

EXERPHILE

Mapping your way to better fitness

Smile — you're on camera doing squats

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FOR THE CALGARY HERALD

What is it?

The Body Map fitness program is a computer-based assessment tool that involves photographing you doing a series of squats, analysing your posture, then coming up with a customized fitness program for you.

Developed by the National Academy of Sports Medicine in the U.S., it's aimed at promoting proper muscular balance, establishing optimal postural control and developing core strength and neuromuscular efficiency.

Much like an ex-wife, the Body Map can point out your deficiencies with laser-like precision; the difference is the Body Map works under the premise that change is possible.

The postural analysis component of the Body Map is a quick and simple process that takes just 15 minutes to perform and will provide vital information to set you en route to your fitness goals in just three easy steps.

To start, you do a series of dynamic (moving) squats.

This makes sense, as the squat is probably the best exercise of all to reveal how we sit, stand and carry our bodies in everyday life.

There are five sets of squats performed in all: one facing the camera, one in profile, one with your back to the camera and a set of single leg squats.

The exercises are all photographed as you move through your range of motion and the pictures are saved for analysis.

Second, the images of your exercise are superimposed over a grid identifying un-

natural weight shifts, imbalances and functional asymmetries. Finally, a series of stretches and strengthening exercises are provided to address any deficiency or imbalance picked up during the assessment.

Who would love it?

Three groups of people can benefit from the Body Map program.

Facility managers looking for a consistent method of assessment and a way to track the physical progress of their members will find it useful, as will personal trainers wanting a tool to help in the identification of postural concerns from which they could develop their programs.

Most importantly, the Body Map is a tool for those attempting to exercise again after a long hiatus. Most new or "renewed" exercise participants are overwhelmed by the amount of equipment, the number of exercises and the plethora of advice churned out by the media, friends and the fitness facility itself.

When most of us go to a new gym or start to exercise again, we just putz around doing what we vaguely remember from high school phys-ed classes or the last Jane Fonda video.

The Body Map serves to correct that by identifying our structural weaknesses and recommending exercises and stretches in a specific order; it prints out your workout complete with sets, repetitions, exercise diagrams and details, leaving nothing to guesswork.

Who would hate it?

Personal trainers or clubs

that provide cookie-cutter programs may not like it.

The klutz factor

From a co-ordination standpoint it's no more difficult than a doctor's visit.

What do you need?

The host club needs a digital camera, the Body Map program and related software and an instructor or trainer who can interpret the results and guide the participant through the analysis. The participant needs gym clothing and his best smile.

Where do I find it?

You can check out the Body Map online at www.nasm.org, though most of the information is directed at clubs and trainers.

Brand-new to Canada, it will be available through a Canadian health company (www.biotonix.com).

What are the costs?

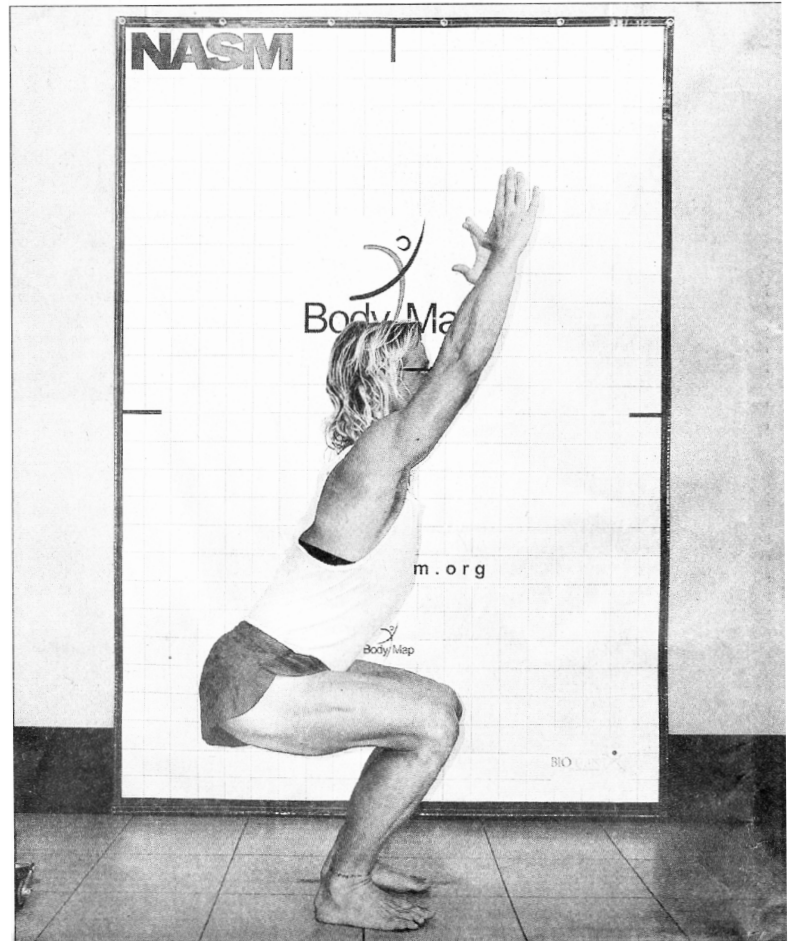
Most U.S. clubs carrying the Body Map program conduct the assessments as a service to members.

Non-member prices usually run about \$30 a session/assessment.

Bottom line?

Just what I needed, someone else telling me to stand up straight.

PETER ESTABROOKS B.P.E.
THE FITNESS GUY IS A PERSONAL TRAINER AND WRITER PLYING HIS TRADE IN CALGARY AT PRO-BODIES FITNESS IN MARDIA LOOP AND VIRTUALLY EVERYWHERE IN THE WORLD FROM WWW.PETESCLASS.COM



Peter Estabrooks for the Calgary Herald
Assessing your shortcomings can be a useful tool in mapping out a fitness program.

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