low intensity and short duration of the program. Despite this, the

team claimed that because of its suitability for overweight and disabled people, tai chi can claim a relatively high adherence rate with these population, compared to other forms of exercise.

Bronwyn Penny, an accredited exercise physiologist at Diabetes Australia NSW, said, 'Apart from genetic influences, physical inactivity and poor diet are the biggest causes of type 2 diabetes. From a diabetes management point of view, exercise should form a major cornerstone in controlling the condition.'

Expressing the opinion that people with diabetes need to partake in more intense exercise than tai chi, she did, however, say, 'Tai chi and other forms of gentle exercise can be a great stepping stone to getting people more active. We know that moderate to vigorous

exercise will have a better impact on managing and controlling diabetes, however for a lot of people, tai chi can be an effective start'.

Study co-author Dr Paul Lam, a GP based in Sydney and a tai chi master, said, 'It's a vicious circle, many diabetics don't enjoy exercise because they're not very good at sports or they're not very co-ordinated, so they don't do it and then end up being even less co-ordinated'. Going on to discuss the other benefits of tai chi, he said, 'It's not just the exercise, people are also learning to relax and improve their ability to handle stress, they get social reinforcement from sharing an enjoyable experience with others and it also nurtures community spirit'. ■

Source: Australian Family Physician

NUTRITION NEWS

FOOD FOR BRAIN HEALTH

Recent UK research has shown what appears to be a strong link between the intake of certain vitamins and the improvement and prevention of illnesses such as ADHD, depression and bipolar disorders, prompting the medical profession to reassess the importance of diet in mental health.

According to Brisbane dietitian and exercise physiologist Michael Lawler, a partner at Tree of Life Nutrition in Woolloongabba, the key to maintaining good mental health may have just as much to do with what's going into your stomach as what's going on in your head.

Many of the vitamins identified by researchers as having beneficial effects on mental health are readily available in everyday foods and natural supplements. 'We're starting to see studies linking common vitamins, such as B1 and B12, Zinc and Folate, with significant improvements in treating people diagnosed with depression' Lawler said.

'Omega 3 – a fatty acid found in fish oil – has even been clinically shown to reduce the risk and severity of depression, including bipolar disorders. The great news is that all of these powerful nutrients are readily and naturally available to us, via foods you can buy at your local supermarket. Beef is a superb source of B12, wholegrain cereal,



pulses, fruit and vegetables are great for upping your B1 intake, and naturally, fish is a fantastic source of Omega 3' he said.

Lawler maintains, however, that the key to good mental health is not just about what we eat, but how, and how often as well; 'It's not just a case of chowing down on eye fillet every night to up your vitamin B levels, it's about achieving a healthy balance in what you eat. One of the most important pieces of advice I give my clients is to make sure they eat regular, healthy meals that have a low glycemic index, to help balance their energy throughout the

day, and subsequently reduce the severity and frequency of low moods.

I also advise them to resist the temptation of indulging in fried, processed and fatty foods as much as possible because it unsettles the balance of Omega 3 and Omega 6 fatty acids in the body. If you upset this balance you risk causing damage to your brain and arteries through cellular inflammation cause by these saturated and trans fats, which is definitely not the way to improve your mental health' he said. ■

Source: Tree of Life International



DIETERS FACE MORE WEIGHT ISSUES WHEN PREGNANT

A US study has shown a link between a history of dieting and over or under-gaining weight in pregnancy.

Researchers from the University of North Carolina studied over 1,200 women and found that 'restricted' eaters (dieters), were more likely to gain in excess of the recommended amount of weight if they were of normal weight, overweight or obese at the onset of their pregnancy. Similarly, dieters who were underweight had an increased likelihood of gaining less than the recommended amount of weight.

The recommended weight gains during pregnancy were based on figures provided by the Institute of Medicine in the US. These figures suggest that during pregnancy, it is ideal to gain 28 to 40 pounds if the woman is underweight, 25 to 35 pounds if of normal weight, 15 to 25 pounds if overweight, and about 15 pounds if the person is obese.

Study co-author Anna Maria Siega-Riz said, 'During pregnancy, it would be useful to target these women with similar nutritional and physical activity strategies in order to avoid excessive weight gain and adverse pregnancy outcomes such as Caesarean sections, macrosomia, and large-for-gestational age [LGA], as well as shorter duration of breast-feeding and higher weight retention in the postpartum period'. ■

Source: Journal of the American Dietetic Association

NUTRITION NEWS

A LITTLE BIT OF WHAT YOU FANCY DOES YOU GOOD ...

