

## SPORTSMED CENTER FOR FITNESS

Written by June Grayson, Photographed by Richard Grayson

According to Dr. Richard Dominguez in his book, TOTAL BODY TRAINING, "Sports medicine can help you live up to your physical Potential: Help for the healthy, hope for the injured, and aid to those who want maximum performance." It doesn't hurt, either, to have a membership at SportsMed Center for Fitness in Wheaton, Illinois.

Doctors Stephen Baker, Richard Dominguez, and Paul Groen are orthopedic surgeons with an enthusiastic commitment to sports medicine.

They are athletes themselves, as well as team physicians and consultants to several professional athletic teams, Midwest colleges, and high schools.

"We kept seeing people who became injured trying to become healthy - through no fault of their own. Many times these injuries occurred in small fitness facilities. We found a basic ignorance about how exercise should be conducted, what caused the injuries, and what over-exercising is," according to Dr. Paul Groen.

"We started out by doing consulting to health clubs about how to develop safe exercise programs. Finally we came to the point where we said - 'What we really need to do is build our own model health club, where the main emphasis is on SAFE exercise,'" Dr. Groen continues.

To the over 2,000 fitness devotees who are members of SportsMed, they succeeded admirably. This fitness center boasts of a 12 lap banked and cushioned indoor running track, a 60 foot lap swimming pool, whirlpool, steamrooms, sauna, exercise studio, free weights, basketball, volleyball and badminton courts, and progressive resistance equipment including both Nautilus and Eagle machines. All supervisors have degrees, usually in exercise physiology, and all instructors are

certified.

You can't just walk into SportsMed and plunk down the money for a membership, however. Each prospective member has an initial fitness evaluation by an exercise physiologist involving a submaximal stress test, fitness parameters, and culminating in a personal exercise prescription.

In addition, area doctors can write their own prescriptions for their patients for rehabilitation therapy and cardiovascular exercise programs under the constant supervision of the center's professional attendants.

How could so much be accomplished since the center opened in September, 1986?

"It was a horrendous undertaking for us," explains Dr. Groen. "Although we had a small physiotherapy and exercise ????? in our previous office building, we could not have started this facility from scratch. We were fortunate that we were able to buy an office building and warehouse previously owned by MAP (Medical Assistance Program) by rolling over the equity in our previous office."

"We moved our orthopedic offices into the office building in the fall of 1985 and immediately set about converting

the warehouse into our fitness center dream," continues Dr.

Groen.

"We had hoped to secure outside financing but when that fell through, the three of us continued on our own, determined to see it through."

"We bought the building complex as a three man partnership. We established a corporation to own and develop the fitness center."

"For the last three years, we have funneled all of our energies and all of our financial resources from our orthopedic practices into the center. Actually, we are pleased that it has done so well since we opened in September, 1986. We hope that the center will be self-sustaining in another year and then we can work on our indebtedness for the building."

"In our business dealings we always remember that we are primarily physicians and we don't try to be businessmen other than providing the entrepreneurial component and medical expertise. We always contract with the best outside consultants we can find to put our concepts into effect."

Dr. Groen believes that the "fitness craze" will continue but that it will develop into medical necessity.

"The medical problems we see today," explains Dr.

Groen, "are primarily lifestyle problems. How to live, what to eat, how to be active, what habits to make or break. People know enough already to better their lives and increase their life span even if they don't incorporate those principles into their lives."

"We predict that insurance companies are going to demand certain levels of fitness if you want to obtain insurance and they are going to put surcharges on people who are not fit."

"We have some of the answers here at SportsMed."

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