Special Report: **Staffing and Education**

fitness MANAGEMENT

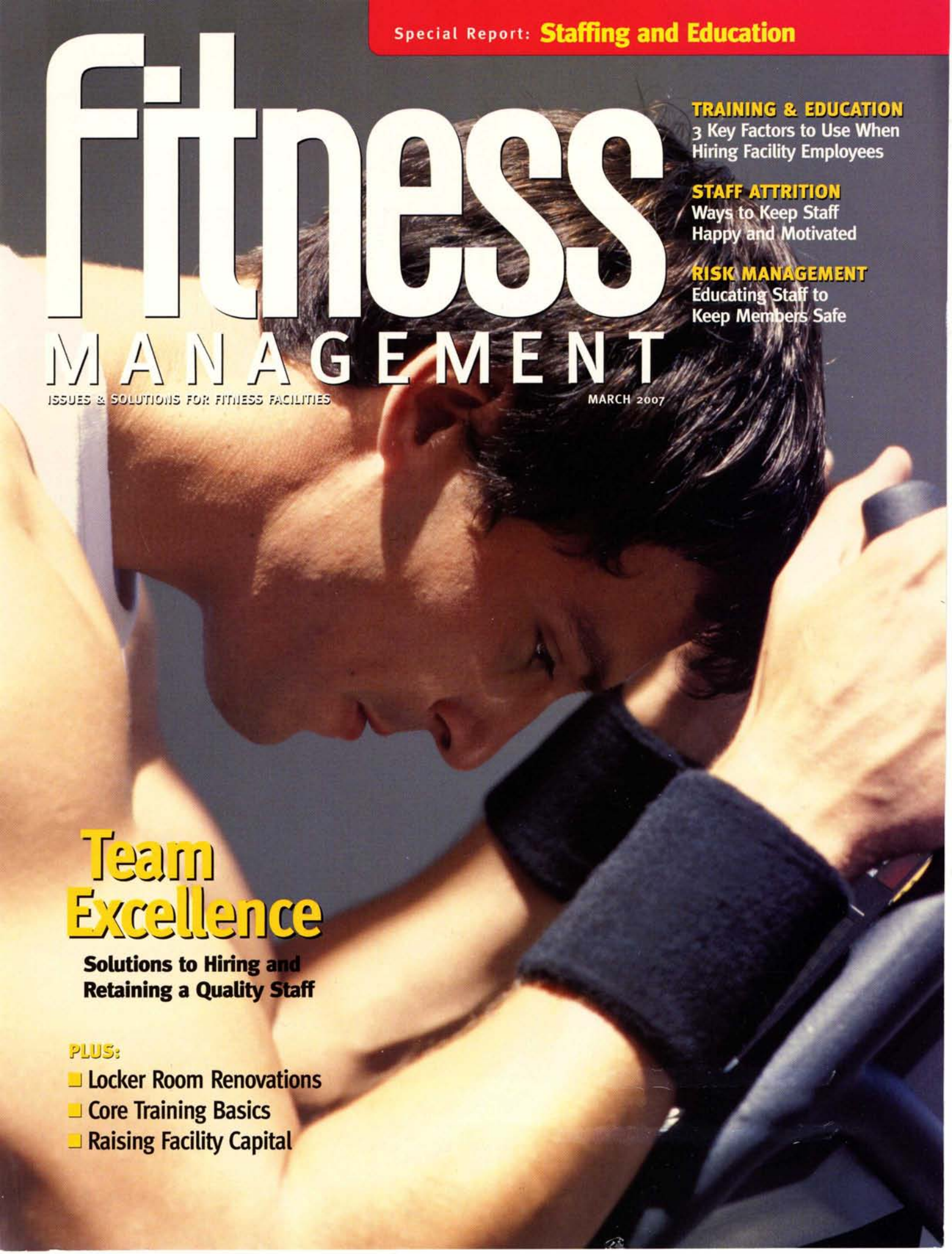
ISSUES & SOLUTIONS FOR FITNESS FACILITIES

MARCH 2007

TRAINING & EDUCATION
3 Key Factors to Use When Hiring Facility Employees

STAFF ATTRITION
Ways to Keep Staff Happy and Motivated

RISK MANAGEMENT
Educating Staff to Keep Members Safe



Team Excellence

Solutions to Hiring and Retaining a Quality Staff

PLUS:

- Locker Room Renovations
- Core Training Basics
- Raising Facility Capital

Does balance training reduce the risk of ankle injury?

