

Need a little one-on-one time? **Krysten Godfrey Maddocks** discovers the benefits of having your own personal trainer.

A life-size caricature of John Dye encouraging you to "Hop aboard the Sole Train!" is the first thing you notice as you enter the Sole Training studio. The color and vibrancy of the cartoon match the energy of its proprietor and the fitness center's philosophy in general.

For more than four years, Dye, 41, has been helping Seacoast residents hop on the train to fitness success at his Greenland location. A former Mr. New Hampshire, Dye still walks the walk—exercising with weights and logging time on the cardio machines six days a week. He began weight training more than 20 years ago on a dare, which has transformed itself into a unique business. "Since high school, I've always been an athlete," says Dye. "[I took part in] my first body building show at age 19, on a dare, and took third place." Serious weight training took place after college, and in 1993, Dye entered the body building competition circuit. He parlayed his hobby into a career, and is accredited by the Aerobics and Fitness Association of America and the American Council on Exercise.

Today, he works with more than 40 clients on weight loss, muscle toning, and metabolism boosting. In fact, his Greenland location has attracted so much attention, that he recently opened Sole Training of York on Route 91 to reach more people interested in his brand of personal training.

The original Sole Training, on Route 33 in Greenland, appears much smaller from the street than it does inside. The 2,000-square-foot, second-floor studio could operate as its own mini fitness



center. Several weight machines, four cardio machines, and resistance balls are located in different sections of the open room. But unlike a typical gym, clients enjoy one-on-one personal training with Dye or Stacie Oswald, who assists him. "Personal training differs from a gym because it is one-on-one. Most of my clients are females who don't like intimidation factors that can exist in gyms," says Dye. "To put them in public with Barbie dolls and muscle-heads is not a good environment for them. A person doesn't want to be giggled at or picked up."

So rather than focusing on the "gym scene," Dye's clients, who spend two or three days a week with him in his studio for a minimum of a month, start with a few minutes on the treadmill, do several sets of abdominal work, and catch a few minutes on the stationary bike before focusing on another muscle group. His philosophy is to incorporate bursts of cardiovascular activity within a full-body weight workout to keep clients constantly moving and burning calories. Fitness trends, like yoga

and pilates, are also incorporated to focus on core strengthening and flexibility. The most important thing Dye stresses is to keep re-inventing programs to "shock" the muscles before they become complacent. At a gym, he says, many people do not keep up the pace he creates in his routines that are personally designed for each client. Also at a gym, many lose the flow of their workouts and don't see the fruits of their labor.

Still, Dye is able to give tips to those who prefer to work out on their own. "You have to look at...how well is the gym managed? Do the staff answer questions and show you around? Some may just leave you and never check up on you again," Dye explains. "Look at the availability of the machines—you don't want them to be antiquated, but you don't want them to be so high-tech that you don't know how to use them." ♦

Sole Training personal fitness is located on Route 33 in Greenland and can be reached at (603) 422-0466.

Fitness Center in North Hampton; and World Gym in Seabrook make up other popular fitness club options in the Seacoast. Each has its niche—but what makes a great gym? According to personal trainer, Heather Kennedy, 33, the best gym is one that is clean and well organized. It should be within 15 minutes of where you work or live, so that you actually go. "Staff should be professional, responsive, and

courteous," says Kennedy. "A gym should have up-to-date equipment that is well maintained. In addition, classes should be current and biomechanically and bioenergetically correct. Instructors and trainers should be certified by an accredited source and be qualified and approachable." Kennedy recommends certain gyms for certain populations. "I have worked in gyms ranging from 'hard core,' Olympic

settings, to luxurious spas," says Kennedy. "In the Seacoast area, the best place for seniors is Team Fitness at World Gym, Synergy, or Gold's Gym. Women will feel comfortable at Team Fitness at World Gym or Gold's Gym. For the 'hard core' enthusiast, look to Hard Knocks or Team Fitness at World Gym." No matter what your choice, experts agree that the best exercise for you is the one you do. ♦