

Workout buddies can keep each other motivated

BY ANNIE VANGSNES
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Among the Louisburg Athletic Club's early birds, there's an unusually cheery trio of women, especially for 5 a.m. at a gym.

Corinne Prettyman, Susie Minor and Kelly Stohs come to the gym together five days a week at 5 a.m. And while many people dread the thought of not only the gym, but also waking up that early, they are thoroughly enjoying their time there.

"You don't dread it if your friends are there," Minor said.

They also like working out together because it holds them accountable to go. All three lived in the same subdivision, until Stohs recently moved, and would pick each other up in the morning.

"I've been known to peek in windows," Prettyman said with a laugh.

Prettyman and Minor have been exercising together since 2000 after they each had a

second child, and Stohs joined them about 6 months ago.

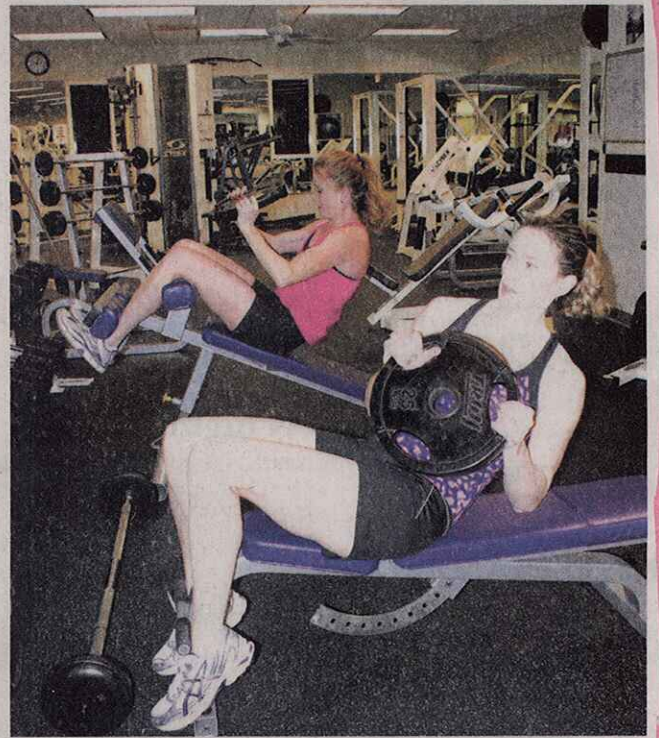
"We drug her in one morning and she never left," Minor added.

The reasoning behind the early start time is simple, Prettyman said. Between the three of them they have 12 children, husbands and full-time jobs. Prettyman said she secretly likes being up that early, but doesn't tell the other two.

Their morning ritual starts with warming up, helping each other remember what body parts they worked on the day before and deciding a plan of action for the day's workout.

They alternate between cardio and weights, and when weight training, they work in rotations of different exercises and chat about their families, work and anything else going on in their lives. They could be having as much fun if they were hanging out at a coffee house. And that's the point, they say; it's more fun when you're not thinking about the task at hand.

The women also encourage each other to push themselves to work harder, from new exercises to running marathons.



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Corinne Prettyman (front) and Susie Minor rotate from different weight exercises when they work out together and with their other workout buddy, Kelly Stohs (not shown).

Prettyman suffered from childhood asthma and never ran more than she needed to when playing sports as a teenager. But when Minor suggested they run a marathon, she started improving her stamina and now both women have a multitude of

marathons, half-marathons and triathlons under their belts.

The two even competed in a figure competition together, which required an intense 12-week workout routine and an even stricter high protein and low-carb diet.

"I never would have done it without someone with me," Prettyman said.

After such a difficult road to the competition, they were also glad they had each other to brave the high heels, tiny bikinis and fake orange tans, Minor added.

The trio agree that the desire to stay in shape and set a good example for their children outweighs the social aspects. Minor said it has worked; all the women's children are active in sports and eat healthy diets. When her younger children are in the bathtub they pretend to make bubble protein shakes, she added with a laugh.

"We don't really think we're going to win any of these triathlons but we want to set a good example for our kids," she said.

Exercising with friends can be more rewarding

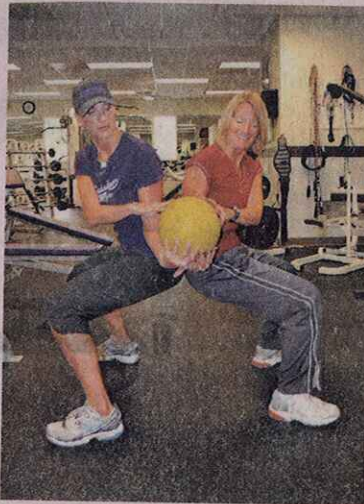
Lesley Seuferling, managing partner at Louisburg Athletic Club, said working out with a buddy is a great way to get yourself into the gym and to stay motivated.

"Some people like working out by themselves but it helps to have a buddy pick you up every now and again," she said. "You might cut out early or not do the last five if you were by yourself. But if you have someone there cheering you on, you can finish."

She said a good, healthy competition can also keep you on your toes and push you a little further.

One popular buddy exercise, she explained, is a medicine ball pass. There are three different versions: sitting, squatting or standing. Shown at right the squatting, and in her opinion, more difficult, position.

With your buddy, put your backs together and squat, making sure your knees don't go past your toes. Make sure to keep your backs straight, and most importantly, your abs flexed. Then, pass the ball to your partner and rotate to your opposite side to retrieve it. Adjust the weight of the medicine ball and the number of sets as you see fit.



Lesley Seuferling and Kristi Thompson from Louisburg Athletic Club demonstrate a simple buddy exercise.