

## March Fitness Diary



Fitness First Founder,  
Steve Ritz

**Steve Ritz, Exercise Physiologist, founded Fitness First in 1998 located on 115 East 2nd St. in Chaska, (952) 448-4322. His second location, conveniently located at 23505 Smithtown Rd./Cty. Rd. 19, Ste. 150, in Excelsior, opened in 2008, (952) 401-4322.** Steve has developed a prescription for exercise called the SEE-FIT training system. The SEE-FIT system encompasses workouts that are **SAFE, EFFICIENT and EFFECTIVE** -- all in just one or two intense 30-60 minute appointments a week. Each month we will be profiling the personal experiences of actual Fitness First clients.



Gary Cooper using a Hammer Strength external rotation machine with instruction and supervision from Fitness Specialist Nick McCoy.

Gary Cooper, 69, long-time resident and business owner in Chaska began making strength training appointments at Fitness First in January 2015 as a result of encouragement from Fitness First Founder Steve Ritz.

"My wife, Sandy, and I own a grocery store in Chaska and we kept running into Steve at various community events," Gary said. "I have always enjoyed waterskiing, but in 2014 I pulled a hamstring and figured my waterskiing days were over

which is one reason I decided to make the commitment at Fitness First. We both decided to make strength training appointments at Fitness First in order to prioritize our strength enabling us to stay active as we age. Sandy and I are in our 60's and still work full time at the store. We also have a very active lifestyle. Many of our friends have retired and things appear to be good for them however, that is not the lifestyle we are ready to lead."

Gary has some advice for anyone thinking about starting to strength train as they age. "After my first strength training appointment at Fitness First I thought I was going to fall over just going downstairs," Gary laughed. "Steve told me I would get to a point that after completing a Fitness First strength training appointment I would feel good. I was skeptical, but I have reached that point now after my appointments. During the fall of 2015 I injured both of my shoulders splitting wood. I utilized the educated experts at Fitness First to address the problem. When I arrived at Fitness First for my appointment after the injury the staff examined my shoulders and made modifications allowing me to continue strength training. I believe this approach accelerated the healing process and currently my shoulders are much improved. Along with the strength training, I attempt to practice healthy nutritional habits. I try to choose lean protein, green vegetables and complex carbohydrates. Since I began making strength training appointments at Fitness First I have increased my lean weight and my clothes fit better. As a result of the strength training at Fitness First I can do things I want to do, feel great about working, being with my grandchildren and traveling. My Fitness First experience has been great!"

**Stump The Staff**  
*Your questions answered*

**Q: Strength training at Fitness First has increased my lean muscle. If I stop strength training, will the muscle turn to fat?**

**A: Muscle can not turn into fat. Fat can not turn into muscle. Fat and muscle are completely different tissues. Strength training provides the following physiological responses:**

- Increase in muscle size and strength
- Increase in metabolic rate
- Additional calories burned

**When an individual stops strength training the opposite occurs:**

- Muscles atrophy (get smaller)
- Metabolic rate slows

**The net result is the volume of muscle decreases while the volume of fat increases, giving the appearance that muscle is turning into fat.**



Fitness Specialist Nick McCoy teaching Gary on a Nautilus leverage shrug machine.



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