



To raise funds, women will crunch for an hour

March 29 challenge needs sponsors

Charmaine Thomas February 27, 2008

Can you do abdominal crunches for an hour straight?

Thirty-three women in the Northwest think they can. They'll demonstrate such endurance during the Ab Crunch Challenge on Saturday, March 29.

The women, ages 19 through 66, are participating in a 10-week exercise program in support of a fund-raising effort designed by St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and the Lady of American Franchise Corporation — franchisor of Ladies Workout Express.

The women are taking abdominal crunch training classes at Ladies Workout Express fitness centers to build up strength and endurance so they can perform stomach crunches for one hour without stopping.

"I'm very proud of these ladies," said Ladies Workout Express owner Patricia Nathan. "My biggest excitement is seeing some of them who thought they couldn't do even three minutes that are now up to 36 minutes."

Ladies Workout Express members and non-members who are participating in the Ab Crunch Challenge raise money for St. Jude by recruiting friends, family members and co-workers to sponsor them. Ladies Workout Express representatives say both beginners and fitness buffs alike can support the cause and improve their core fitness. The training involves timed crunches and adding six minutes each week, one minute a day up to the day of the challenge. The staff monitors participants to make sure crunches are done correctly.

"I went into the gym and saw the posters advertising the challenge and thought 'there is no way I could do that,'" said Cary Lockamy. "I then saw people of all ages and sizes trying it, so I thought, 'why not,' and I tried, and was able to do five minutes the first day."

Cary, 29, said she is now up to 25 minutes, her abs are tighter and the training has also strengthened her arms and neck.

"I have made new friends, everyone working out cheers us on while we do crunches. It is keeping me motivated to come to the gym every day," Lockamy said.

St. Jude and The Lady of America Franchise Corporation hope to raise \$1 million to help fight against childhood cancer and other catastrophic diseases. More than 200

Lady of America Fitness Centers across the country, including Ladies Workout Express centers located at 9190 N. Coachline Blvd. and 3603 W. Cortaro Farms Rd., are offering the free training and the opportunity to support childhood cancer research by sponsoring any participant.

For more information on the Ab Crunch Challenge or to support a participant, visit www.abcrunchchallenge.org.

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