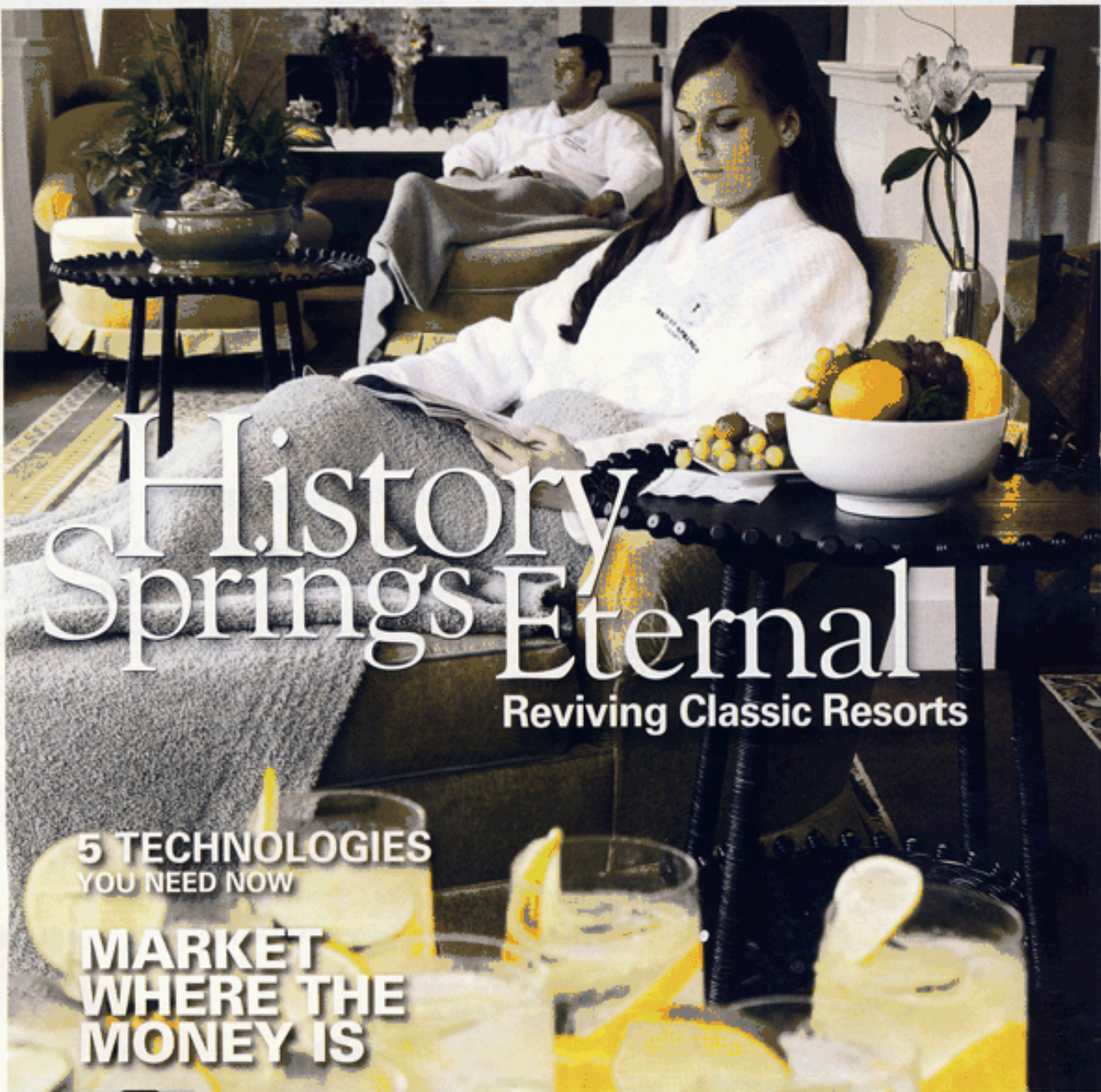


FITNESS FOCUS: INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES AND PERSONAL PERFORMANCE RULE

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IHRSA Fitness Trends

Interactive Experiences and Personal Performance Rule

By Bryan Green

Each year, there's no better venue to get a snapshot of the trends in the fitness world than at the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association's annual trade show, and 2008 was no exception. First, there's been a dramatic shift in emphasis from developing a harder, more attractive body to performance in day-to-day life. The second development is the influence of digital technology on fitness and exercise. Together, these aspects can create a personalized and interactive fitness experience, focused on functional fitness measures.

