



Fit For Sisters

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Columnist

Fitness breakthroughs of 2016

With 2016 drawn to a close and a new beginning on the horizon, many people are putting their past behind them and moving forward with vigor. 2016 was a stellar year in fitness, with a number of interesting breakthroughs. Here is a rundown of a few.

Ultra-marathons reach an all time peak:

Marathons anymore are for Average Joes, with the consensus from many fitness enthusiasts that 26.2 is for soccer moms and AARP members. The new fitness and fortitude test is 50-100k through mountains and forests without course marshals every step of the way on barricaded streets. What is great about this movement is that as the former marathoners move to more rugged events, they bring others up with them to the shorter distances, creating a net-gain effect with people involved and participating in all events.

The new cramp fighter is a burning shot:

Muscle cramps have plagued athletes since the dawn of athletics in ancient Greece. Often misunderstood, a cramp appears to be a blip in the neurological programming of a muscle's contractile characteristics.

This blip causes the muscle to seize in a painful and sometimes unrelenting contraction. New science suggests the cure for this is to give the neurological system a shock to reset. This shock was often provided by the brine of pickles, a tart, sour puckering elixir that old wives' tales still promote. Now, a new product called "Hot Shot" promises release with a cinnamon burning liquid shot which provides the same release.

Cycling takes it's palomares to the gravel:

Cycling has been polarized between dirt and road for generations. Finally, bike companies decided to make a middle-ground type of bike to allow riders to enjoy the gravel and dirt roads that a road bike isn't suited for and a for which a mountain bike is too slow. The gravel bike was born with the original Tour de France, but has been re-born in modern times with the wide acceptance of gravel-specific bikes coming from every major brand. The Oregon Bicycle Racing Association calendar has many gravel rides on the calendar this year, and popularity is booming. Any time horizons are expanded, and an opportunity to get out more is created it is a good thing.

Rest and recovery is on the rise:

Many extreme workout and fitness folks have pushed their limits on a daily level for a long time. At the beginning, they saw tremendous results, fat-loss, fitness gains, and increased well-being. Eventually these results fade because the proper rest and recovery protocol is not being considered. The implications for rest and recovery were brought to the mainstream in 2016. Now it is known that fitness programs are more effective when a good protocol of recovery is

added to the equation. This can be meditative breathing, foam rolling, days off from exertion, and taking an inventory of stressors and working to better cope with them.

Health and fitness trackers become nuanced:

In 2015, the wrist-based activity monitor was a hot trend. They counted steps, considered nighttime activity, and gave a decent snapshot of daily activity. These were novel and basic, not considering intensity of activity or the actual amount of sleep a person was getting. In 2016, tracking saw many advances. Heart-rate monitoring, GPS recording, and many other features emerged making tracking more sophisticated and useful. There are also many other new ways to take a look at health and well being. Take-home testing for different markers, mail-in gene sequencing, and more. In 2017 fitness tracking will again see advances as the market hasn't shown a slowdown in people's thirst for data.

Fitness in the other 23 hours:

Many people working a white-collar job are sedentary all day, then perform a gym workout for an hour or so. They believe what they were doing is healthy and a way to undo sitting all day. This notion is now being challenged; it may be more important to be active many times throughout the day than to try and get it all done at once. The phrase "sitting is the new smoking" was a hot one in 2016. The body is most resilient when movement and activity is constant, not limited to one period of time in a day.

Drones can't get too close to Orcas

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — The Washington State attorney general says drones are just like boats when it comes to protecting orcas.

KING-TV reports that Attorney General Bob Ferguson released an opinion Friday saying state law says "vessels and other objects" can't come within 200 yards of an orca — and that includes drones.

Ferguson says the Legislature most likely meant to include drones in the term "other objects."

The case stems from Mercer Island photographer

Douglas Shih, who was cited after using a drone to take pictures of orcas in the San Juan Islands last year.

State fish and wildlife Sgt. Russ Mullins says the drone was 20 to 30 yards over a pod of whales.

Mullins says they're concerned drones could get too close and even strike a whale.

Shih fought the ticket and won. He said the law didn't specifically mention drones.

San Juan County Prosecutor Randy Gaylord asked the AG's office for a clarification of the law.

New secretary of state names ousted officials

PORTLAND (AP) — Oregon's Secretary of State-elect Dennis Richardson, who will be sworn in Friday, has named an ousted elections official and a former state manager tied to a multimillion-dollar scandal to top administrative positions.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports Richardson has appointed Leslie Cummings as deputy secretary of state. Cummings managed tech-security for the Oregon Employment Department until 2013, when she resigned after being caught up in accusations of

nepotism and wasting millions in public funds.

For elections director, Richardson selected Steve Trout, who held the position from 2009 to 2013 under then-Secretary of State Kate Brown. Trout left after Brown faced criticism for giving candidates short notice that the date of their election would change — a responsibility of the elections director.


Trout said Brown, who is now governor, asked him to resign but said it had nothing to do with the election scheduling entanglement.

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