



"Look into my eyes," says your reflection. Resist the urge to drink it in.

The Green Routine

A Bay Area firm takes exercise training outdoors.

BY MARIANNE LUCCHESI HAMILTON

Summer will soon give way to Fall, and Fall to Winter, but that doesn't mean you should head indoors for your exercise needs. Los Gatos-based fitness company Ultimate Body Potential has a seemingly endless array of programs to get you motivated and keep you in the great outdoors.

UBP (formerly Ultimate Outdoor Fitness) helps couch potatoes, the semi-fit, and serious athletes get into shape—and stay there—with workout programs that are actually fun. What's the hook? You won't

find yourself bored on the treadmill, or listlessly lifting weights at your local health club. With Ultimate Body Potential, the outdoors becomes your gym.

UBP owner Michelle Van Otten started the company after training in Mill Valley with Tina Vindum, creator of Outdoor Action Fitness—one of the Bay Area's first firms to train clients exclusively outdoors. Within three months, having reduced her body fat by 10 percent, Van Otten knew she was onto something huge.

"By doing a workout outdoors, the body burns 12 percent more calories, and 32 percent more fat than indoors," Van Otten reveals. "When it's colder, the body has to work harder to regulate itself. So those chilly winter mornings are really the best time to work out!"

A typical UBP program will bring participants into contact with parts of the South Bay they rarely see; workouts take place on mountain trails, hills, streams, rock formations, parks, playgrounds, stadium stairs, and other sites. Sure, you think, but what about those March days when the rain never stops? Says Van Otten, "It's really about what you wear. Think about it: you go skiing on days when it's snowing, but with the right gear you're fine. Why

not exercise when it's raining? It's a lot more stimulating to be outside than to be stuck in a gym."

When you're tired, out of shape, and not the least motivated to begin an exercise regimen, such a chirpy challenge can be profoundly annoying. After all, Van Otten probably never met an article of spandex clothing she didn't love, right?

Wrong. Extremely wrong. Don't let her trim physique and glowing complexion fool you: Van Otten knows precisely what it's like to have a negative body image. In her late teens, she tipped the scales at 190 pounds. Following what she terms "a mental breakdown" over the state of her health, she began reading everything she could find about nutrition, fitness, and exercise. Though she initially labored in investment banking and trading, health remained her lifelong passion. In 2003, it became her career. Thanks to America's obsession with health (but seeming inability to achieve it), UBP's phone has been ringing ever since.

Just in time to prevent those pumpkin pie pounds, Van Otten and operations manager Angie Manning have created the "Ultimate 90-Day Weight-Loss Program," a customized, intensive plan for clients aiming to change their formerly wicked ways. Trust us: by the time you finish this routine, you may well become The South Bay's Biggest Loser.

The program begins with metabolic and cardio testing, to gauge your daily caloric requirements and heart-health. Through the use of a mask that measures oxygen intake and CO₂ output, a heart-rate monitor, and treadmill, Van Otten and her staff can quickly determine just how many calories their clients actually need each day. A full athletic assessment is also part of the process.

Then Van Otten and Manning craft a personalized exercise program that marries strengthening and conditioning exercises, cardio workouts, and nutritional counseling. The latter includes a three-hour visit to Whole Foods, where clients learn to make proper food choices and select



Michelle Van Otten

items that will help them stay within their caloric boundaries. Clients also participate in regular group-coaching teleconferences. And, should you be so inclined, the program offers a complete detox – colonic-style – at Radiance Health Solutions in Campbell.

Once you're purified, your program will find you climbing out of bed for anywhere from two to six morning workouts each week, depending on your beginning fitness level. Clients can choose from sessions at 5:30, 7:30, or 9:00. Yes, that's *am*.

You may believe that 5:30 is just about when REM sleep should begin. Then again, watching the sun come up over the hills while you're doing crunches on a Swiss Ball, or scooting up a mountain trail under a full moon, are experiences not to be missed. Nor should you have to watch one more *Full House* rerun while you're stuck on the stationary bike at the gym. **TV**

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