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Green workouts

Make your exercise regimen eco-friendly



By Barb Berggoetz

Posted: April 9, 2009

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Every day, manager Ron Lewis looks outside the Rusted Moon Outfitters across the street from the Monon Trail and sees people drive up, grab their disposable plastic water bottles and hit the trail.

"Maybe they could ride their bike or run here, at least sometimes," he said. They also could carry CamelBak or Sigg bottles with filtered water from home, Lewis suggested.

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Taking steps to "green" your workouts can be that simple.

It's not easy being green...or thin: An interactive guide to 10 simple products for a sustainable routine.

But nothing, he says, fosters environmental awareness more than spending time outdoors.

"The more time people spend in the woods, hiking, riding bikes, the more time they spend on a stream or river, the more they're going to care about the environment."

From the clothes and shoes you wear, to the resistance bands and yoga mats you use, you can conserve resources and energy as you're burning up your own.

Workout apparel and shoe companies are appealing to the eco-conscious. Bamboo, hemp, recycled coconut shells, natural rubber and soybean oil-based fibers are increasingly making their way into clothes, shoes and equipment.

"All the companies are really moving in that direction, especially in apparel," said Andrea Johnson, an owner of The Running Co. in Broad Ripple. "In the last year and a half, people have come in and requested these eco-friendly products."

They're starting to take "baby steps," says Nicole Schumacher, marketing director for Natural Fitness Inc., a firm offering eco-friendly yoga and fitness products.

"We've had a lot of interest from retailers, both big-box and gym and yoga studios, whose clients are looking for alternatives to regular gym equipment," she said. "Consumers are trying to figure out different ways to have an organic



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- Angela Edwards / The Star



ZOOM

Step in the right direction: Nike's updated, eco-friendly take on its classic Pegasus design uses recycled materials and water-based solvents and adhesives to reduce volatile organic compounds. - Photo provided by Nike

RELATED INFORMATION

Ways to go green

1. Look for resistance tubing or bands that are biodegradable or made out of natural latex.
2. Wear workout shirts made of natural, sustainable fibers, like those used in Cocona, made from recycled coconut shells.
3. Use soft weighted balls that are latex-free vinyl, filled with natural sand and iron.
4. Carry a workout bag or tote made of natural materials, like salvaged rice paper.
5. Wear workout shorts made from soybean oil-based fibers.
6. Work out using an exercise ball made with non-toxic, phthalate-free and latex-free vinyl.
7. Try socks made from antibacterial bamboo charcoal, recycled polyester, Merino organic wool or organic cotton.
8. Wear running/gym shoes made with a biodegradable midsole or other recycled materials.
9. Use a yoga block made from bamboo, a sustainable natural resource.
10. Lie down on a yoga mat made of natural rubber.

Greening your workout

1. **Resistance tubing or bands**, Natural Fitness Inc., natural latex and biodegradable, \$15.99

lifestyle."

For people like Renée Bogard, owner of Altered Body Mind Yoga in Greenwood, green practices permeate her business and personal workouts. "The practice of yoga is generally pretty green, because you just need you and your yoga mat."

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(www.naturalfitnessinc.com)

2. Workout shirts, New Balance's Cocona line, fabric from recycled coconut shells, \$30 and up (www.newbalance.com)

3. Soft weighted balls, Natural Fitness Inc., latex-free vinyl, set of two, \$19.99 (www.naturalfitnessinc.com)

4. Workout bag, Keen's Irving tote, woven strips of salvaged rice paper, \$40 (www.keenfootwear.com).

5. Workout shorts, Gaiam, organic cotton, \$38, or ActiveSoy, \$52, made from soybean oil-based fibers (www.gaiam.com).

6. Exercise ball, non-toxic, phthalate-free and latex-free vinyl, Natural Fitness Inc., \$19.99-\$29.99 (www.naturalfitnessinc.com).

7. Socks, Greenyarn LLC, antibacterial bamboo charcoal, \$16-\$18 (www.greenyarn.com).

8. Running shoes, Brooks BioMoGo with biodegradable midsole, several models, \$100-\$140 (www.brooksrunning.com).

9. Yoga block, Natural Fitness Inc., 4-inch, bamboo, \$15.99, (www.naturalfitnessinc.com).

10. Yoga mat, Natural Fitness Inc., natural rubber, biodegradable, \$39.99 (www.naturalfitnessinc.com)

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