



The fitness, fat fight

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By:

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Rocco Castellano is a man with a mission: helping Americans fight fat and get fit.

"I'm teaching the core exercises that I believe every person should do," he said, Saturday during a training boot camp at the D1 Sports training facility near Hamilton Place. "I want people to wake up and realize all these exercises are easy to do, and that you don't need expensive equipment or a gym membership."

The five exercises Mr. Castellano promotes as the pillars of a fit and healthy life are ones familiar from middle school physical fitness classes: push-ups, lunges, crunches, mountain climbs and jumping jacks. But these exercises, if done properly for 15 minutes at least three times a week, are the basics necessary for movement throughout a lifetime.

"My generation totally screwed up our kids by not teaching them how to exercise," the 42-year author, fitness expert and former boxer said.

Every day, maybe before going to school or doing homework, children should get some physical exercise to help keep them healthy and to release pent-up energy, Mr. Castellano said.

"Why can't parents do 15 minutes of exercise with their kids?" he asked. "They will start to make exercise part of their daily routine. All exercise is ritual, one that allows you to be able to do everything you want to do."

During Saturday's training session Mr. Castellano stressed that exercise needs to mix aerobic with strength training if a person's reason for exercise is to gain vigor and lose pounds.

Laura Giordano, 51, and Lauren Brantley, 46, both drove from Atlanta to attend the hourlong workout.

"I needed reinforcement," said Ms. Giordano, who teaches school, dances and regularly attends a gym. "I can't wait to get back and tell my trainers what I've learned."

Ms. Brantley, coordinator for a middle school dance team, said it was worth the drive to learn how to get fit by working out at home without weights.

"There is no need to complicate fitness," Mr. Castellano said. "Fitness is really free. You don't have to go out and buy expensive equipment. Buying something does not get you fit — doing something is what gets you fit."



Key exercises

Rocco Castellano's five core exercises to form the foundation of fitness are:

- * Lunges. "Don't alternate legs. Use a long stride for one minute or until it burns."
- * Mountain climbing. "Works almost the whole body. Keep your head up and your (hips) down."
- * Push-ups or negative push-ups. "Creates balance in your midsection and builds upper-body strength."
- * Criss-cross crunches. "Keep your hands flat behind your head and reach the elbow outside your knee."
- * Jumping jacks. "My favorite exercise in the world. Bring your arms straight up over your head."

ON THE WEB:

Information about Rocco Castellano, his training philosophy, his fitness clinics and his books can be found at www.askrocco.com.

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