

## Feel the **BURN**

Rec Center students personal trainers, tips on working out for health benefits

By THOMAS PHILLIPS  
THE BATTALION

Whether for show, sport or survival, many college students make staying in shape a routine and indispensable part of their young lives. Visit the Student Recreation Center at 5 p.m. on any day to learn this truth. Why might someone want to sweat away all those hours in a crowded weight room?

"I work out for the health benefits," said Leah Venable, a graduate student in the Department of Health and Kinesiology.

Venable, however, is an exception to the norm. She earned her bachelor's degree in exercise physiology, is working on her masters in the same field and spends her free time leading aerobics classes. But to say Venable is too busy for her own workout would be misleading.

"Right now, I teach aerobics eight times a week, but I try to run and lift weights, too," Venable said. "Since it's a priority in my life, I've always found a way to work it into my schedule."

The benefits of an established exercise plan are what drive Venable through her workouts. Decreased risk of cardiovascular disease, decreased stress levels and increased energy are health benefits attributed to regular exercise.

"I enjoy it, so it keeps me motivated," Venable said. "Plus, I've seen the effects of inactivity. It's a lifelong commitment, but the benefits are worth it."

Wade Womack, Class of 1994 and a lecturer in the College of Education, coordinates the Applied Exercise Science Laboratory's Fitlife Program, located in the Netum Steed Laboratory. He also works with students and athletes to determine what the best

exercise plan is for their needs.

Fitlife's Athletic Performance Test (APT), which is available to all members of the community, provides participants with in-depth analyses of their physical performance levels. This can then be used to design a personal training program.

The APT includes blood chemistry analysis, muscular strength and flexibility measurements, body fat analysis and cardiovascular assessments. Students, faculty and staff members and their immediate families qualify for discounted rates for the testing.

For those just starting a workout routine, Womack advises to proceed with caution.

"I tell everybody to start off slow," Womack said. "We see a lot of people with injuries. When you're in your 20s, you don't think about that so much."

Three days a week is the minimum workout amount Womack recommends, but added that even one day each week of exercise is better than none.

"The more the better, to a point, about three to five days a week," Womack said. "You need to give your body time to heal."

Aerobic exercise makes the most immediate impact on a beginner's body, with the results showing in just one to two weeks. Muscular strength may take longer to become evident, anywhere from four to eight weeks.

But working out will not have an affect if diet is ignored.

"The main thing when it comes to diet is calories," Womack said. "If you consume more calories than you burn off, you're going to gain weight."

Some professional body builders and athletes have just that in mind, though. They may supplement their diet with extra proteins and amino

acids — chemicals that the body uses to build muscles. However, these additives are not quick-fix ways to increase muscle mass.

"I'm not a big fan of supplements," said Jerod Wilson, a weight room and personal trainer coordinator for the Department of Rec Sports. "I'd rather somebody spend their money on good food."

Wilson matches clients with a personal trainer, someone qualified to give instruction on proper use of all of the equipment in the Rec Center's weight room and tailor a personal exercise regimen.

"[Personal trainers] are just another form of motivation for you," Wilson said. "They're really good for just teaching people to exercise and holding you accountable."

The Rec Center's Jumpstart program offers participants a two-hour, one-on-one session with a personal trainer that includes equipment instruction and diet analysis for \$30. Rec Sports offers other plans with two to fifteen sessions with a personal trainer, all of whom are nationally certified.

Having a partner, a trainer or a group to workout with can make or break the dedication to the workout, he said.

"You have someone there to push [you]," Wilson said. "It's easier to stay at home or party if you don't have someone to hold you accountable."

For those not so intrigued by sticking to a regular workout, the Department of Recreational Sports offers a wide range of outdoor pursuits, from intramurals to canoeing to rock climbing.

"If people are just looking for a change in routine, we have people that can design stuff for them that are more advanced," Wilson said.



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