In a recent symposium at the European Society of Cardiologists in Munich, Germany, the potential heart benefits, and negative effects, of tea, coffee, chocolate and wine were discussed, from a cardiology perspective. The antioxidant polyphenols and flavonoids appear to be the beneficial compounds evident in each of the 'stimulants', and the differing levels of these antioxidants is speculated to affect the benefits or otherwise in each product.

The contributors to the symposium reported that the benefits of green tea may outstrip those of regular black tea, because the phenolics have been oxidised in black tea. A Dutch study led by Dr D Kromhout showed that individuals who drank more than 4 cups of tea per day displayed 50 per cent lower incidence of cardiovascular disease than minimal tea drinkers over a 5 year period, and 60 per cent less strokes over a 15 year period if more than 3 cups were enjoyed daily. A UK study, however, seemed to show an inverse relationship between the level of tea drinking and the development of aortic atheroma (an independent risk factor for stroke).

When it comes to coffee, the symposium contributors discussed 'soft evidence' indicating cardiovascular benefits of

drinking filtered coffee among women, but also stated that any such benefits are lost in smokers. Coffee consumption may also have a temporal link to the timing of a first myocardial infarction (heart attack) and may mildly elevate blood pressure, particularly among individuals who are slow metabolisers of caffeine.

Chocolate lovers also have cause to rejoice, provided that their treat of choice is of the dark, rather than milk, variety. It was reported that small quantities of dark chocolate (between 8 and 40g) appear to have clear benefits to the heart, demonstrating a fall in blood pressure acutely of 5/4 mmHg and chronically of 3/2 mmHg. The secondary benefits dark chocolate, including platelet adhesion, insulin resistance and endothelial function were also highlighted.

Perhaps indicating an eagerness on behalf of imbibers to justify a daily tippie of grape juice, the symposium heard how the benefits of wine consumption have been thoroughly documented in a large meta-analysis of 13 studies involving nearly 210,000 individuals. A 'J-shaped' curve of benefit was found, indicating that in individuals who drink up to 150ml of wine daily a reduced risk of vascular disease is evident. This beneficial effect, however, becomes an adverse one when the limits of

200ml and 100ml were exceeded daily for men and women respectively.

The findings presented by the symposium were reported by Dr Bronte Ayres in a report appropriately entitled *The gourmand's heart: a bitter sweet relationship?* ■

Source: European Society of Cardiologists News Alert



CLUB CORNER

FITNESS EMPLOYERS – VOICE YOUR NEEDS

Service Skills Australia is calling for validation of its recently developed sport and recreation industry research report. The report was developed as part of Service Skills Australia's work on the *Service Industries Environmental Scan 2009*, which draws together intelligence and research about existing and emerging trends and issues in the service industry sectors covered by Service Skills Australia, and how these impact on skill and labour needs.

Service Skills Australia is the industry skills council for the service industries. It is an independent, non-profit organisation funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to support skills development in the service industries. Service Skills Australia offers

expert advice and a national perspective to help organisations in the service industries achieve quality outcomes and meet their skill development needs. It is responsible for developing the skill standards required to undertake work tasks and collate them into training packages. Training packages are used as the basis for vocational education and training – the national qualifications used to recognise skills in the service industries. It also provides advice to government on skills development needs in the service industries.

The sport and recreation industry research report is available at www.servicesskills.com.au/scan for industry comment and validation until the end of November 2008. Small, medium and large businesses are being invited to help shape the future of workforce and skills

development by providing their input and feedback. It offers a good opportunity to communicate the skills and labour issues affecting your business, and to feed this information into government decision-making.

Environmental Scan 2009 offers the opportunity to clearly articulate the skills and labour issues affecting the services industries and will be used by the government advisory body, Skills Australia, to determine where government responses should be targeted. The Service Industries Environmental Scan will also drive the development and improvement of Service Skills Australia's training packages and inform its future priorities for its work on behalf of the service industries. ■

Source: Service Skills Australia

CLUB CORNER

NEW ZEALAND COUPLE AWARDED

New Zealand couple Tina and Paul Richards were recently honoured by Fitness NZ for their 'Outstanding services to the fitness industry'.

