

Better, Stronger, Faster:

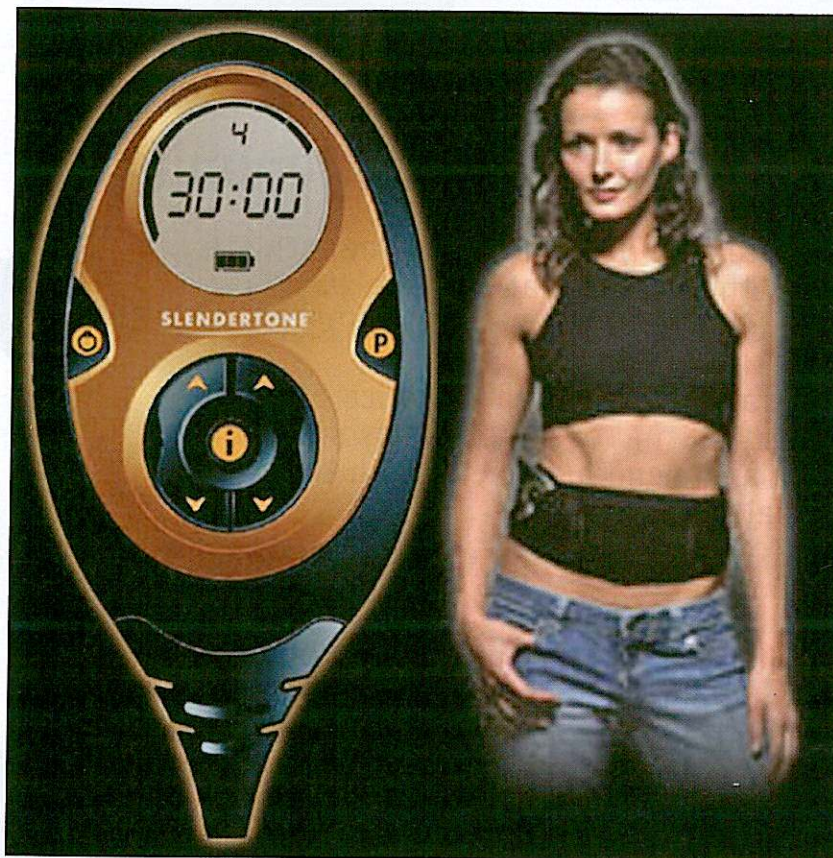
The Positive Impact of Changing Technology in Fitness

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There should be a sexy word for "technology." The mere mention of the term frequently gives cause for eyes to glaze over, hiding mental images of an intelligent chap in thick glasses and a lab coat fiddling with microchips as though they were a deck of playing cards.

However, a quick look around and it is virtually impossible to ignore the impact of technology on everyday life. Whether whipping up delicacies in the kitchen or paying a visit to the local fitness club, advances in technology surround us. It's no longer sufficient to own a run-of-the mill vacuum cleaner. We are promised the best cyclone technology on the market. It's not enough to have a good looking, functional automobile. It must be fuel-efficient – or even offer hybrid technology. We have long since shunned vinyl records and 8-track tapes for compact discs and the teeny-tiny iPod, which holds more music than the average human can possibly need. As busy consumers, we are promised results, results, results. And everything can be accomplished ten minutes ago.

And, while elite athletes may think that the only standbys to help achieve their next fitness goal are a coach, inner drive and strength – whether it's as simple as dropping five pounds or as



lofty as attaining a gold medal in Beijing – more and more they are discovering the advantages and even the necessity of incorporating specialized technology into their training regimen.

What is it that allows swimmer, Michael Phelps, to break and set new world records? Surely it was not dumb luck that mended the torn Achilles tendon of world class gymnast, Courtney Kupets, enabling her to fulfill her Olympic dream. It is for competitive athletes – those that break world records or equally significant, shatter a body part – that technological advances in the world of fitness soon become glaringly apparent.

To state the obvious, sports medicine

plays a critical role in helping us perform better, stronger, faster and more safely. And in sports medicine, technology plays a lion's share role.

