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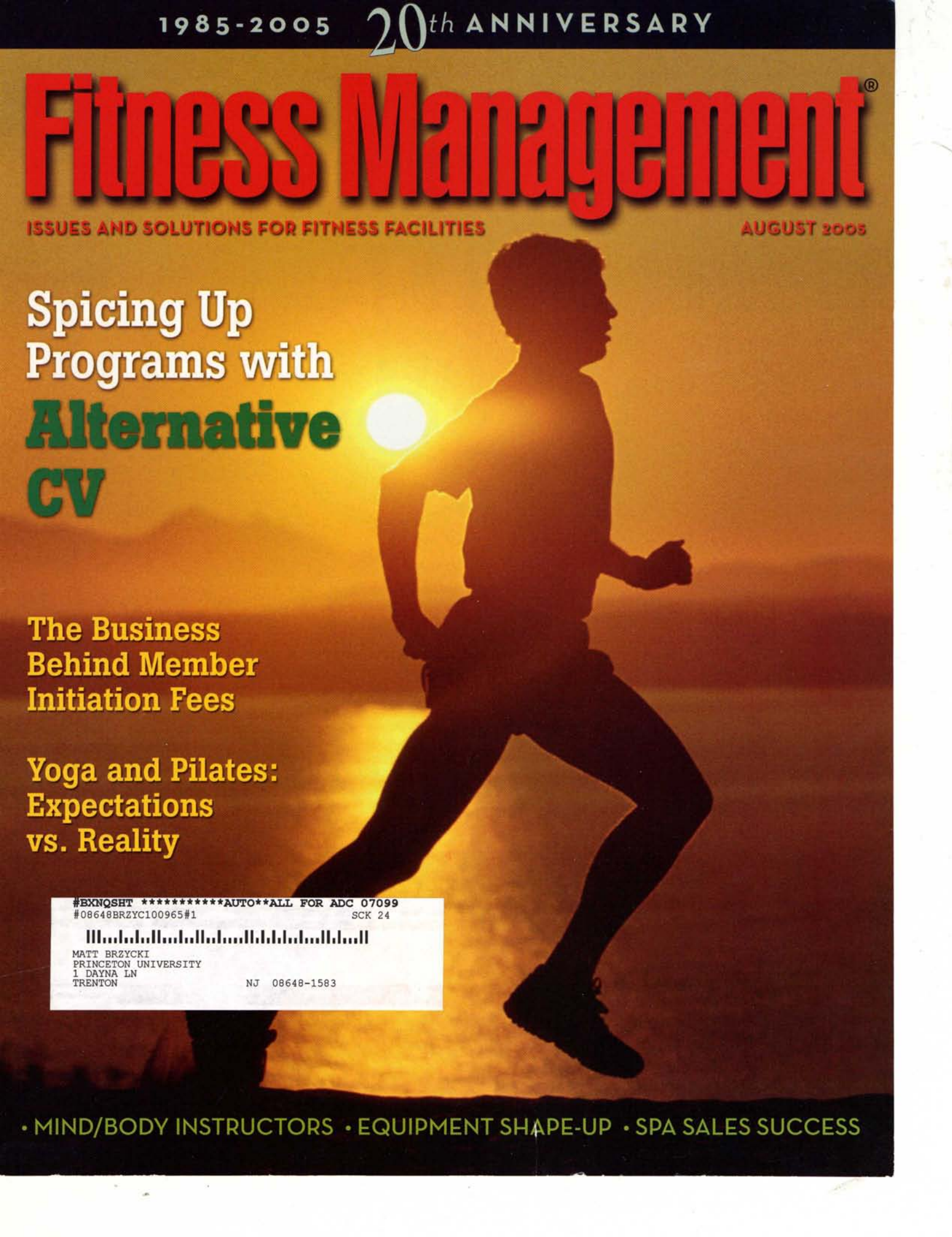
ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS FOR FITNESS FACILITIES

AUGUST 2005



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Q&A

[BY MATT BRZYCKI]

To lose weight, is it best to eat every three hours?

