

WORK OUT LIKE A STAR

BY COLLEEN OAKLEY

Personal trainer. For me, the term conjures up images of Buckhead Betties—wives of investment bankers and pro golfers who fill their days with tennis lessons, manicures and lunching—working out for an hour every day in the privacy of their own W. Paces Ferry McMansion in order to show off their perfectly toned triceps at the next charity gala. They don't have to schlep to the nearest L.A. Fitness and elbow their way onto an elliptical, sweating with the masses.

Am I bitter? You bet. If I could afford it, I would hire someone whose sole job was to come to my house every day and kick my butt into shape. That's why I was intrigued by Café Physique, a new Atlanta fitness company that touts its ability to bring in-home personal training to "ordinary people."

As ego-crushing as it may be, I'm about as ordinary as they come, particularly if "ordinary" in this case means "not rich." And I had flirted with the idea of hiring a personal trainer before, at the chain gym that I belong to. They wanted a \$150 registration fee (even though I was already a member of the gym) and \$60 per session. And I still had to drive to the gym every day. I'll stick with the stair climber, thanks.

So I went to Café Physique's Web site and saw that for the same price of \$60 per session, a trainer will come to my house, bringing all the equipment I might need, and there's no registration fee. Plus, if a friend joins me, the price drops to \$40 a person. While I still couldn't afford that five days a week, it's still a bargain compared to my gym. On to the next question: Is the workout any good? I signed up for a session.

Amber O'Neal, founder and owner of Café Physique, showed up on my doorstep with a big fitness ball and a gym bag. She smiled at me as I opened the door. "Ready to work?" It was an uncommonly warm February day, so we went out to the driveway in the back of my house to get started. She pulled out a green stretchy rubber workout band from her bag and instructed me where to place it under my foot and how to hold it to do the first exercise: bicep curls. I was skeptical that such a small, lightweight

band could create a challenging workout, and I told her as much. She smiled, "Typically, men are concerned about the same thing; if they're not lifting a heavy dumbbell, then they feel like they're not working out. I'll tell you what I tell them: Just give it a try, and we'll see how you feel about it after a few exercises." She was right. I'm in fairly good shape, but I could feel my arm muscles beginning to fatigue after just two sets.

Over the next hour, she took me through a series of exercises working my major muscle groups and utilizing different workout tools—the bands, a small six-pound rubber ball, a "clapper" that she holds while you karate kick it with your foot. But the best part was that she analyzed my living space and showed me how to take different areas of my house—the back staircase off the deck and different wooden support poles, for example—and turn them into serious workout machines. If I went to a sports store and purchased the few inexpensive pieces of equipment that she showed up with, I could essentially do this workout every day—without her. As if she were reading my mind, she said, "I like to show clients how easy and inexpensive staying in shape can be. Not everyone can afford to hire us to come to their house every day or even twice a week.

So I show them exercises they can do on their own—without a big fancy gym."

I was impressed. And I felt like she really wanted me to succeed in fitness, whether I chose her to be my full-time trainer or not. Or it was a really sneaky sales gimmick. Either way, I totally believed her.

The next day, I headed to O'Neal's studio in Inman Park, where she also offers personal training, plus yoga and Pilates classes. She shares an old remodeled house with a chiropractor and teaches classes in what's technically the living room. The atmosphere is soothing and quiet, and

it's not much different than being in your own home, which is what she was going for—a workout experience that's completely different than the mass market gyms. I took Pilates, which was every bit as good as other Pilates classes I've been in, with the added bonus that it was a small class (just two people and the instructor) so I got extra personal attention about my form and breathing techniques. The best part about these classes? Prices start at \$10 a session for clients. When I lived in New York, I took Pilates for \$30 a class, so I almost fainted from the sticker shock.

The bottom line? While I'm not giving up my gym membership anytime soon, Café Physique is a place I will go back to. It's a workout experience that makes you feel, well ... a little less ordinary. **SP**

Colleen Oakley is a freelance writer in Atlanta and the former editor of Women's Health & Fitness magazine. She's no triathlete, but she enjoys being active and adventurous. Got a fitness challenge for her? E-mail her at colleen@sundaypaper.com.

Café Physique

608 Moreland Ave.
404-444-2857
www.cafephysique.com

PRICE: Yoga and Pilates start at \$10/class. Personal training starts at \$33/person for groups of 3.

FITNESS FACTOR: ★★★★★

FUN FACTOR: ★★★★★

New weekly fitness column!



Amber O'Neal (left) gets the ball rolling for motivating her clients to exercise.

CHRONIC VOMITING SHOULD BE EVALUATED

Q For more than a year, I have had episodes of vomiting. If nothing is in my stomach, nothing comes up, but I still have the response. I have no warning. No pain. It just happens. I kept a food journal, but could see no pattern. I am a 50-year-old woman. I'm on medication for blood pressure. I exercise regularly and eat healthy. My blood work was "perfect."

A Unfortunately, many medical conditions can lead to the symptoms you describe. You'll need further medical evaluation to uncover the source of the problem.

One possibility is that you have a stomach motility, or motor, problem. In these disorders, your stomach doesn't empty properly, causing vomiting and other symptoms, such as nausea or a feeling of fullness soon after you start to eat.

Gastroparesis (literally weakness of the stomach) is an example of a motility disorder. It can be diagnosed with a gastric emptying study, which measures the rate at which food leaves your stomach.

A second possibility is cyclic vomiting syndrome (CVS). Although this rare disorder occurs most often in children, it can affect adults. Many people with this disorder suffer from migraine headaches. Symptoms include sudden-onset vomiting that can be quite severe. Usually, it lasts for several days and then goes away without any other symptoms until the next episode of vomiting. The characteristic signs and symptoms of cyclic vomiting syndrome usually are the basis for diagnosis. This syndrome

can be triggered by smoking marijuana, among other causes. So if you use marijuana, stop. In many cases, medications used to prevent migraine attacks can help prevent or stop the episodes of vomiting.

A number of uncommon metabolic conditions, as well as problems in the brain, can cause the type of vomiting you describe. They also need to be ruled out. Examples

include failure of the adrenal gland (Addison's disease), severe diabetes or a brain tumor. Testing your electrolytes and glucose, and an MRI of the brain, can help to rule out these conditions.

If the vomiting occurs without other symptoms, and diagnostic tests don't reveal another underlying medical condition, you may have functional vomiting. Simply, this is unexplained vomiting. Functional vomiting sometimes responds to medications such as tricyclic antidepressants. In this situation, the antidepressants are not prescribed due to depression, but because they may effectively stop the vomiting.

The bottom line is that it's essential for you to see a gastrointestinal specialist for a full evaluation of your situation to find the underlying cause of your vomiting. —Nicholas Talley, M.D., Ph.D., Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville, Fla. **SP**

WEED MIGHT TRIGGER CYCLIC VOMITING SYNDROME.

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