

Sky High Studio owner brings fitness classes back to former Ascona

Workouts for those who need their "fit fix"

BY MICHELLE TROUTMAN
Correspondent

Now slim and trim, certified fitness trainer Deidre Hutchins once had an award-winning, muscle-bound body.

It all started after she saw a photo of a woman with bulging biceps doing a seated row exercise; she became hooked on pumping up.

"I thought, 'Gee, I'd really like to look at what it would take to get a physique like that,'" said Hutchins.

She started lifting light weights, one set of 15 repetitions per muscle group three times a week, every other day. At the peak of her training, she worked out six days a week at least two hours daily.

Three years later, Hutchins had sculpted her body well enough to pose first in her height class, 5-foot-4 and up, and to later win the 1988 Miss Northern New England crown at John Baptist High School in Bangor.

Citing the intense amount of emotional, mental and physical preparation required, Hutchins said she quit to focus more on her gym, in Skowhegan at the time, and its members.

From Caribou, Hutchins received an associate degree in health and physical education from University of Maine at Presque Isle. She met her first husband, who was from the Skowhegan area, and together they ran The Body Shop.

"It served two purposes: I was able to bring my 8-month-old daughter to work with me, and do something I really enjoyed doing."

After her divorce, in 1992, Hutchins became fitness director and aerobics coordinator at the Racket Club of Augusta, to develop its new program. With the addition of a gym, it was renamed Racket Club and Total Fitness. Five years later, as part of the World Gym franchise — along with tennis and racquetball — there were, at one point, 12 fitness instructors, including Hutchins, and about 1,200 gym members.

Under new ownership in 2003, it became Ascona Tennis and Health Club. Hutchins taught there until 2007, a year before it closed.

During the years since she left, she continued her personal training with clients in their homes, under the name Fit Fix.

Hutchins might also be remembered for her fitness program of the same name that ran more than a decade ago for two years on local public access TV.

She gets continuing education credits to retain her fitness and personal trainer certifications and to stay current with industry trends. She is also certified in first-aid and CPR, and is a U.S. Army

Master Fitness Trainer.

Hutchins uses all of this knowledge in her business. Last September, in partnership with Kevin and Hollie Webb of the Institute for Wellness/Martial Arts Institute, she returned to the former Ascona building with Sky High Studio.

"I'm very excited to be back," Hutchins said.

Of her partnership with the Webbs, Hutchins said they work very well together because they share a passion for and a philosophy of a healthy lifestyle through fitness.

At the Martial Arts Institute, Kevin Webb teaches Goju Ryu karate, which originated in Okinawa. His wife, Hollie, a licensed massage therapist, offers massages to relax tired, achy muscles, especially after a boot camp class.

Hutchins runs regular 45-minute fitness sessions on the second floor of the new A-COPI Tennis & Sports Center. For all fitness levels, weight training includes core strengthening, balance and flexibility. Boot camp is for those "who want a challenge, want to sweat and get stronger — all while having fun."

For people who want to try a class, the first one is free, and after that are \$8 per session. Ten-visit "punch passes" are \$70, and unlimited classes are \$49 a month. Students who bring a partner also get a free class.

During a typical boot camp, Hutchins coaches students through aerobic exercise routines that stretch the arms and legs and core muscle groups of the abdomen and lower body; students also use hand weights, straps and exercise balls, which she provides.

At a recent Saturday morning boot camp, wearing a jacket and sweats, and with pop music playing, Hutchins counted seven women through a workout that included step aerobics, lunges, squats and stretches.

As they swung and stepped to the rhythms, Hutchins encouraged them to "Get that booty back up there where it belongs!"

Hutchins believes the weight training sessions are best for beginners; they work with fit balls, weighted medicine balls and dumbbells for a total body workout.

According to Hutchins, most people tend to focus more on exercising their arms, legs and shoulders and not enough on their core, which is important for balance and stability as they age.

Hutchins performs individual body fat testing for \$25 by appointment. She also offers a Healthy Hottie program that involves a 28-day cleanse, exercise and body fat percentage testing with measure-

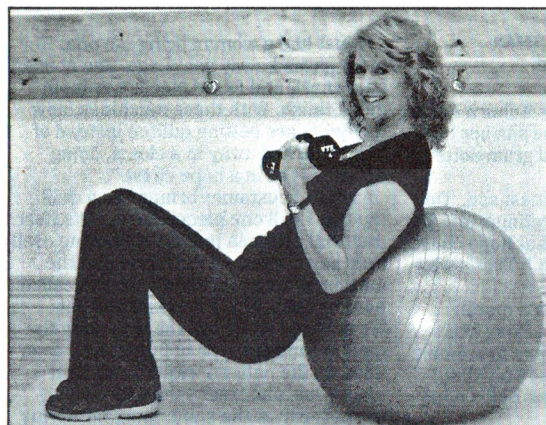


Photo by Sky High Studio

FITBALL: Deidre works her arms and her core at the same time.

ments for \$89.

"One lady actually lowered her cholesterol 40 points," Hutchins said.

Hutchins wants to hold yoga, Zumba or other fitness classes in the main room of her studio, which can accommodate up to 40 people. She said she is currently looking for instructors. She has rooms available for smaller fitness and educational classes and workshops, parties and banquets.

She also gathered support to return tennis to the building. The Kennebec Valley Tennis Association reopened the courts in February. The A-COPI Tennis & Sports Center's courts feature Energy Miser ceilings and lighting and new curtains and nets. The floors will be resurfaced this spring.

"I invite all the former members to come back and get reacquainted with their old workout buddies or tennis players, even if it's just to reminisce," Hutchins said.

Sky High Studio is open for boot camp sessions from 5:15 to 6 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays and from 9 to 9:45 a.m. on Saturdays. The weight training and core strengthening class is from 9 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays. Hutchins offers personal training and body fat testing by appointment. Cash and checks are accepted. For more information, email Hutchins at deidrehutchins@roadrunner.com, visit her website, www.thegratefulgirl.com or call 446-6280.

The mother of three adult children, Hutchins lives in Winthrop with her husband, Gregory, and their dogs, Murphy and Montana.



Deidre Hutchins photo

TITLE: 1988 Miss Northern New England champion Deidre Hutchins.

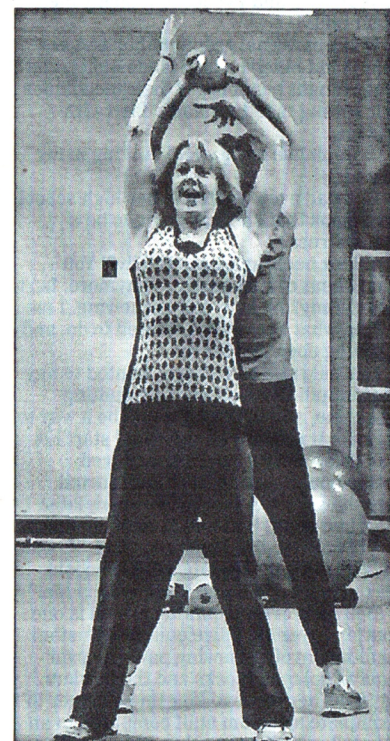


Photo by Michelle Troutman

BALL: Deidre Hutchins passes a ball to one of her students.