

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Fitness experts help mind and body

■ Program guides clients toward goals for healthful lifestyle

By LARA MOSSA
Of The Daily Oakland Press

Rich Walker believes he's found the key to healthful living. A physical trainer for seven years, he and his wife, Karla, have developed a program that combines exercise with fitness psychology classes.

"Too many people are using exercise equipment as a clothes rack and not treating their body well," Rich Walker said. "There's a definite need there and a missing ingredient. We believe fitness psychology is the missing ingredient."

Walker 29, of Southfield started thinking about the program last year, because his clients struggled to maintain their regimens. Clients can be more successful with support from their peers, he said.

So, the Walkers launched Inner Excellence on Sept. 14 with 10 students.

The business offers 30-minute group fitness classes

Name: Inner Excellence
Business: Fitness program
Owners: Rich and Karla Walker
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Hours: 7 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday through Friday

es — ranging from two to 12 people — for strength and aerobic training. Although the group classes use dumbbells and weight resistance exercises, the business also has machines for students with special health problems.

Each week, clients attend a half-hour fitness psychology class, which is kind of like a support group, to discuss different fitness principles.

"A lot of times, a person feels like they're the only person going through what they're going through. It's discouraging," Rich Walker said.



Rich and Karla Walker are co-owners of Inner Excellence, a fitness psychology and health center in Southfield.

The Daily Oakland Press/CHARLIE CORTEZ

Clients are more motivated if they work out with peers and discuss the challenges of healthful living, he said.

Inner Excellence has five certified trainers. Packages start at \$330 a month for four exercise classes and four fitness psychology sessions.

Students who prefer to work out at home can sign up for online training for \$140 a month. The company develops personal training programs that are continually updated. The package also includes a motivational CD called Fitness

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Psychology 101.

In addition, the company has a personal chef who can provide healthful meals for clients each week.

Karla Walker, 30, who leads some of the fitness psychology classes, has a bachelor's and master's degree in social work. She

has worked as a therapist for 12 years. Rich is a certified personal trainer with the American Council on Exercise.

Both are licensed and ordained ministers and worked at the Maxey Boys Training School in Whitmore, Mich.