

Dow Jones Reprints: This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers, use the Order Reprints tool at the bottom of any article or visit www.djreprints.com

See a sample reprint in PDF format. [Order a reprint of this article now](#)

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

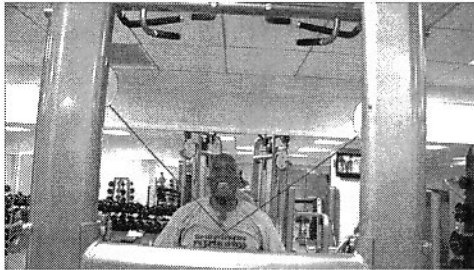
WSJ.com

WHAT'S YOUR WORKOUT | NOVEMBER 29, 2011

Dad Shakes Up Routine to Keep Up With the Boys

By JEN MURPHY

Many fathers and sons bond at ball games or while watching them on TV.



Hoyt Harper, global brand leader for Sheraton Hotels & Resorts, incorporates regular, customized workouts at the hotel's gyms into his fitness routine. A key strategy for him is doing it early, so he's "pumped up" for the rest of the day, and incorporating variety in his flexibility, strength and cardio training.

Hoyt H. Harper II, 56 years old, prefers to bond with his sons by actually playing the game, be it flag football or paintball. It's how the self-professed weekend warrior spends time with his four boys, ages 14 to 22.

Over the years, it got rougher, he says. "I was always achy. I wanted to be able to play sports pain-free."

Mr. Harper is global brand leader of Sheraton Hotels & Resorts, which is owned by Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc. When Sheraton introduced customized fitness and nutrition programs for its hotel guests, Mr Harper, who was looking to lose weight, decided to test it out.

After a two-day fitness assessment, Mr. Harper, who is married and lives and works in White Plains, N.Y., was given a personalized fitness program. Nine months later, Mr. Harper says he was moving without pain and sleeping better. He also had gone from 232 pounds to 212 pounds. "The key was that it was sustainable," he says. "I didn't need to increase my time spent exercising. The plan improved my efficiency. I could get a workout done in 25 minutes."

Mr. Harper also has more energy for—and needs less recovery time from—weekends running around with his sons.

"My new workout regimen helps me keep up with my teenage boys, whether we're on a court, running through the woods playing paintball or just horsing around in the house," he says. "Equally important, I'm not sore the next day like I used to be."

The Workout

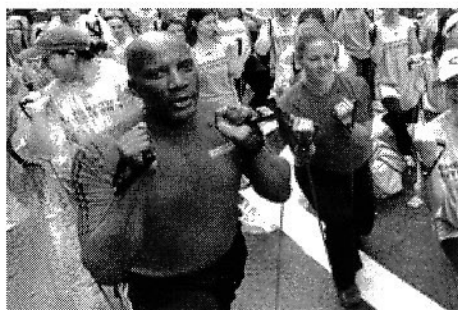
Mr. Harper works out six days a week. His cardio workouts range from 25 to 50 minutes on the elliptical machine, treadmill or stairclimber.

After performing a series of active stretches, he'll do some stability exercises like holding plank position. For lower body,



Bryan Derballa for The Wall Street Journal

Hotel executive Hoyt Harper stretches between paintball games with Alex, left, and Jake, right, two of his four sons.



Diane Bondareff

Mr. Harper at a Sheraton fitness event in New York last year.

he'll go through a series of squats and walking lunges. He'll use free weights or resistance bands to perform upper body exercises like shoulder presses and tricep extensions. And he'll do various styles of crunches on a stability ball.

Stretching is a big focus for him.

"I never realized how inflexible I was," he says. "My hips were unaligned, which probably explained my knee pain." Even if he has just 15 minutes, Mr. Harper will make time to stretch.

He had a Power Plate, a vibrating platform, brought into his office. "Just standing on it for 30 seconds and doing knee bends stimulates the body as much as a 12-ounce cup of coffee."

Says his colleague, Emily Ostrover: "He loves to grab people walking by his office to put them on his Power Plate for a quick boost of energy in the middle of the day."

On weekends, Mr. Harper tries to keep up with his sons, playing flag football or paintball. He often works out with his youngest son, spotting him while weightlifting.

