



"Look into my eye
says your reflection. Re-
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The Green Routine

A Bay Area firm takes exercise training outdoors.

BY MARIANNE LUCCHESI HAMILTON

The average American ends the holidays with a seven-pound weight gain. So, what are you going to do about it?

Put down that stale Christmas cookie, stop gnawing on the candy cane, and get serious about your health. You don't have to be bored spitless in a gym to do it: Ultimate Body Potential has a boat-load of cool ways to undo your holiday excesses.

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 the chilly winter mornings are really the best time to work out!"

A typical UBP program will bring participants in contact with parts of the South Bay they rarely see. Workouts take place on mountain trails, hills, streambeds, 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

Michelle Van Otten



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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 for New Year's resolutions, 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,

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SPORTS & ADVENTURE FEATURE



Four people, together,
can run 60 mph!

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 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 *a.m.*

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. **EW**

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