Fitness "Fun & Games"

Interactive, digital-gaming products, like the popular Wii gaming device, allow consumers to become a part of the virtual world. One trip to a local arcade/entertainment center will find hosts of kids engaged in break-dancing competitions or martial arts battles against "virtual" opponents. This technology makes perfect sense in fitness, where exercise programs are found in these same competitive, gaming-based platforms. Some are calling this movement "exergaming."

Motivatrix's MX 10 Work-out Master offers up to 20 different options of game-based exercise programs. "Zak Attack" combines martial arts in a gaming format where the user punches and kicks virtual targets, earning points along the way. "Dash, Dart & Jump" users can jump, sprint and kick point-bearing targets, while also avoiding dangers and obstacles as they traverse a virtual world. Another company, Xavix, offers martial arts-based programs led by Jackie Chan himself. And I-Tech fitness is offering the XR-Cade, a gaming-based destination created within an existing fitness center that offers a variety of gaming-based exercise options.

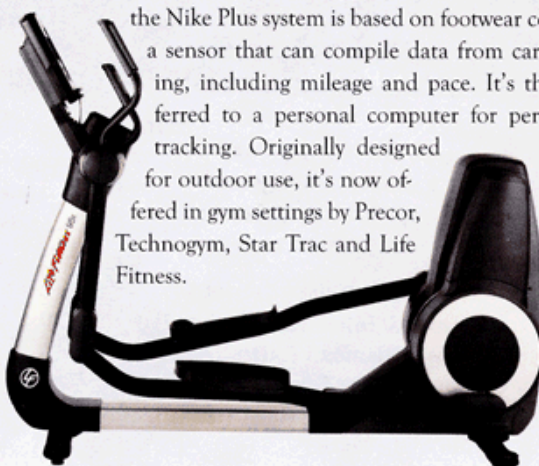


Personal Training... To Go

USB-compatible storage devices, often called jump drives, are being integrated into the techno-fitness movement. These products can read the user's jump drive to access personalized information and tailor exercise regimens based on that data.

Star Trac's pre-designed cardio and strength programs allow users to track progress at home. Fitness centers can sell the software-loaded USB sticks to members who will plug them into Star Trac's E-Series cardio equipment and/or the company's new Koko strength training machines. Performance data from each workout can then be downloaded onto personal computers to track progress in detail.

Other products interface with Apple iPod devices. For example, the Nike Plus system is based on footwear containing a sensor that can compile data from cardio training, including mileage and pace. It's then transferred to a personal computer for performance tracking. Originally designed for outdoor use, it's now offered in gym settings by Precor, Technogym, Star Trac and Life Fitness.



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Advancing Options

TRX Suspension Trainer - This product has spawned an entire new category, "Suspension Training," where the sole means of resistance is the user's body weight. A simple system of heavy-duty straps is anchored to an overhead weight-bearing support (ceiling beam, door, wall ring/hook, etc.) allowing the user to suspend their body in various positions to target specific body parts through body-weight. The product works perfectly for outdoor group exercise programming, capitalizing on breathtaking vacation environments.

Workout 180 - Another exercise system based on body-weight resistance, Workout 180, allows for up to 80 different exercises, including push-ups, biceps curls, squats, and yoga positions. This product is ideal as an in-room fitness solution that can be stored and used within tight confines.

Good Vibrations - Acceleration Training exploits an innate response to disruptions in stability along with acceleration of g-forces via a platform that vibrates anywhere from 30-50 times per second. The body's natural response is to contract its muscles for each and every vibration. This significant amount of muscular activity in such a short time frame renders full workouts to be done in merely 15-20 minute sessions, ideal for the busy traveler or vacationer who needs more time for a variety of activities. This year, category leader Power Plate was joined by at least 15 other manufacturers, including VibraGym, Itonic by Free Motion Fitness, Maxuvibe, Pneumax and FitVibe.

Elliptical Evolution - Recently, manufacturers have breathed new life into elliptical machines, allowing them to accommodate varying stride lengths and planes of motion. Precor's Adaptive Motion Trainer has led the charge, but Motus USA, Octane Fitness and True Fitness have also added advanced elliptical offerings. **R+R**



Bryan Green is president and CEO of Advantage Fitness Products, which designs, equips and operates wellness environments. For more information, visit www.AFFProducts.com.