

Working out: turning cellulite into muscle

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SCOTTS VALLEY — You know how hard it is to get out and exercise when you're chained to your desk job forty hours per week?

If only your typewriter, computer terminal, ballpoint pen or switchboard were Nautilus equipment. You'd have one shapely set of ten fingers.

You feel the flabs of extra flesh clinging to your midriff as you reach for 35 cents to buy another snack from the office vending machine. You know the cellulite is busy dimpling your thighs and stomach. And the cholesterol silently packs around your heart. You feel the nerve endings split themselves one more time as you drink the tenth cup of coffee of the day.

It's not that you don't want to exercise. You'd be out there jogging, swimming, lifting weights, aerobic dancing, or at least hanging upside down in your inversion boots, if only you had the time. You know you would. You'd bet a chocolate truffle on it.

Well, that's your excuse, but it wouldn't be good enough at the Interdesign electronics firm.

Interdesign makes it easy for employees to exercise. The company has its own gym open 24-hours per day. Employees can work out on exercise

equipment during lunchtime or breaks, then shower and return to work. Professional fitness consultants design fitness programs for interested employees. The company even has its own recreation council — a committee of representatives from each department.

So far, 46 of 225 employees have signed up for fitness programs, said Terry Schmucker, head of employees services. Presumably, the others have found other excuses for not participating. Average age of an Interdesign employee is 30.

Idris Kothari, 33, a production manager at the company, works out each lunchtime. Not only is he developing more muscles, but eating less. "I take a very short lunch," said Kothari Tuesday, as he vigorously pumped a weight machine, sweat pouring from his brow.

In the days when he didn't work out, Kothari said he was a "coffeholic. Now I drink little."

Also, said Kothari, he hasn't missed a day of work since he started using the gym when the company first opened its Scotts Valley plant in the fall.

When Interdesign was located in Sunnyvale — and had no gym — Kothari said he was spending \$1,000 per year for membership in a private gym.

The cost to employees to use the Interdesign gym is nothing.

Schmucker said the gym is consistent with the company policy that as people work out, they are more productive at their jobs.

"I'm a lot more awake in the afternoons," said Kothari.

John Bailey, 35, a production and processing manager, uses the gym to help advance his standings in marathon running competition. He has run in the Napa Valley, San Francisco and Paul Masson marathons and struggles now to break a three-hour time to qualify for the Boston Marathon.

The idea of the gym, said Schmucker, was supported by company president, Robert Townley, who "enjoys working out."

She said the gym is not only a good company drawing card in recruiting new employees, but a way of keeping them happy at the company.

"Working out becomes an important part of the day," said Schmucker.

The gym is not the only unusual aspect of the company. Employees there work 10-hour shifts, four days per week, which gives them three-day weekends every week.