

## Expansion the Result of Need, Luck and Lots of Negotiating

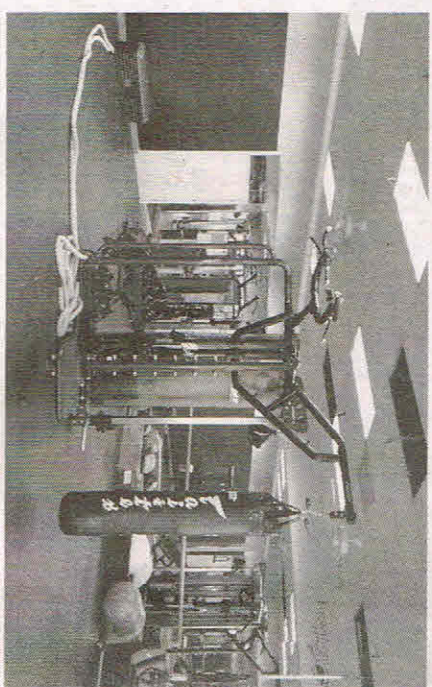
For this Popular Fitness Center a \$225,000 Makeover Found New Equipment, Training Room and Studio

JUNO BEACH -- "The perfect storm," as described by Rick Opton, owner of Loggerhead Fitness, occurred and paved the way for a \$225,000 expansion project, which is now completed at the Plaza La Mer facility, 901 Donald Ross Road.

Opton explained: "We were in need of a larger space for our personal trainers to work in and were then compelled to expand when a competitor closed in nearby Loggerhead Plaza. When Juno Beach Fitness closed down, we received a considerable windfall. In less than a month, 130 new members and four full time personal trainers moved down the hill and joined our family. In June 2013 (prior to the other fitness center closing), the Seagull Diner vacated from space directly next door to Loggerhead Fitness. We found ourselves in a position to negotiate a fair lease with the Plaza La Mer management and took over half of the diner's 4500-square-foot of space. The renovations were



Rick Opton, owner of Loggerhead Fitness, explains the function of some new equipment to a member.



This separate and fully equipped personal training room was created with the Loggerhead Fitness expansion.

completed this past fall and we opened the expanded facility November 1."

As a result of the expansion, Loggerhead Fitness was able to gain a Fitness Class Studio (2,000-square-foot) with impressive wood flooring that floats on wood strips with foam. "We currently run more than 40 classes a week in this studio," Opton advised. "Everything from yoga, group cycle, zumba and step is taught here and a full class schedule can be found on our website."

Additionally, the center now has a separate personal training room with all new equipment and several new fitness machines in the main workout room. Further, Opton said, in the near future he may be able to take over the other half of the former diner space for even more fitness options.

The improvements in the main workout area include a new rubber flecked flooring, which is much cleaner and more flexible than the old black mats. Also, \$100,000 worth of new cardio and gym equipment was installed including eight treadmills, two lateral X trainers, two recumbent ellipticals and another step mill. The cardio machines are all equipped with integrated TVs that are Wi-Fi and blue tooth enabled.

The new personal training studio features a multi-station hoist cage, battle ropes, TRX, kettle bells, dumb bells, web slide with resistance bands and a Cybex functional training machine. The space is large and will accommodate small group personal training.

Loggerhead Fitness is one of the better operated programs in this area, and certainly one of the largest in terms of membership, which now totals over 1,600.

Opton bought the original Loggerhead Fitness in 2005 and operated it part-time, with the help of a general

manager and several part-time front desk employees. Rick maintained a full time job at the time, and also operated a marketing firm he founded in 2009, Harvest Marketing Group. He eventually merged the marketing company with SoVi Digital and was a managing director. He left SoVi last November and is giving full attention to the fitness operation. "The club has grown," he advised, "and I felt it was best to no longer manage from the sidelines."

Opton gave accolades to his staff, which now consists of 25 personal trainers that make Loggerhead Fitness their home, and a dozen group class instructors. He noted that the club caters to fitness aficionados over 40. "The core demographic we serve is the baby boomer population that lives three miles in every direction around us," he said, "but, we want to take steps to attract younger residents, too."

A community minded business man, Opton belongs to the Northern Palm Beach Chamber of Commerce, and was recently recognized and awarded as Small Business of the Year. He also serves on the Chamber's Small Business Advisory Council. The fitness center owner also belongs



With its expansion, Loggerhead Fitness gained a new group class studio which offers many opportunities.



Eight new treadmills were included in the additional \$100,000 worth of fitness equipment added to the main gym area at Loggerhead Fitness.

to The Beaches Small Business Initiative and is a member of Friends of Jupiter Beach, serving on the organization's board of directors and serves the Town of Jupiter as a member of the Beach Committee. Recently, he was called upon to lead a technology seminar for the Small Business Advisory Council of the Chamber of Commerce and received high grades for this.

Like a healthy muscle, Loggerhead Fitness has grown and expanded. "It's not every day that we can devote the time and money to this type of growth," Opton concluded, "so we are trying to think ahead of what our future needs will be. We do have our eyes on further expansion and plan to be in the community for a long time. We are one of only a few independent boutique clubs to survive, and for that we are grateful."

An open house is planned for early 2015, but a date has not been set. To learn more about Loggerhead Fitness, go to [www.loggerheadfitness.com](http://www.loggerheadfitness.com), which is a very thorough website, visit the facility at Plaza La Mer in Juno Beach, or call them at (561) 625-3011.

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