Paul founded Club Physical gym in 1981 when he personally renovated the dilapidated Waitemata Athletic club in Waitemata on New Zealand's North Island. Things were challenging at first, with Paul working 16 hour days without wages, seven days a week for the first few years. With no financial backing, he had to cut living costs by building a small bedroom in a vacant area beside the men's locker room and toilets.

Soon after this, Tina entered the scene as an instructor. This enabled Paul to take up concrete drive contracting during the day with his friend, former 'Mr New Zealand' Barry Davies. These earnings helped subsidise the gym's wages for a period, but Paul was later forced to make his entire staff redundant during lean times and to become the sole staff member manning reception, instructing and cleaning by himself. As income improved Tina was re-hired, the two grew close and were later married. Since then, Club Physical has grown to become one of New Zealand's largest privately owned health club groups employing three hundred people.

Paul became president and CEO of the industry organisation, Fitness NZ for several years and he and Tina were the first New Zealanders to join Australian Fitness Network, the leading Australasian industry organisation, and IHRSA, the worldwide

organisation for quality health clubs based in USA. As members the two have attended numerous educational events in the US and Australia, returning with hundreds of ideas for the NZ industry.

Inspired by former IHRSA president Julie Maine, Club Physical has for the last five years offered a ten-week exercise program for cancer patients, which is given free of charge without any government or charity funding. It is fully supervised by personal trainers at several locations and has now been completed by scores of people.

The company also sponsors a large number of community groups each year. Club Physical recently created an Olympic Wrestling Club for boys which, thanks to the blind coach, Clinton Hall, has already accumulated a number of gold medals in New Zealand championships. The group last month hosted the Auckland Olympic Wrestling Championship. Each branch of Club Physical sponsors a child living in Myanmar and the company is actively involved in fundraising and supporting projects with World Vision.

Paul has now authored eleven books featuring the numerous benefits of exercise with subjects dedicated to weight loss, exercise for older adults, mental health, diabetes, cancer and teenage fitness. Most of these are freely downloadable from Club Physical's web site. Paul's latest book, *Cancer Can Do* is freely downloadable from www.clubphysical.co.nz/files/Cancer%20Can%20Do%20Formatted%20for%20Web.pdf



From left: team members Josh Luxmore, Derek van Beynen, Tina Richards, Paul Richards, Shelley Miles.

Tina now leads a team of eighty 'presenters' who teach group exercise classes at New Zealand's fourteen Club Physical locations, eight of which are now franchised. The branded GROUPX program incorporates a variety of formats for fat-loss, toning, strengthening, increasing core strength and reducing stress. Tina is also responsible for releasing new music and choreography for the group on a quarterly basis.

Both Tina and Paul and their children Chloe, Renee and Brahm are members of LIFE church and Tina and Paul are members of Toastmasters. Several family members now also hold martial art black belts, and Paul says, 'We're a team. Tina has been a huge positive strength for me throughout the trials of business. But I need to offer a major credit to our influencers; church pastors Tak Bhana and Paul De Jong, and to my friends and colleagues Derek van Beynen (CP General Manager) and Shelley Miles, along with the thirty or more people who have been part of our team for over twenty years'. ■

2009 TOUR DOWN UNDER

The 2009 Tour Down Under, the southern hemisphere's leading cycling race, will take place on 18 to 25 January 2009.

The Tour Down Under is the biggest cycling race outside of Europe. The week long event, that has been held annually since 1999, brings the world's elite cyclists to South Australia to compete for the prestigious leader's ochre jersey. The six stage race will see world-class cyclists (previous Australian winners include Stuart O'Grady and Patrick Jonker) battle it out over 800kms across Adelaide and South Australia.

The Tour Down Under isn't just for the world's elite professionals. The Mutual Community Challenge Tour, on Friday 23 January 2009, gives the novice cyclist the opportunity to ride stage 4 of the Tour Down

Under; the same route on the same day as the Tour's elite riders. The route runs from Burnside Village in Adelaide out to Angaston in the Barossa Valley. There are three ride routes to suit all abilities, ranging from a 32km loop in Angaston through to the full 143km route from Burnside to the Barossa. Visit www.tourdownunder.com.au to register.

In 2008, 548,000 people turned out to watch the Tour Down Under. Winding its way through Australia's iconic wine regions of the Barossa, Adelaide Hills and McLaren Vale, the event is perfect for enjoying the stunning views of the rolling hills, vineyards and ocean while the world's best cyclists whizz by.

