

Train away the pain

Calgary exercise expert shares message of pain-free living through her DVDs

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Denise Beatty knows the struggle of living in chronic pain.

The Calgary-based personal trainer and exercise physiologist was in two serious car accidents within two years in the late 1990s.

The second accident -- a head-on, high-speed collision by Canada Olympic Park in 1996 -- left her with extensive knee, hip, neck and back injuries.

It also left her in tremendous, unrelenting pain down her left side.

Yet, throughout her recovery, Beatty, who was working at the University of Calgary at the time, kept working out, doing her special brand of core stability exercises.

Using the balance ball, resistance bands, weights and compound exercises that engage multiple muscle groups at the same time, Beatty found relief from her pain as she built up overall muscle strength.

She also ended up whittling herself to a lean shape, losing 30 pounds and reducing her body fat by eight per cent.

"The exercises saved me -- that's for sure," says the 32-year-old.

Now Beatty hopes to spread the message of pain-free living, and pain-free fitness and exercise, to the masses.

Beatty's personal program -- which she has named the Fitness Fix and has adapted over the years -- is now available on three new fitness DVDs she



CREDIT: Stuart Gradon/Calgary Herald
Fitness trainer Denise Beatty in her home basement studio. Beatty has made three fitness DVDs for different levels of training.

produced in June 2006.

The Fitness Fix, which stands for Functionally Integrated Training with Fun Innovative Exercise, is focused on building overall core strength, balance and endurance to prevent exercise injuries in the first place or help people recover from injuries.

The three DVDS -- beginner, intermediate and sports conditioning -- were filmed outside at Nakoda Lodge, a hotel and conference centre on the Stoney reserve west of Calgary, last summer over four days. Each features Olympic skeleton athlete Lindsay Alcott.

Unlike other exercise videos, Beatty's has no background music. Instead, throughout each video she talks about body mechanics, proper alignment and injury prevention as she demonstrates each exercise.

Each DVD is divided into multiple sections which target different zones of the body, including an upper or lower body fix, core fix, upper or lower body flexibility, to name a few.

Beatty says she fine-tuned the program with the help of a physiotherapist, a chiropractor and a physician.

Apart from her own recovery from the car accidents, Beatty was inspired to develop the Fitness Fix after seeing "client after client" with chronic injuries and pain caused by exercising. She says she was convinced there had to be a better way for people to train safely.

"I am so focused on building the muscles you need to prevent injuries," says Beatty, who runs her personal training company called Life Works Fitness from her northwest Calgary home.

To that end, her DVD exercise program focuses heavily on strengthening those core (torso) stability muscles, proper exercise posture, body alignment, flexibility and total body toning, and strengthening using a balance ball, balance disk, free weights and resistance bands.

The program -- which Beatty also teaches in fitness classes at community centres across the city -- is not meant to replace cardiovascular workouts, but rather to supplement them as part of a larger fitness regime.

More than just preventing injuries, Beatty says the program will help anyone drop weight, reduce their body fat and lose inches.

"The amount of calories burned is so huge because you are using so many different muscles," she says. "The results are fantastic."

Beatty's sister followed the program and lost 65 pounds following the birth of her child.

Her own mother, who was diagnosed with advanced lymphoma in July

2005, followed the beginner DVD throughout her cancer recovery.

"The doctors could not believe how strong she was," Beatty says.

Today her mom is free of cancer and still on the program.

Beatty's Fitness Fix DVDs cost \$19.95 each, or all three for \$49.95. They are available for sale at Fitter First (www.fitter1.com; 3050, 2600 Portland St. S.E.; 243-6830) or online at fitnessfix.ca.

For more information about Beatty's fitness classes or her program, visit www.fitnessfix.ca.

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Body & Health

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