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Five Hot Products For 2007

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'Tis the season once again when magazines, Internet sites and experts tell us what is hot in health and fitness for the New Year. This ranges from workouts and the latest diet to products that will finally make us skinny and fit. New products sell magazines, but what makes a product truly relevant? Is it aesthetically pleasing? Did we see it on "Oprah?" Did a company flood consumer-marketing channels trumpeting its virtues? At the end of the day--or workout--what matters most is whether the product will make a difference to you and your members and whether or not it delivers on its promise.

As dangerous as it can be for a magazine to try to list some of the hot products in the industry (someone is always upset that their product wasn't included), we have taken on the challenge again this year and are listing five products. We chose these products after walking the exhibit hall floors of various trade shows and talking to the people closest to the consumers who use the products every day—club managers and fitness professionals. We wanted to know why they liked a product and what they thought their members would as well. This could mean products that offer a more motivating workout or a product that streamlines the way a trainer

tracks a client's progress.

We tried to remain true to a few principals for each choice: The product must be new and it must enhance the workout experience either by simplifying it, making it more effective, more comfortable and/or easier. In a word—relevant. Based on industry input and these requirements, here are our choices of hot products for you to keep your eye on in 2007.

A Little Gyration

The **Gyrotonic Expansion System®** consists of a new exercise platform using Gyrokinesis® principles as the basis to exercise the musculature while mobilizing and articulating the joints. The system simultaneously stretches and strengthens the body with minimal effort, while increasing range of motion and developing coordination.

The company claims that the system was specially conceived using the key principles of gymnastics, swimming, ballet and yoga through which major muscle groups are worked interdependently and in an integrated manner. It emphasizes multiple-joint articulations without compression, thus strengthening ligaments and each of their respective attachments. This system is served by a series of specially designed exercise equipment that are built around the premise of allowing total freedom of movement while enhancing coordination, strength and flexibility. The motion patterns are natural, turbulence-free and pure with no interruption. This creates a bridge between contraction and extension through the rotating movement of the joints, resulting in a balanced support system for the skeleton. The exercises are performed through spherical awareness and circularity of movement, enabling the user to perform under permanent guidance, variable-controlled resistance, and real sports simulation with no limitation to speed and impact.

Fitness professionals using the system say that involved muscle groups are maximized and evenly distributed between agonist and antagonist muscle groups.

The personal trainers we spoke to are using them as a total-body workout system and are even conducting small group exercise classes using the equipment. Instructors also told us that small group classes using Gyrotonics were quickly filling up, and that the more clients used them, the more they believed in them. Tony Swain, fitness director for The East Bank Club in Chicago, says his club doesn't have enough of them.

We now have waiting lists for classes," he says. "Our trainers and clients love them."

Pros and Cons

Pros: We all know that a large part of our population has participated in exercises far too long that compress and stress the joints and musculoskeletal system. This, of course, is why Pilates, and yoga have seen such meteoric growth. Gyrotonics is worth checking out, particularly for your middle-aged populations.

Cons: The equipment is expensive and requires valuable floor space.

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