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Hot Finds

'Flintstone Fitness' 'Clubs' tone us like cavemen

By Lisa B. Schreider

WOULD YOU BE READY TO HUNT AND KILL FOR YOUR FOOD TO MAKE DINNER TONIGHT? It may not sound very appealing, but what if you knew that this method of dinner preparation burns 1,600 calories a day? That is the amount of calories our ancestors spent daily hunting and gathering.



KEVIN KEARNS WITH INSTRUMENTS OF FITNESS.

Today the average person burns 400 calories daily, and hunting and gathering has devolved into foraging in cavernous supermarket-hangars with a red plastic basket, or rolling up to a drive-through window for a pre-packaged meal while seated in a fossil-fueled metal carapace.

Kevin Kearns vows to mend our sedentary ways without reverting to hunter-gatherer culture. The owner of The Fitness Connection, Inc., a personal training and self-defense company in Coolidge Corner, Brookline, he has created a workout called Flintstone Fitness. The program features clubs called Indian Clubs, among other objects, which Kearns' clients swing to strengthen and sculpt their bodies. Kearns is the first in the area to offer an Indian Club workout and estimates that approxi-

mately 10 to 20 percent of his clients, equally divided among men and women, work out with the clubs.

"Post caveman era, but before the invention of cars, day to day living and working was filled with exercise. People walked to school, work and shop, and many jobs required physical labor in which people used their core muscles every day," said Kearns.

According to Kearns, the wood or cement implements were first used in the 1700's and 1800's in the U.S., coinciding with a late 1800's trend in wellness. Prior to their use in the states, the clubs were used in India to train wrestlers—hence their name. Indian wrestlers employed them to strengthen their grip, which allowed them to get a firmer purchase on opponents. Army rangers at the United States Mili-

tary Academy at West Point in West Point, NY also use the clubs, which look a little bit like stubby baseball bats.

Indian Clubs are the most widely used form of strength training in history, predating even the simple dumbbell. "Indian Clubs are useful for many sports. They allow for useable strength, and provide a workout that's more beneficial than just looking good," said Kearns.

Join the Club

DETERMINING YOUR GRIP—one or two-handed—is typically the first step of an Indian Club workout. Users hold the clubs at their neck, which is approximately two inches in diameter. Once the grip is determined, you normally begin with a swing, also called a "swing to order" or a "clean to order," swinging the club then bringing it to a complete halt in front of the body. Kearns normally begins with 5-10 lb. clubs. "People move up pretty quickly, once they get the motion down," he said.

Another move, "clean to order to snatch," involves extending both arms overhead. "Swing to order" and "clean to order to snatch" work forward motion, while arm rotations, for example, work lateral motion.

During the unappealing sounding "march of death," users swing the Indian Clubs while simultaneously lunging forward. The "Cossack"

involves bringing the clubs over your head, then squatting as you bring them forward.

The clubs should never leave your hands, although your grip will shift with their movement. Some trainers espouse a workout called the "Catch 22," where the clubs do leave the hands, but Kearns considers that workout dangerous.

In fact, he recommends working out with nothing breakable and no small children or animals in the immediate area, since if a club slips during a workout it "could leave your hand and become a missile." Kearns recently brought 10, 15 and 35-pound clubs to a FOX 25 television appearance. "The Fox News people couldn't pick up the 35-pounder," said Kearns, who, despite his experience, has beamed himself a few times in the head with a misplaced club.

Benefits

BECAUSE OF THEIR AWKWARD ANGLES and multi-planar movements, which work the body's full range of motion, Indian Club workouts are effective, according to Kearns, creating what he calls a circular strength training workout. As we age, our range of motion and flexibility decreases; with this fluid workout, clients can maintain or increase their muscle flexibility.

"There are many benefits to training with Indian Clubs: grip strength, stabilization of smaller muscles," said Kearns. "Indian Clubs provide an intense workout."

