

Equalizer makes for portable, versatile workouts

ROSS O'DONNELL, Special to The Banner

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In a recent column on taking vacation time for yourself I mentioned a new piece of fitness equipment called, the Equalizer. I have had a few inquiries as to what an equalizer is.

The Equalizer is a simple, portable, yet multi-purpose and versatile piece of strength training equipment that works legs, arms, chest, back and core muscles as well as providing for cardio and flexibility training.

You use your own body weight as resistance and decide what level is right for you by "self-spotting". It allows the user full control over the amount of body-weight used for any given exercise.

The Equalizer was invented by Marc Lebert, a personal trainer who operates an in-home personal training service to clients in the Orangeville and surrounding area. The idea for the Equalizer came to Lebert out of a need to have clients work all their muscles effectively at home, something that would allow clients to perform modified strength training exercises. It has two sturdy bars that are 28 inches high, 24 inches in width with two feet for support and are constructed of light weight metal. It resembles a "walker" without wheels.

With the Equalizer even the least fit participants can perform exercises they could not normally do -- push-ups, tricep dips, squats, lunges, chin-ups -- by modifying the level of difficulty. Besides the obvious firming and tightening, strength training can also: aid in weight management by reducing fat, lower blood pressure, reduce the risk of diabetes, prevent osteoporosis, prevent lower back pain, and even improve cardio fitness. It is also well established that it is the most effective way to reduce the effects of aging.

Here are some general guidelines for resistance training.

Warm up before you work out. Walk on the spot, do jumping jacks or "self-spot" to make the first set of each exercise easier. These will warm up the muscles and joints.

Be sure you are in correct position for each exercise. Protect your back by maintaining good alignment (neutral spine) at all times.

Start at a fairly easy level. In general, perform three sets of 10 repetitions for each exercise.

Move your body through the entire range of motion. Lift and lower your body slowly and smoothly. If an exercise is performed quickly, you are likely to get injured. Do not "lock" your knees or elbows when extending your arms or legs.

Exhale as you lift your body, inhale as you lower it.

Stop if you feel pain during your workout. A "burning" sensation in the working muscles is ok but joint pain is not. Some muscle soreness for a day or two after your workout is normal.

Cool down after you work out. Stretching at this time is particularly effective, since the muscles are very

warm. Increased flexibility is an essential component of muscular fitness.

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