For example, when used in conjunction with an aerobic workout, a heart monitor can vastly streamline and improve fitness results. To this end, technology is vital to maximizing the benefits while minimizing time spent on the treadmill. Monitoring the heart rate ensures that we are operating in an effective and safe cardiovascular range. In other words, it enables us to approach our workout with intelligence. We don't want to take it too easy, but likewise we don't want to push ourselves into the danger zone. The heart monitor allows us to be the Goldilocks

Quick Tip Look Leaner With Better Posture!

We all want to find quick and easy ways to come across at our very best. One of the easiest ways to improve one's appearance (and even appear leaner and taller!) is to practice good posture. Statistics from Stanford University tell us that 55 percent of what we take away from interactions comes through body language, and a good posture conveys confidence and poise. Improving your posture also can alleviate and prevent back pain, help your energy level and ease breathing, digestion and circulation. Luckily, you could be just 12 minutes a day away from better posture by following these simple tips from Dr. David Rothbart of Spine Team Texas:

- **Two minutes** – In the morning, stand in front of a mirror and inspect your standing position to see if your ears, shoulders, hips, knees and ankles are forming a straight line. If your "line" needs correction, so does your posture. Straighten it out and take a note of how your body feels when it's aligned correctly – inventory the position of your feet, hips, shoulders and head when you're standing properly and use the muscle memory as a check throughout the day.
- **One minute** – When you grab your cup of joe and pull up your chair to your desk at work, inspect your seating arrangement – are your feet flat on the ground? Are you looking up or down to view your computer monitor properly? If you need to have your chair raised to look straight ahead at your monitor, then you should track down a foot rest to make sure your feet can rest flat or lower your monitor.
- **Three minutes** (six, 30 second check ups throughout the day) – When you take a seat, take a moment to make sure your shoulders are down and back so that you're not slouching. Check yourself during a couple of set times throughout the day and make corrections if you find yourself sitting incorrectly.
- **Five minutes** – Don't sit at your desk all day – take a break once every hour or so to walk around for a few minutes, even if it's just to the printer or water cooler.
- **One minute** – When the day is done and you're ready to go to bed, try sleeping on your side or back instead of on your stomach. You can place a pillow between your knees if you need some additional support for your spine when lying on your side.

If you would like to check out more of healthy living tips like these, please visit www.spineteamtexas.com.

of aerobic activity and get it just right – in the optimal range for the body.

The Internet offers infinite tools to fitness enthusiasts, including calorie counters, fitness tips and even customized workouts based on the our personalized schedule, goals, fitness level and available exercise equipment. Some Web sites even stream workout videos for us to follow in a virtual one-on-one exercise class. This, too, has become a very useful tool for travelers or executives chained to their laptops.

For more than 40 years, electric muscle stimulation (EMS) medical technology has been integral to the treatment of muscle atrophy and muscle fiber rehabilitation. Today, EMS technology has considerable crossover appeal, evolving into a portable consumer fit-

ness technology to meet the needs of busy professionals and fitness enthusiasts alike. Through bypassing the brain to directly stimulate muscle contractions, products like SLENDERTONE SYSTEM are now providing consumers with the option of utilizing one of the most trusted and effective medical technologies to tone and strengthen abs, arms, glutes and thighs on their own time, in virtually any location.

A torn anterior cruciate ligament, a damaged rotator cuff or a ruptured Achilles tendon – all once considered career ending injuries – today present an opportunity for athletes and physicians to demonstrate how EMS medical technology can help the body heal sometimes to a state superior than before injury.

The latest technological advances may sound almost sci-fi. Stem cell research seems to be the next great frontier in developing therapies for the practical healing and rehabilitation of tendons, ligaments, muscle and cartilage. Already, some sports agents are preparing to advise clients about banking stem cells as an insurance policy against future injury.

We all know that being an athlete – or simply being fit – takes strength, both inside and out. But sometimes, even the strongest among us need a little something extra to ensure that we achieve our goals and stay at the top of our game. And considering technology, what could be any sexier than being your fittest when looking in the mirror?

■ In line with the theme of this issue...