

## New year, new fitness choices

Have a ball, return to P.E. or try a 30-minute workout



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 The Courier-Journal

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Working out isn't just about pumping iron, pedaling stationary bikes or taking aerobics classes

anymore.

The variety of fitness equipment in today's gyms is astounding, and the exercise classes offered seem almost infinite in variety.

Depending on where you go to work out, you might find yourself running on a treadmill underwater or pressing against a large exercise ball in a yoga pose.

For those who can't imagine having enough time to exercise, there are now a slew of programs that cater to getting you in and out in less time than it probably takes you to commute to work.

Health providers such as physical therapists and physicians are also taking a bigger role in fitness prescriptions. And personal fitness trainers are turning more attention to the special medical needs of clients.

There also are signs that a fun factor is making a comeback this year with exercise classes that feature dodge ball and schoolyard-style jump-rope games.

Here's a sampling of some strong local fitness trends and hot new programs.

### In just 30 minutes

One of the hottest fitness trends locally and nationally is a workout that can be done in a half-hour flat to cater to busy clients.



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL HAYMAN, THE COURIER-JOURNAL

Stephanie Rodgers led a hip-hop class at Louisville Athletic Club. Group fitness classes like dance are among the ways people can socialize with and motivate one another.



Mike McGuirk walked on an underwater treadmill at Total Fitness and Wellness

The national chain Curves for Women has been enormously successful stressing its 30-minute sessions. Locally, Curves is booming, and so are Curves knockoffs.

A new, men's-only version in New Albany is called Men's Workout Xpress. Like Curves, the facility uses hydraulic equipment that exercises the upper and lower body and requires no stacking of weights or other adjustments to machines that can slow down a routine.

But the hydraulic machines at the men's center require more strength to use than those at women-only facilities, said Ed Snelling, a contributing partner of Men's Workout Xpress.

The pattern is the same. Exercisers use a circuit of machines with limited time spent on each one. A recorded voice prompts exercisers to change machines at 30-second intervals. In between using resistance machines, exercisers can keep their heart rate up by jumping rope, running in place or stepping up and down on a box.

It's the 21st-century version of circuit training, which was popular in the 1980s.

Also flocking to join the 30-minute workout trend are many local YMCAs. The Southwest Family Branch led the way with its Cafe Y, but has been followed by the Northeast, Downtown and Bullitt County branches, which call their programs "Fit in 30."

The Middletown Extension of the Northeast YMCA will soon follow.

At the Downtown Branch last week, Cynthia Miller explained why she uses the "Fit in 30" program. "I don't have much time," said the working mother of two, who had dashed from her job in Okolona to the YMCA and needed to head home as soon as she finished to take care of her family.

## On the ball

Those big balls that started appearing in exercise studios a few years ago are multiplying. Classes to promote stretching and balance use them. And they're used in many other kinds of workouts, including yoga

in New Albany, Ind.



BY PAT MCDONOGH, THE COURIER-JOURNAL

Dean Brooks, right, leads a duathlon cycling class at Baptist East/Milestone Wellness Center. For an hour, participants divide their time between cycling and running on a nearby track. "It's a great form of interval training," said Brooks.

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and Pilates and routines that use handheld weights.

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What students and instructors seem to like about ball routines is that they engage more muscles and promote a strengthening of the abdominals and back muscles, known as core strengthening.

Louisville boasts a national leader in the use of the exercise balls. Lauren Eirk, group fitness director for the Louisville Athletic Club, is author of two manuals on "Yoga With Resist-A-Ball" and stars in several Yoga Resist-A-Ball videos.

Eirk said to expect more innovations, including yoga using medicine balls and exercises using foam rollers as props. She said she's planning such classes.

## The medical connection

More fitness facilities are aligning themselves with medically based programs. Late last year, for example, the Middletown Extension of the Northeast Family Branch YMCA teamed with KORT (Kentucky Orthopedic Rehab Team) to give Y members free injury screenings at any KORT location. In return, the Y can be used by KORT patients for their continued rehabilitation.

Troy Turbeville, Northeast YMCA fitness director, said this partnership also exists between KORT and other YMCAs.

At Baptist East/Milestone Wellness Center, a local leader among medically affiliated fitness facilities, Carlos Alberto Rivas, fitness/personal training director, said his personal trainers are being required to hone their skills to work with clients with medical conditions such as diabetes, fibromyalgia and arthritis.

Total Fitness and Wellness, with two locations in New Albany, Ind., makes an effort to reach both clients with medical needs and those who are fit and healthy. It was started by a physician.

Physical therapists there are part of the regular staff, and there are special programs to meet health needs, such Total Kidz, which is aimed at overweight children and involves exercise and nutrition counseling for the whole family.

Just this month, the Heuser Clinic, a Louisville facility that offers aerobics classes, fitness programs and nutritional counseling for children and adults, teamed with another business, Proformance, which offers chiropractic and massage therapy plus fitness training.

## Fusion isn't just about food

The blending of cuisines is a trend on the restaurant scene. Now there's a blending of exercise regimens, too, said G. Connor Williams, divisional president of Premier Health and Fitness clubs.

Popular now are Pilates and yoga hybrids, such as PiYo Body Ball. Then there's Bodyflow, blending Tai Chi, yoga and Pilates. And combining bodybuilding or strength training with

aerobics has produced classes with names such as Step and Sculpt, Bodypump and Rep Reebok.

### **Dance it off**

Dance is still a popular way to exercise. The newest workouts: hip-hop, with salsa sounds and moves still in the mix.

### **Remember gym class?**

At the second Louisville Athletic Club, due to open next month in Jeffersontown, there will be a new class called P.E.

Participants will play dodge ball, jump rope, run in relay races and do old-fashioned calisthenics. Everything old is new again.

### **Remember recess?**

Susan Schonberger, group fitness director at Baptist East/ Milestone Wellness Center, is going to bring in a new teacher to offer a class on jumping rope. If students go for it, expect some fun competition like a Double Dutch challenge.

### **Running that's all wet**

You can't walk on water, but you can run in it. At Total Fitness & Wellness, 3891 Charlestown Road in New Albany, members can step into a heated pool and run on an underwater treadmill. The environment is kind to the joints and particularly helpful for overweight people attempting to exercise.

The pool also has a harness device and water jets that allow swimmers to swim in place against resistance.

Although the pool is used for physical therapy clients, it is also available for folks who simply want a good workout.

### **Double the challenge**

A unique class offered at Baptist East/Milestone Wellness Center is called duathlon cycling. Participants gather in Milestone's cycling studio, mount the LeMond RevMaster bikes and do a 10-minute warm-up under the direction of an instructor. Then it's 12 minutes of running on the indoor track.

A full hour is divided between cycling and running. The class builds to a point where the participants are riding as if in a race and running as fast as they can. The club has some nationally recognized duathlon champs to teach the classes.

"This is such a good workout," said a sweaty Janice Preuss after a session. "It's the best workout I get. It pushes me harder than I do when I just run by myself."

"It's a great form of interval training and a great form of cross-training," said Dean Brooks, a duathlete who is one of the instructors.

### **Million-dollar workout**

Muay Thai, the boxing of Thailand, is now being offered in Louisville at the Core Modern Training Center.

Contact boxing and kickboxing still draw a crowd at fitness centers where they are offered. Perhaps with the release in Louisville later this month of the new pugilist movie "Million Dollar Baby," starring Hilary Swank, boxing will go a few more rounds in the fitness world.

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