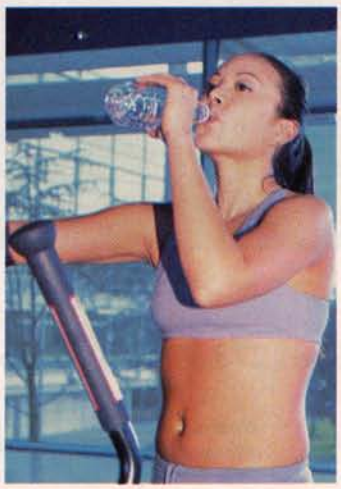
In the never-ending saga of diet themes, one of the latest revolves around the idea that it's not necessarily what you eat but when you eat. Does this notion have any value?

For weight loss, many authorities recommend eating more frequent — but smaller — meals. It follows, then, that people who want to lose weight should eat every few hours. However, there's nothing magical or physiological about eating every three hours. Granted, some people need a degree of regularity and structure and this is certainly provided by a schedule that calls for eating at regular intervals. But it doesn't have to be done exactly every three hours. Also, don't forget the basic foundation of weight loss: Caloric expenditure must be greater than caloric consumption. **FM**

Should fitness enthusiasts limit their intake of water?

A front-page article in *The New York Times* (Study Cautions Runners to Limit Intake of Water) quickly sparked nationwide concern about the intake of water when exercising. Much of the article was based on a study that appeared in *The New England Journal of Medicine* (Hyponatremia among Runners in the Boston Marathon). The study examined 488 runners who provided blood samples at the finish line of the 2002 Boston Marathon. The researchers found that 13 percent of the runners had hyponatremia or overhydration (which is also referred to as "water intoxication"). Three of the runners had "critical hyponatremia."

The primary risk factor for this condition is thought to be excessive fluid intake (which essentially dilutes the level of sodium in the blood and creates an electrolyte imbalance). In the study, 35 percent of the runners drank so much fluid that they actually gained weight during the marathon. One individual was nine pounds heavier at the end of the race! (It's important to note that the study had several shortcomings that weren't mentioned in the article, including a small sample size and reliance on self-reported data. Plus, imagine being asked to fill out a questionnaire immediately after running 26.2 miles.)



While overhydration is certainly a concern, the take-home message of the newspaper article was that exercisers should restrict their intake of water. As a result, countless people were no doubt frightened into thinking that they should refrain from drinking fluids.

Certainly, endurance athletes should be aware of the potential for overhydration. But for the average fitness enthusiast, overhydration is extremely rare. With hot, humid weather in full swing throughout most of America, fitness enthusiasts must be aware that proper hydration is absolutely critical. It's recommended that individuals weigh themselves before and after activity and adjust their fluid intakes as needed. **FM**

How many calories are used during a Curves workout?

In a nutshell, the Curves program involves a circuit of 12 strength training exercises, or "stations," performed on hydraulic equipment. Each of the stations is used for a period of 30 seconds. In between these stations, the participant completes 30 seconds of some type of aerobic activity, such as stationary jogging or walking. A workout consists of two circuits. This takes about 25 minutes, with another five minutes set aside for post-workout stretching and cool down.

The "30-minute workout" used a total of 184 calories.

Researchers at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse conducted a study to determine the effectiveness of the Curves workout. The study involved 15 healthy female subjects (members of two local Curves facilities) with an average age of 42. In the 25-minute circuit, they used an average of 163 calories (about 6.42 calories per minute). The five-minute stretch and cool down used another 21 calories. Thus, the "30-minute workout" used a total of 184 calories. The researchers noted that this caloric expenditure was similar to walking at four miles per hour for 30 minutes on a flat surface. **FM**

Do you have questions that you need answered? Email them to edit@fitnessmgmt.com.

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 13 books.