



ADAM SINGS IN THE TIMBER | THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

Katie Cuedyer jogs while she listens to a workout on her FitP3 player at the Great Bridge/Hickory Family YMCA in Chesapeake. Cuedyer says she works out six to seven days a week and uses the player about three times a week.

TUNING IN, GETTING FIT

With a FitP3 digital player, you can liven up a workout by downloading a program

By Elizabeth Simpson
The Virginian-Pilot

Grace Lazenby has abs you could bounce a quarter off and biceps that look sculpted from steel.

She has a lean, mean, sweaty glow to her face, a degree in exercise physiology and a list of celebrities she personally trains.

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come to iTread 40 minutes. ... OK, here we go, let's get warmed up ... nice, long strides, improving every single muscle in your lower body. ... Oh my goodness, sounds like we have to get a little faster!"

Thankfully, I can turn Grace off or on at will, and she can't see me huffing and puffing or stopping to retie my shoe. (It's loose!)

Anyone who owns an iPod or an MP3 player knows you can download exercise programs from Web sites, but those of us who haven't sprung for digital players - or who have spent all our money keeping our kids outfitted with them -

want to try it?

The YMCA's FitP3 program is a joint product of MYE Entertainment and NetPulse, two California-based fitness entertainment companies.

The digital players are available for \$30 at local YMCA of South Hampton Roads branches. YMCA representatives say that price is about their cost for acquiring the players.

You can quickly download exercise and music programs at YMCA "fitness download stations." Personal iPods and MP3 players cannot be used to download the programs.

The FitP3 players can be used outside the YMCA, and new programs are available each

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A NEW TOOL IN THE FITNESS BOX

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workout pass swiftly. There's even some soothing yoga, with flutes and drums, for more introspective pursuits.

I generally plow through a few miles on the treadmill – same speed, same incline – hoping a 24-hour news channel will distract me long enough to finish.

But Grace has different ideas for me today.

"Come on, have fun with it," she tells me. "This is where your legs start to click in, this is where you start to get into your groove, this is where you start to feel good. ... Stay ahead of the pack. ... Come on, stay with me."

Have fun with it. Right. I'm with you, Grace. How much longer?

Two local Ys started demonstrating the FitP3 a couple of weeks ago, and each branch now has the system up and running. The local Y system is the first in the country to install it.

Linda Reiske, health and fitness director at the Great Bridge/Hickory Y, said the FitP3 players are geared to what they call "health seekers."

To understand the term, you need to know that about 20 percent of exercisers do it faithfully, with nary an excuse or complaint. You've seen them, their iPods strapped to their sweaty arms, a near euphoric look on their faces.

Another 20 percent rarely darken the door of the gym.

Then there are folks in between who want to be healthier but need a little prodding. Maybe they'll sign up for a class, then let it lapse after a few months.

Maybe they're intimidated by their svelte gym mates, befuddled by the electronics of the equipment or just plain bored.

Lisa Ward, 42, sets herself in that middle ground. "I'm not a professional gym person," says the mother of two teens. "I'm just a lady trying to lose some pounds."

She tried one of the FitP3 players last week, choosing a 20-minute program with some rock tunes for the treadmill. She says she definitely worked out harder than usual, and her red face attests to that.

"It's very user-friendly. It's basic. If somebody is self-motivated, this is good. A real



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The FitP3 takes Katie Cuedyer through her paces. The device lets users digitally download an exercise routine.

person holds you accountable, though."

But sometimes, let's face it, there are errands to run. Plus, that little off-on button comes in handy.

"Those arms are pumping," Grace reminds me. "No touching the top of the treadmill. Take your hands off the side of the treadmill and start pumping them. There's no help, just you. Come on, dig. You gotta grab it. You gotta recruit every single muscle in that lower body."

Normally, I will give in to my weaker side and knock off a little early, or take it easy toward the end, punching down the incline, grabbing hold of the sides for dear life. What's wrong with a 20-minute cool down?

Grace, though, is having none of that. The good thing is she assures me that the steep incline she just told me to key in will be followed by a breather.

"This is your biggest hill of the day, so take it, embrace it

and use it. Try to punch your speed up.

"... You're almost to the top. I promise."

No, you're lying to me, Grace, you just want me to work harder.

But I keep at it. Finally, she gives me a break, reducing the incline but keeping up the pace, asking me to note how fleet my legs feel.

"They feel light, as light as this song. It's almost as though you can't see them, they're moving so fast, so easy."

Well, not that easy, and don't forget that boiled-spaghetti sensation in my knees.

"You're going to end this run on a hill. It's not really a hill, it's a speed bump."

No, it's a hill, Grace. And who ends going up a hill?!

"This is where your body is just kind of flowing, coasting along, kind of cruising. Take your speed up. ... This is how we shock our bodies. We have to keep changing everything up, every single day."

And that is the key, I think, changing things up. While the FitP3 is no substitute for a real trainer, and it's not a fail-safe way to keep you devoted to sweat, it's a good way to freshen up your routine.

"... Don't touch that dial, give me one more minute. ... As I always say, you can do anything for just one minute. One step at a time. One minute at a time. ... What an amazing, amazing run. And what a beautiful finish."

I restrain myself from pump-

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upcoming fitness events

Keep your balance Betty Perkins-Carpenter, an author and former Olympic diving coach, will speak at Westminster-Canterbury on Chesapeake Bay at 2 p.m. Thursday.

Her book "How to Prevent Falls: Better Balance, Independence and Energy in 6 Simple Steps" teaches seniors six steps they can take to reduce injuries and fears associated with falling.

Westminster-Canterbury on Chesapeake Bay is at 3100 Shore Drive, Virginia Beach. Contact Thomasita Reynolds, fitness coordinator, at (757) 496-1692 or Thomasita_Reynolds@wcbay.com.

Run! An 8K run (4.97 miles), 2-mile walk and a 1-mile fun run and wheelchair race will be held June 14 to benefit Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters. The event will start and finish at CHKD.

Registration begins at 6:30 a.m., with the 8K run and 2-mile walk kicking off at 7:45. The 1-mile fun run and wheelchair race begin at 9:15.

"Ommm" for bone density The Space Above in Norfolk is offering a six-week session of yoga classes designed for women interested in preventing osteoporosis.

Florence Cristelli, a certified yoga instructor specializing in osteoporosis prevention, will teach the class Tuesdays, beginning June 3, from 8:30 to 10 a.m. Cost is \$60. Drop-ins are available on a limited basis for \$15 per class with permission from the instructor.

The Space Above is at 202 W. 22nd St. To register, call (757) 622-2474.