

fitness

Eco Fitness

by Jennifer Taylor



product for a price that is affordable and accessible to the general public." Members are able to take unlimited yoga classes for a reasonable rate, unlike the majority of studios where yoga is often very expensive, forcing students to scale back on the number of classes they can afford to take. There are an abundance of class selections to choose from, including hot yoga, Pilates, spinning, popular hip hop classes, Tae Bo, strength and

The smaller downtown Eco Fitness and next-door neighbor Blue Turtle Yoga opened first in November of 2004, and the Mount Pleasant location followed in March of 2007. The second locale expanded on the approach and offers acupuncture, chiropractic care and massage under the same roof—a one-stop shop for your entire range of mind and body needs. The spacious childcare center has activities for kids and doesn't include a television.

There is an organic café called Sprout, which offers meals for the entire day. You can choose from an array of coffee, juice, espresso and regular smoothies, salads, fruit and garden burgers. What you won't find in the café is anything containing high fructose corn syrup, including soda.

Fox also avoids chemicals, choosing to clean mats with organic oil instead of standard cleaners. In addition, diffusers "emit grape seed oil, which kills mold and is organic," another method that differentiates Fox's business from other workout facilities.

If one of your New Year's resolutions was to join a gym and get in shape, chances are you might still be waiting to check that off of your list. Finding the right place to work out can be daunting, especially if your motivation has a tendency to waver. Abiding by a resolution and sticking with it, especially when you're traveling, also can be especially difficult. On a recent trip to Charleston for a wedding, I noticed Blue Turtle Yoga down the street from my hotel and decided to attend a class. I enjoyed it so much that I brought several women from the wedding party to another class with me the following day. One of the women told me how nice it was to find a community, even in another city.

Dave Fox, owner of Eco Fitness and Blue Turtle Yoga would appreciate that comment, because that is part of his idea. As the name implies, Fox has an environmental focus and is trying to "be a good neighbor and good shepherd to the environment," through his unique gyms located in downtown Charleston and Mount Pleasant. Fox admits, "we aren't a typical health club, and the focus is to make a sustainable community." With that in mind, his business actively supports causes that are important to his members, ranging from the Race for the Cure to environmental organizations to the arts. Fox adds "we've donated memberships to the Charleston Ballet so they can work out without a cost."

Fox has a track record with the health industry going back to the mid 90s. He previously owned Gorilla Sports in San Francisco and has discovered a passion for encouraging others to lead more balanced lives. He says, "I'm very interested in fitness, nutrition and how we can live healthier lifestyles across the board."

Part of urging others to become healthier is the affordability of the gyms. Fox states, "we offer a good



cardio mix classes, totaling more than 100 classes a week between the two locations. Members have the flexibility to go back and forth between both of the venues.

Fox suggests members try a different type of workout to help with problems they might be experiencing. He recalls a man who hadn't taken a yoga class before but was having back pain due to running. Fox recommended that he try yoga. "He was resistant at first, but I told him to try it over a month. He felt better and went on to continue with it, and all of the pain has cleared up. Now he continues with yoga, attends yoga clinics and events," Fox says.

Members ask if there are plans for additional expansion, and Fox says *no*. "We try to do things really well. I'd rather do two locations really well," he explains. The members can attest that this has been accomplished, and so can I after my experience at the yoga center.

Locations are at 69 B Wentworth Street in Charleston and 627 Johnnie Dodds Boulevard in Mount Pleasant. For more information, visit www.ecofitnessgym.com.