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Fit for a chief

Get Fit New Jersey

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Book review: Get Fit New Jersey!

■ BY MATT BRZYCKI

The New Jersey Council on Physical Fitness and Sports is an organization that offers information on fitness and promotes active lifestyles. Created in 1999, the council draws upon the expertise of 16 appointed members and numerous resource members. One of its most recent and ambitious projects is a book called *Get Fit New Jersey!* The book is written by 21 authorities from the Garden State who have countless years of experience working in fitness-related professions. The layout is truly a work of art and must be seen to be appreciated. More importantly, you'll find a wealth of material in the book that you and your family can use to initiate a fitness program or tweak an existing one.



Matt Brzycki

The Chapters

This book is bursting at the seams with useful information, high-quality photographs and eye-grabbing illustrations. Here's a thumbnail sketch of 15 of the 21 chapters that are found among the book's 230 pages:

Basic Anatomy

Written by a high-school biology teacher, this chapter covers the basics of your muscles and how they function. It's an excellent primer for giving you fundamental information on such things as the different types of muscle, muscle-fiber types and how the muscles contract. Also included is a handy chart that summarizes the chapter's discussion of the location and function of your major muscles. A "must read" is the section on adaptations to training.

Flexibility Training

This chapter details the who, what, why and when of stretching. You'll also find descriptions of 10 stretching movements with supplemental photographs that depict their proper performance.

Aerobic Training

Were you ever winded during a foot pursuit or shortly afterwards? In this chapter, you'll learn the benefits of aerobic training as well as information on several important principles of training (such as the Principle of Overload and the Principle of Specificity). Additionally, there are descriptions of the components of a training session and the components of the exercise prescription. All of the information is based upon the recommendations of the American College of Sports Medicine.

Strength Training

Detailed material is given in this chapter about 10 guidelines for increasing muscular strength in a safe and efficient manner. This includes recommendations for appropriate levels of intensity, methods of progression, numbers of sets and repetitions, checkpoints for proper technique, sequence of exercises, frequency of training and record keeping.

Myths and Misconceptions

The fitness industry continues to be inundated by an endless stream of myths and misconceptions. This chapter debunks

seven of the more prevalent ones. Did you ever hear that doing lots and lots of abdominal exercises will selectively reduce fat from your abdominal area? Or did you ever read that lifting weights will make you muscle bound and lose flexibility? Well, you'll discover the reasons why these and other widespread beliefs are nothing more than myths and misconceptions.

Choosing a Gym/Personal Trainer

So you've made the decision to join a gym. Or perhaps you're shopping around for another gym. Do you know how to choose the one that's most appropriate for you (and maybe your family)? Among other things, this chapter tells you what to observe during the tour of the gym and gives you pointers about membership fees. What about personal training? Do you know the main questions that you need to ask a personal trainer to help you decide if that individual is right for you? You'll find out in this chapter.

Exercising Outdoors

Can't get to a gym for a workout? This chapter offers insights into how you can exercise in the great outdoors. Possible locations include neighborhood schools, nearby beaches and local parks. A great feature is a detailed graphic that summarizes a total-body workout that can be done at a park using little or no equipment. Also given are sample programs for beginner, intermediate and advanced individuals.

Overcoming Plateaus

Sooner or later in your fitness program, you'll hit the inevitable and dreaded plateau. In this chapter, you'll learn some effective methods that you can employ to overcome those plateaus. Of particular note are tactics for avoiding monotony and the resultant boredom in your program by manipulating different training variables.

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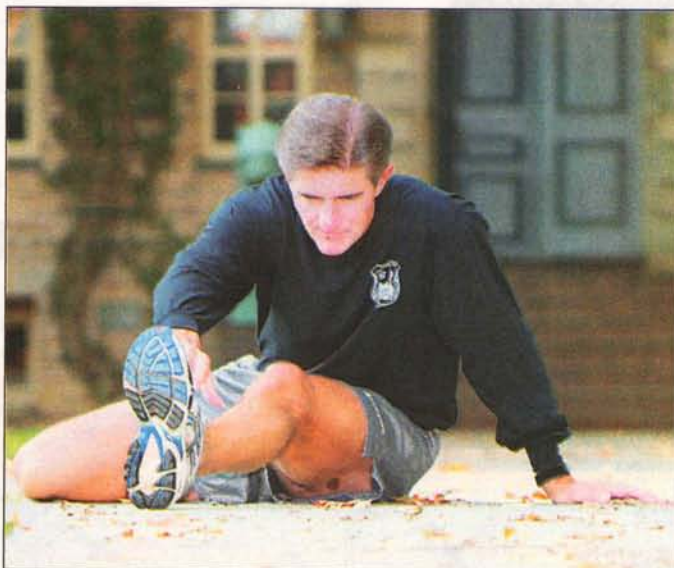


PHOTO BY DENIS NILAND

Princeton University Department of Public Safety Deputy Chief Charles Davall, former Princeton Borough police chief, stretches prior to his workout on campus.

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Goal Setting

One of the most overlooked aspects of a fitness program is the setting of goals. The chapter starts by guiding you through some self-evaluation in your eating habits and your exercise regimen. The guts of the chapter are instructions on how to develop short-term and long-term goals.

Injury Prevention

At some point in performing your job as a police officer, there's a very good chance that you'll get dinged up. Written by a sports medical physician, this chapter details not only injury prevention but also injury recognition. In addition, you'll learn some simple steps for self-treating injuries.

Nutrition

This very important and highly informational chapter is written by a registered dietician. Although nutrition can be boring and complicated, the content of this chapter is presented in an enjoyable and easy-to-read manner. Moreover, the material is scientifically based minus the ubiquitous hype that accompanies most discussions of nutrition.

Weight Management

Few other areas of fitness are more saturated with misinformation than weight management. But this chapter will set you straight. Discussions consist of the concept of ideal bodyweight, the impact of calories and diets along with simple steps to make healthy food choices. Also included are frank points on skipping meals, snacking and eating out. The chapter concludes with comments on the role of exercise in weight management.

Female Fitness

Not to be forgotten are the special needs of female police officers. Thorough yet understandable information is provided for women on the many benefits of physical activity, the myth of masculinity, exercising during pregnancy, the female athlete triad and osteoporosis.

Cancer Prevention

In all probability, you know someone who has been ravaged by cancer. In this chapter, you'll learn facts about cancer as well as the important roles of physical activity and healthy eating in its prevention.

Youth Sportsmanship

Many of you have children who participate in youth sports. And unless you've lived under a rock for the past few years, you know that sportsmanship – or, rather, bad sportsmanship – has gotten a lot of unwanted press. Reading this chapter will arm you with information on the developmental needs of youth and how parents can support those needs. The chapter also offers you guidance on conflict resolution in order to minimize inappropriate behavior. Those who coach youth sports or offer their services to a Police Athletic League will also benefit from the material in this chapter.

THE BOTTOM LINE

In short, this compendium of fitness information is readable and reliable. Now here's the best news of all: The book is absolutely FREE; it can be downloaded from <http://www.nj.gov/health/fhs/njcdfs/getfit.shtml>.

Matt Brzycki is the coordinator of Recreational Fitness and Wellness at Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey. A former Marine Drill Instructor, he has authored, co-authored or edited 15 books on strength and fitness, including SWAT Fitness (available at www.operationaltactics.org).

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Justin Mang, MD

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