A RECENT STUDY on balance training has gained considerable attention. Researchers found that high school athletes who practiced balance training had a significantly lower rate of ankle sprains compared to a similar group of athletes who didn't perform any preventive or balance training "beyond their normal conditioning exercises as directed by their coaches." (The balance training included five different balance activities that were performed on a flat surface and an unstable disc, referred to as a "balance board.")

The results of this study must be viewed with caution, however. The training performed by the comparison group was unregulated, which is a major limitation. In the process of performing their "normal conditioning exercises," the athletes could have performed just about anything. In fact, it's quite possible that their conditioning may have included some form of balance training. And, some athletes may not have participated in any form of preventive training whatsoever.

In another study, 52 female athletes were randomly assigned to one of three groups: One group practiced technical training in jumping and landing, another group performed balance training (on a balance board) and the third group wore external support (an orthosis). All three treatments were effective at reducing the risk of ankle sprains, but the technical training was slightly more effective.

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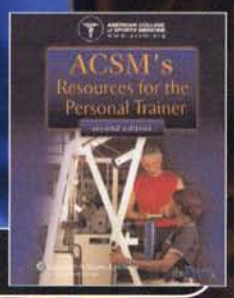

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Based on his oxygen intake, why didn't Lance Armstrong do better in the marathon?

Lance Armstrong has been described as "the best endurance athlete on the planet." Considering his athletic portfolio — winning the grueling Tour de France an unprecedented seven times in a row — who can argue otherwise?

Most pundits thought Armstrong would complete his first marathon in less than three hours (the 2006 New York City marathon), but some expectations ran higher: One professor of exercise physiology estimated under 2:10 (which is a world-class time for men). Although Armstrong finished in 869th place — about 50 minutes behind the winner — he posted a very respectable time of 2:59:36 (a pace of about 6:51 minutes per mile).

His maximum oxygen uptake, estimated to be at least 85 ml/kg/min during his string of victories in the Tour de France, is an important factor in efforts of long duration. But having a high maximum oxygen intake doesn't guarantee success. And, even though certain factors are valuable in both long distance cycling and long distance running, they're highly specific to the activity. For example, mechanical efficiency is a critical element of success. But cycling efficiently has no correlation with running efficiently. All told, Armstrong probably fared better in his first marathon than an elite marathon runner would in the Tour de France.

Does high fructose corn syrup cause obesity?

High fructose corn syrup is a synthetic sweetener created in the late 1960s. The manufacturing process starts with kernels of corn and ends up with a concoction of fructose and glucose. It's found in numerous foods and beverages, ranging from the fairly obvious (yogurt and sweetened beverages) to the totally unexpected (bread and tomato soup). A study showed that from 1970 to 1999, consumption rates of high fructose corn syrup have closely paralleled obesity rates in the United States. This has led to the conclusion that high fructose corn syrup causes obesity.

By all accounts, the rate of obesity in the U.S. has continued to climb steadily since 1999. Yet, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the per capita consumption of high fructose corn syrup has dropped from a peak of 45.4 pounds per year in 1999, to 42.2 pounds per year in 2005. It's unreasonable to think that the obesity epidemic can be narrowed down to one single ingredient. The cause of obesity is a function of two variables: eating too much and exercising too little. High fructose corn syrup has no nutritional value, but, with respect to being the cause of obesity, it's a miscast villain. **FM**

Matt Brzycki is coordinator of recreational fitness and wellness programs at Princeton University, Princeton, N.J. He has more than 22 years of experience at the collegiate level and has authored, co-authored or edited 14 books.

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