The Diet

"I now eat more often and smaller portions," he says.

Pre-workout Mr. Harper might have a protein bar or a handful of nuts; post-workout a protein shake. Second breakfast is oatmeal around 8:30. Late-morning he might grab a banana

from the "healthy" pantry he has stocked in the office.

Mr. Harper and his wife spoke to a nutritionist who recommended healthful recipes that they could cook at home. One tip: Color your plate for variety. Lunch and dinner always include greens, a vegetable and seafood or chicken. Mr. Harper's splurge is his wife's apple pie.

Gear & Cost

Mr. Harper spends \$59 a month on his gym membership. He keeps running sneakers and cross-training sneakers, and replaces each every six months. He wears Adidas Dri-Fit clothing and brings two sets of workout clothing when he travels.

"I wash them myself in the sink," he says. To gauge his running or walking pace and monitor his heart rate, Mr. Harper uses an Adidas MiCoach Pacer, which retails for \$139.

A vibration technology platform like the Power Plate Mr. Harper uses can vary in price from \$1,200 to \$8,700, for one with a larger platform, stronger vibration frequency or attached cables for strength training.

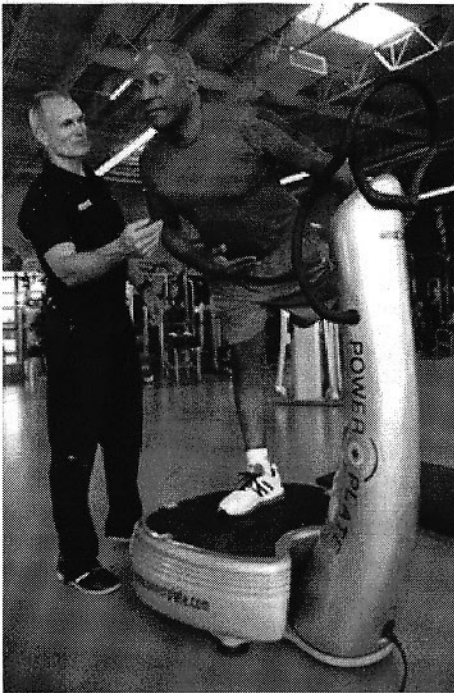
Travel Strategies

"I never get on a flight hungry," says Mr. Harper, who travels frequently for work. "I bring water, a banana and a bag of oatmeal on board even when I sit up front. You can always ask for hot water to make oatmeal."

The Case for Adding Some Good Vibrations

The Power Plate, which Mr. Harper uses, is one brand of whole-body vibration training platform. The platform oscillates up and down, imposing small, repeated forces on the body.

"These forces cause the muscles to reflexively contract



Jason Wise

Mr. Harper uses vibration training as part of his workout.

thousands of times per minute," explains physical therapist Gabriel Ettenson, co-owner of Amplitude Vibration Studio and owner of Equilibrium Physical Therapy, both in New York City.

"They simulate an environment of higher gravity than Earth. This, like adding weight with traditional exercise, helps build muscle more rapidly."

A 2009 study conducted at the College of Charleston in Charleston, S.C., and published in the *International Journal of Exercise Science*, compared vibration training and free-weight exercises on upper body muscular endurance.

The six-week trial found that a vibration platform group completed the exercises faster than the group using free weights and received the same results.

The study, which did not use funding from a vibration platform manufacturer, concluded that vibration technology may enable people to get an optimal muscle workout with less physical effort.

Keli Roberts, an American Council of Exercise-certified personal trainer based in Pasadena, Calif., says she uses whole body vibration equipment to stretch more deeply. "While the muscles are being lengthened they are simultaneously

contracting, so it's not just a passive stretch," she says.

Ms. Roberts suggests people new to whole vibration training seek out a session with a trainer first.

If you just stand on the platform with locked knees it will vibrate all the way into your head, and that's not pleasant," she says.

Copyright 2011 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. Distribution and use of this material are governed by our Subscriber Agreement and by copyright law. For non-personal use or to order multiple copies, please contact Dow Jones Reprints at 1-800-843-0008 or visit www.djreprints.com