

The early bird... gets fit

Local execs start their day with a pre-dawn workout

BY JANET MILLER
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Their cars snake through the empty, dark streets. The moon sheds a mellow light, and at shortly before 6 a.m., Ann Arbor seems like a ghost town.

Until a right turn into Hyperfit Boot Camp, located inside the One On One Athletic Club on Boardwalk. The parking lot is filled with cars and the facility glows with light, like fireworks on the Fourth of July.

There, three pre-dawn mornings each week, 20 to 30 people head for what will be, for many of them, the toughest part of their busy day: An hour's worth of push ups, squats, chin ups and suicides, short back-and-forth sprints.

"Anything in my day seems easier than this," said Jennifer Cornell, vice president of Eiler Communications, mid-way through a recent 6 a.m. workout. In the year since she joined the Boot Camp she not only toned her muscles, but also has dropped a dress size.

Doug Chapman is a military guy. That's evident in the first moments of his Hyperfit Boot Camp class as he barks commands - yes, he calls them commands - to his class of business owners, CEOs, physicians, attorneys and others. Chapman, a command fitness leader with the U.S. Navy who has helped prepare reservists for duty in the Middle East, started Hyperfit USA two years ago as a way to offer personal fitness training but in a group setting.

Boot Camp participants come before the sun rises for a number of reasons: For some, it's the only time in their hectic schedules. Others want to start the day with a bang: It gives them energy and helps them focus for the rest of the day. Others want to keep their evenings for their families, but don't want to miss the chance for keeping fit.

As a facial plastic surgeon at the University of Michigan Health System, Charles Boyd goes into surgery at 7:30 a.m. As associate chief of staff, he can be in committee meetings well after regular work hours. There's little surplus time for keeping fit. That's why he heads to Boot Camp three mornings a week.

Boyd said many longtime surgeons suffer from posture problems after spending so much of



Sessions offer a mix of strength and conditioning exercises. ROBERT RAMEY

their time bent over an operating table. He enrolled in the program six months ago, and notices a difference. "It increases my energy level all day long. I'm trimmer. And I'm not fatigued when I operate," he said.

And while some aerobics fitness programs may appeal more to women, Chapman's Boot Camp

is comfortable for men, Boyd said. "There are definitely Y chromosomes here."

Boot Camp offers strength and conditioning training, Chapman said, rather than focusing on a single aspect of fitness such as strength. Boot Camp improves

See **WORKOUT**, page 18

BIZLIFE



Boot Camp participants gather for a group photo.

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WORKOUT

Continued from page 15

cardiovascular health, but also works on strength, flexibility, endurance and more. "The magic behind the class is that there's specific tasking for specific results," Chapman said. One eye is always on his watch as Chapman leads his group from hamstring stretches to overhead squats to triceps pushups

and to the finale, what Chapman calls the gauntlet: A combination of drills that act as the workout climax.

Although he's been a top college athlete, Bill Orabone couldn't come close to touching his toes. "My flexibility was assessed in the bottom 10 percent for 70 year olds," he quipped. When it came time to give up playing basketball - he was getting too many injuries - he wanted to

find something to keep him in shape, work on his flexibility but also that would push him. "If I don't walk out of the gym feeling like I'm going to die, I don't feel like I've done anything," Orabone said. Boot Camp was the answer for Orabone, who retired from working with startup companies.

Boot Camp has had many benefits for George Wilbur, owner of Wilbur Plumbing in Ypsilanti. It's not only helped him lower his cholesterol and blood pressure, it's together time for Wilbur and his wife. They take the 6 a.m. class together.

Julie McFarland, chief executive officer of McNaughton & Gunn, Inc. printers, lost a staff member to a heart condition four years ago, and her own mother to cancer when her mother was just 42. She decided she would stay fit. "I don't want to miss all the things she missed," McFarland said.

She spends two to three hours a day on fitness, including the early morning Boot Camp. "It gets me up and going, while being able to spend time with my family in the evening," McFarland said.

While the physical benefits are obvious, Boot Camp also gives him a psychological edge, said Daniel Price, a Belleville attorney. And that helps him negotiate with other attorneys on his job, he said. "With the class, you have to push yourself until your muscles hurt and you know that's not so bad. So you can push some more. Well, the same thing is true at work. You have to push your self to your plateau, and then push some more."

There's also an unintended side benefit, said Cornell. "You don't think that working out would give you a chance to network. But one of the other class members sold me my house."

■ Janet Miller is a freelance writer.

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Boot Camp details

When: Boot Camp is held Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays with sessions at 6 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

Alternative: Chapman also offers CrossFit, a smaller and even more intense program, five days a week, along with CrossFit Kids.

Participants: There are roughly 200 Boot Camp participants and another 70 enrolled in CrossFit.

Cost: Boot Camp is \$40 for four classes per month, \$70 for eight classes per month or \$90 for an unlimited number of classes per month.

Contact: The Hyperfit Web site is at www.hyperfitusa.com and Doug Chapman can be reached through One On One at (734) 761-4440.