For more information, contact Michelle Logie on 08 8463 4695 or michelle.logie@tourism.sa.com ■

Source: South Australian Tourism Commission



BOOK REVIEW

Book title: Sports Injuries Guidebook

Author: Robert S Gotlin (Editor)

Reviewed by: Peter Lawler

Details: Paperback, 288 pages, published by Human Kinetics, 2008

RRP: \$43.95, Network members: \$39.60
(if purchased online at <http://www.fitnessnetworkcentre.com/products/showproduct.cfm?isbn=0736063390>)

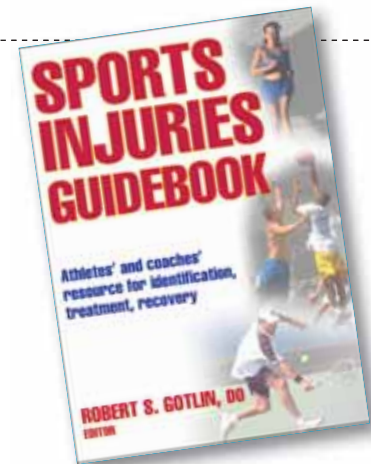
Robert S Gotlin, the Editor, has many, many friends. He is the director of orthopaedic and sports rehabilitation at the Beth Israel Medical Centre and is also an assistant professor of physical medicine at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University.

Gotlin has gathered no less than 24 of his medical associates and persuaded them to contribute to this publication. Once again, the credentials of the authors are formidable, a hallmark of Human Kinetics.

Sports Injuries Guidebook is subtitled 'Athletes and coaches resource for identification, treatment and recovery' from sports injuries and comprises 16 chapters. The first chapter presents the general issues of body maintenance that prevent injuries. Here the work of Tudor Bompá, Gary Gray, Paul Chek et al, is used to establish the tenets of functional conditioning. Should injuries occur, chapter 2 assists by advising on strapping, NSAIDs, splinting and bracing, and

chapter 3 focuses on correct identification of injury type. Do you know the difference between a comminuted fracture, a compound fracture and an avulsion fracture? Could you correctly identify a Grade 1 ankle sprain and would you advise walking to expedite recovery? Are you aware that ICE has grown to PRICE and MICE? Can you decipher the new acronym HARM? If the answers are a recurring NO, then purchase this book!

Once the reader has digested the preliminaries, which are competently and lucidly constructed, the beauty of this book is revealed. Starting with the head and finishing with the tootsies, 130 common injuries are 'treated' by the assembled medical crew. The format of the book is great, with each and every injury being subjected to an identical approach. What are the common causes of the injury? How is the specific injury identified? What is the treatment? When should the athlete return to action? There is a multitude of sports injury books available, so what makes this one special? The answer is simple – or rather, simplicity of delivery. The language used is very clear, a comfort for those of us who cannot understand our X-Ray reports or remember what the doctor told us to do while the anaesthesia lingers. The obsolete Latin has been replaced by commonsense cookbook English – it's a revelation, the Rosetta Stone hieroglyphics have been deciphered! On every page, for every injury



wherever jargon is encountered, a simple explanation follows. Examining Osgood Schlatter's Syndrome, the text on page 221 reads:

'Pain is related to the growth plate of the tibial tubercle (the bump on the leg just below the kneecap) where the very strong patellar tendon inserts...'

and:

'Rarely adults, with a history of Osgood Schlatter's might continue to have episodic pain when an infused bone ossicle (a small piece of bone attached to the patellar tendon) persists at the tibial tubercle.'

An illustration accompanies each injury, locating and labelling the sacred site. What could be simpler? This is a deceptively clever book, user friendly and comfortable to read. There can be no confusion about the advice offered. ■

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Min Lomo has been involved in the fitness industry for years teaching group exercise, but recently decided that it was time to take his skills to the next level by becoming an Elite Personal Trainer.

What most appealed to you about the ePT course?

The flexibility which on-line learning can provide! Like most people, my work/life schedule fluctuates periodically from 'very busy' to 'not-so-busy', so the ability to adjust my study load to suit my work/life demands is invaluable. I don't have to worry about studying or doing any assignments during my busy periods, and can put in the extra hours when I'm less busy – perfect!

What are your general thoughts about the course?

The course structure is logical and specific. It has a great balance between theoretical and practical learning. I feel that it is achievable and provides me with practical learning outcomes. I also enjoyed the ePT students Community page where we all get to connect and share our experiences – so it was not a lonely ordeal at all! I highly recommend it!

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