Clients who use them develop an all-over toning (not to mention an all-over level of soreness the next day). "I have been working out with Kevin Kearns for years," said Stanley A. Nasraway, M.D., Associate Professor, Surgery, Anesthesia & Medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston, MA, who owns a set of the clubs. He said: "Programs and devices are changed regularly, to work different muscles and sustain client interest."

Indian Clubs are also beneficial to the wallet. One club costs from \$80 to \$160 depending on the weight increment. According to Kearns, one set is as effective as an entire gym and requires no maintenance.

Home work

MOST PEOPLE KNOW they should exercise, but taking that first step or maintaining motivation can be a major challenge. For many people, going to a gym is not practical, is time-consuming or does not generate the desired results. One solution for busy people and those wanting personalized instruction is a home-based personal training program.

[TURN PAGE]

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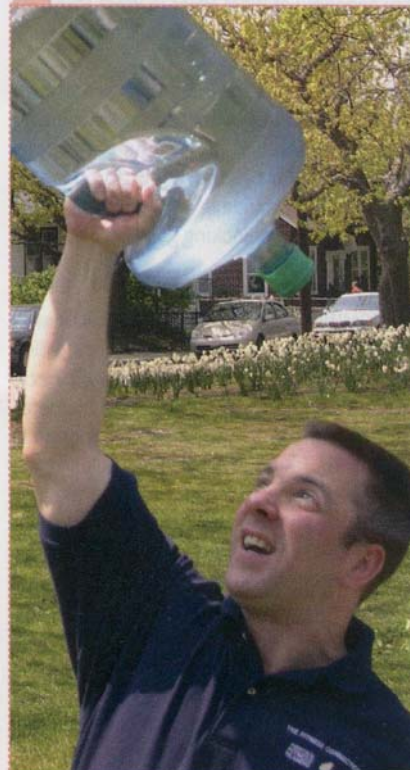
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Hot Finds



KEVIN WORKING OUT WITH A SIX-GALLON POLAND SPRING WATER JUG.

“A true healthy, effective workout should contain these five components: aerobic fitness, strength training, flexibility, nutrition, and body composition (lean body mass-to-fat ratio),” Kearns explained.”

To derive any health benefits from exercise requires a lifetime commitment. Kearns offers a functional approach he calls “exercise for life.”

He offers personal training as well as courses in self-defense, cardiovascular fitness, nutrition, muscular strength and endurance, body composition and flexibility. His goals are to help clients lose weight, lower their body fat, increase muscle mass, improve their cardiovascular endurance and enhance muscle tone.

Kearns has been a personal trainer for 18 years, and also has 25 years of martial arts self-defense training. “A qualified trainer should develop a program for all ages that is tailored

to you, not a canned workout program. A true healthy, effective workout should contain these five components: aerobic fitness, strength training, flexibility, nutrition, and body composition (lean body mass-to-fat ratio)," Kearns explained.

Old school workout wisdom

KEARNS USES SUMMIT AVENUE in Brookline as a training route for himself and his clients. He calls it the "Summit of Pain," since the hill is equivalent to 246 stairs. The elevation provides an effective cardio workout.



- Try working out with a six-gallon Poland Springs jug. Its awkward size and shape is ideal for multi-planar movement, and as a result it conveys benefits similar to that of an Indian Club workout.
- Try filling a stability ball with water. The water adds significant mass to the ball. Since the ball becomes unstable, it provides a challenging total-body workout. It also provides a refreshing change to your exercise routine.
- Pour a 50-, 75-, or 100-pound bag of sand into a duffle bag and use that as your workout equipment. Since it constantly changes shape, is awkward to move, heavy, and hard to grasp, it is a challenge.
- Be aware of the good training opportunities that an average day provides. Carry all of your groceries in at once. By loading the weight on your body, in an unbalanced, asymmetrical way, you are doing great exercise. It is good to train your body to anticipate daily life challenges. Other useful daily training opportunities include picking up your children, shoveling snow, helping a friend move, or raking leaves.

Kearns recently released a DVD called "Burn With Kearns," about his home fitness service, which incorporates online training with email and phone support. ▲

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