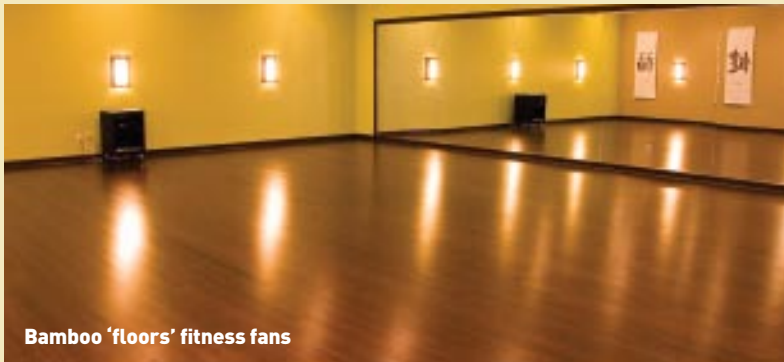




| Green Scene |

Harder-Working Hardwood Floors



Bamboo 'floors' fitness fans

By Jennifer H. McInerney

Let's face it: hardwood floors look amazing in health clubs' yoga, Pilates, and group-fitness studios, but they're not exactly the "kindest" option with respect to the environment.

"Most hardwood trees that are milled for flooring can take anywhere from 40 to 80 years to grow to a size that's suitable for harvesting," explains Steve Chase, the general manager of Fitness Flooring, Inc., in Indianapolis, Indiana.

In general, recycled rubber flooring and recycled-content carpeting are more environmentally friendly, but not necessarily ideal for aerobics and mind/body classes.

The solution? Bamboo, which is considered a renewable resource because it grows—and re-grows—to its full height within a matter of months and can be utilized for flooring material in about five years. "That means that, at a minimum, bamboo provides flooring boards eight times over in the same amount of time it takes for a maple tree to be harvested once."

For 25 years, Fitness Flooring has offered a popular line of hardwood group-exercise flooring, under the brand Exerflex. The wood used in this product, Chase explains, is derived from sustainable managed forests and certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

However, the company wanted to go even "greener."

Earlier this year, it introduced Zenterra, a bamboo flooring offering designed specifically to be durable—and beautiful—enough for commercial fitness applications.

"The timing for developing Zenterra coincided with advances in harvesting technology that allow for a product that's actually harder than maple or oak," Chase continues. "It also has a lower VOC (volatile organic compound) content, which makes it environmentally safer."

Aesthetically, there's only a slight difference in the appearance of Zenterra bamboo flooring when compared with traditional hardwood: instead of dark streaks and knots, bamboo is characterized by a subtle "knuckle" pattern indicating where the cane ends.

Predictably, clubs are lining up to install this rapidly renewable resource—which also happens to be Fitness Flooring's fastest-growing product line, with sales outpacing even its historically best-selling Exerflex brand. →

Please contact j.mcinerney@fit-etc.com with your 'green' initiatives.

Wilkins Wins McCarthy Merit Scholarship

Cooper staffer shines at IHRSA's Institute for Professional Club Management

Brad Wilkins, the director of fitness management and development for the Cooper Fitness Center, in Dallas, has been named the recipient of the 4th Annual John McCarthy Institute Merit Scholarship.

Wilkins received full tuition and a \$500 travel stipend to attend the 21st Annual IHRSA Institute for Professional Club Management, which was held last month at the Resort at Squaw Creek, in Lake Tahoe, California.

Wilkins has worked at the Cooper Fitness Center for 13 years. He's held the position of director of fitness management since 2005, and serves as the team leader of the Cooper Corporate Solutions commercial consulting line. In that capacity, he's responsible for the daily operations and strategic business development of a multi-million-dollar department.

Wilkins was also instrumental in restructuring the club's fitness department and creating its Trainer Advisory Board.

"Brad has done an exceptional job of growing the personal-training services and establishing a team approach among the staff at the Cooper Fitness Center," observes Roger Ralph, the co-owner of the Hockessin Athletic Club, in Wilmington, Delaware, and a member of the scholarship-selection committee. "The great results produced by Brad's Trainer Advisory Board are a testament to his leadership and team-building talents. He's very deserving of this award."

The John McCarthy Institute Merit Scholarship was established in 2006 to honor IHRSA's executive director emeritus. It's funded through donations from industry founders and friends. The other members of the selection committee included: Rick Caro, president, Management Vision, Inc.; Jarod Cogswell, general manager, ClubSport Oregon; Nestor Fernandez, vice president of operations, Western Athletic Clubs; and Karen Wischmann, president, Total Woman Gym and Day Spa. →



Brad Wilkins