

Strong Start, Strong Finish

CooperLife in McKinney brings good health to new horizons. By **Gary D. Ford**



Dr. Tyler Cooper, lifting weights, joins his father, Dr. Kenneth Cooper, at their new Cooper Fitness Center at Craig Ranch in McKinney. Studios include workouts in yoga, aerobics, Pilates, and Kinesis.

That slender, older man on the treadmill beside you, the one with the flat abs you wish you had, has gained only 3 pounds over his high school weight of 168. His equally slender son pumping iron nearby ran track at Baylor University, earned his medical degree, and coauthored with dad a new bestseller on fitness. It reveals the one secret to a svelte physique and good health.

So you go ahead and ask them: “What’s the magic bullet that will give me buns of steel, abs as flat as Amarillo, a healthy heart, and long life?” The younger man, Dr. Tyler Cooper, smiles.

“It’s self-discipline,” he replies softly and then adds, “but it doesn’t take that much.”

Late each afternoon Tyler and his father, Dr. Kenneth Cooper, the man who coined the word “aerobics,” sweat with other guests at one of two places. They may work out at their Cooper Aerobics Center in Dallas or at their new Cooper Aerobics Center at Craig Ranch in McKinney. The latter is the centerpiece of CooperLife, a rising community of residents who may live among like-minded, health-conscious neighbors with medical, fitness, and spa services at their fingertips.

Fitness, Food, and a Spa While Ken oversees the Dallas location, Tyler serves as president of CooperLife. In its 75,000-square-foot fitness center, members and guests climb aboard a regiment of workout stations that face a wall-size window view of the Olympic-size pool and prairie beyond.

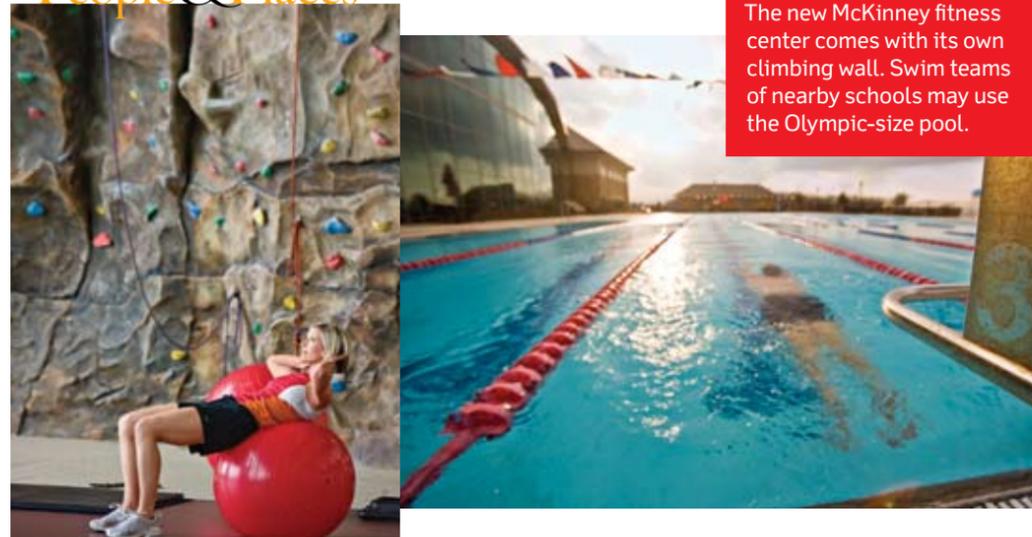
Many work with staff personal trainers, while others join sessions in Kinesis, Pilates, and yoga studios. Elsewhere in the center, others may relax in the spa, catch a cooking class, listen to lectures, and dine from heart-healthy menus at Tenley’s Café.

Fitness goes hand in hand with wellness here. Next door, the Cooper Clinic houses a staff of physicians, including an oncoplastic surgeon, who oversee comprehensive preventive examinations and treatments in dermatology, gynecology, and breast care.

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PHOTOGRAPHS: CARY JOBE



The new McKinney fitness center comes with its own climbing wall. Swim teams of nearby schools may use the Olympic-size pool.

Want Good Grades?

Take PE “It is the future beyond us,” comments Tyler of this groundbreaking wellness resort and residential community. It also serves as the next step on the journey to a fit future that Ken began as a flight surgeon in the U.S. Air Force, where he created a conditioning program for America’s astronauts. He published *Aerobics* in 1968 and founded The Cooper Institute in 1970.

Over the years, he’s broken new ground in physical health. In 2002 he partnered with Frito-Lay to help the company eliminate trans fats from its products. Now, he’s fighting for the lives of Texas school children.

Armed with research that shows children’s test scores improve with high levels of physical fitness, he initiated the concept for legislation passed in Austin as Senate Bill 530. With it, last fall, he says Texas became the first state to mandate yearly physical and fitness testing for about 4 million youngsters in nearly 9,000 Texas schools.

“It’s been a tremendous challenge,” he comments of the fight for the legislation. “People say, ‘Your legacy will be aerobics.’ I say, ‘No, my legacy will be this.’” ●

For more information visit www.cooperaerobics.com.

The Doctors Cooper

Start Strong, Finish Strong: Prescriptions for a Lifetime of Great Health (Avery, \$24.95) is Ken and Tyler’s first book together. They recently sat down for a few questions.

How long does it take to form a habit for a strong start to an exercise program?

Tyler: “Four to six weeks, but with consistency in that habit. I tell people, if you just give me 30 days, the next 30 will be a lot easier.”

Ken: “It takes four to six weeks until you get muscle development. People tell me the reason they keep exercising is that they don’t want to have to go through starting again.”

What are “extra activity add-ons?”

Tyler: “Take the stairs at work. Walk to lunch instead of drive. Watch television shows while walking on a treadmill. Adapt exercise into your pre-existing life.”

Explain “cutting out one thing” in a weight-loss plan.

Tyler: “In medical school I gained weight because I was living out of a vending machine. A professor said in one class, ‘Just try cutting out one thing from your diet.’ I was drinking soft drinks at night to stay awake. I cut out soft drinks, and the weight started coming off.”

All right, last question: When it comes to food, what is that one treat that is your downfall?

Ken and Tyler: “Chocolate chip cookies!”