

A 90-DAY CHALLENGE: DOES TONY HORTON DELIVER?

By Charlie Flora

WHEN THE INFOMERCIALS FOR P90X Extreme Home Fitness began airing, the clear target seemed to be guys. With images of a charismatic Tony Horton performing pushups and pull-ups to exhaustion, the camera's focus was on chest, arms and shoulder muscles. The exercises and the "guy's gym" stage provided a refreshing detour from the spandex-clad legs of Windsor Pilates or the toned arms of Yoga Booty Ballet's signature move, "the blooming flower."

But if the images that have dominated the late-night exercise video marketplace have



"After four weeks, I almost didn't recognize my own shoulders"

changed, the market has not. Women have out bought men by a ratio of 60/40, according to P90X creative director Ned Farr. The Beach Body Web site is full of testimonials, with an even mix of both men and women of different ages, showing off ripped abs, defined shoulders, arms and legs.

Though the demographic may have drifted from its original goal, one thing that is certain about P90X (short for Power 90 Days of Extreme Home Fitness): It is an exercise program geared

DETAILS:

- ▶ A 90-day detailed exercise regimen for strength gain and weight loss
- ▶ Three, 4-week phases. Each phase includes 3 hard weeks/ 1 easy (recovery) week
- ▶ Average workout length: 1 hour per day
- ▶ 6 days a week with one day for recovery or stretch

COST: \$139.80 including shipping and handling

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- ▶ A total of 12 workout DVDs
- ▶ 3 part nutritional plan
- ▶ Comprehensive fitness guide
- ▶ Online access to message board so you can get tips from other participants.

toward the advanced. There is an extensive "fit test" that requires you to be in relatively good shape. Males must be able to do three complete pull-ups, 15 push-ups, and to hold wall squat (bent knees with back flat on wall) for 1 minute.

From direct marketing company Beachbody (Hip Hop Abs, Slim in 6), the P90X program includes 12 different workouts, focusing on upper body, abdominal muscles and legs and lower body exercises. Each DVD lasts 60 to 90 minutes, including warm up and stretching. The videos are not in sequential order so your muscles don't settle into a comfortable routine. Some highlights include a 90-minute intense yoga program, which is, thankfully, broken down into two segments. There is also a disc dedicated to stretching, and two cardio-only videos. An extensive diet plan is included that maps out three months of meals as well.

For the three of us who took up the challenge, the results were overwhelmingly positive with a few complaints. Triathlete and avid cyclist Tim Stephens increased his vertical jump, crediting the plyometrics workout, even having to buy heavier dumbbells in the middle of the 90 days to accommodate his gains in arms and shoulders. However, Stephens got "nothing" out of the karate video, Kenpo X, and would usually pick another option on those days. After four weeks on the program, I almost didn't recognize my own shoulders, doubled my original max on pull-ups, and, overall, felt more energy from the consistent workouts. However, my nemesis video, Ab Ripper X, proved to be beyond my fitness level, as was the inverted pull ups and one-handed push-ups – quite frustrating. Regarding the extreme moves, trainer Mark Harari would have liked the videos better if they had more emphasis on proper form.

WHAT YOU NEED:

- ▶ Pull up bar
- ▶ A set of dumbbells or exercise bands with varying resistance
- ▶ Yoga mat
- ▶ Nutritional supplements, multi-vitamin pills and recovery drinks (optional)

WHAT'S NEW: P90X will release an expansion called P90X+ with "more cardio, specific sculpting of upper body, abs & total body," said Product Developer Anna Erickson.
www.beachbody.com

