

ST. CLAIR SHORES, MI

Michael Fox
Next Level Health and Fitness
21431 Greater Mack Ave.
586-776-2800

We have trainer phobia, so finding out Fox has clients of every fitness level (including a 72-year-old nun) helped. Fox placed us on the treadmill to warm up and then we zoomed from triceps dips to curls and presses with resistance bands to mat exercises with a ball—all done in 30-second spurts. At the close of the session, he showed his soft side when he gently ran a foam roller over our sore muscles. One-hour session, \$50.

DALLAS

Jason Harnden

Axis Fitness
5915 Forest Ln.
972-980-8880

We've been to trainers who don't understand that it's impolite to draw attention to a woman's fat. Harnden didn't even put us near a scale. He also impressed us with his analysis of our posture and joint mobility. He saved the working out for our second meeting, taking us through a routine that

included squats, chest presses, and hamstring flexes. At the end, he gave us a T-shirt, asking "Size small, right?" Is this guy good or what? One-hour session, \$125.

SEATTLE

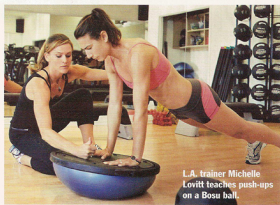
Traci Barnum

Fly Fitness
206-909-4404
We take the elevator to the second floor. We run only when chased. But Barnum was not judgmental. She turned up a customized playlist (she asked us for our favorites in advance) and got us going. Using resistance bands, weights, mats, and a step platform, she kept us moving briskly, all while correcting our form and cheering us on. Like any good coach, she kept us focused—so much so that we were shocked when our time was up. One-hour session, \$80.

SAN FRANCISCO

Nikki Galvan

Galvanize Fitness
415-307-8474
When you meet a hairstylist with a great cut, you trust her skills. Same goes for a trainer with a great body. Galvan fit the bill. She arrived with a resistance band and a TRX Suspension Trainer, which she clipped to a pole. She had us grab its two handles and lean forward to do push-ups in the air before switching to squats and lifts. Our heart rate was already racing when she sent us sprinting up the closest hill. She said bursts of



L.A. trainer Michelle Lovitt teaches push-ups on a Bosu ball.

cardio would speed up weight loss, and between wheezes, we thanked her. One-hour session, \$75.

LOS ANGELES

Valerie Waters

ProGym
11943 Montana Ave.
310-571-1720
Valerie Waters is a "celebrity" trainer, but she isn't a Hollywood narcissist. She welcomed us so enthusiastically, you'd have thought her client Jennifer Garner had just walked in. While warming up on the elliptical, we went over our history and goals—and then started the first of two circuits of lunges, squats, biceps curls, thigh work, back and shoulder presses, and step aerobics. Every exercise challenged but didn't overwhelm us. One-hour session, \$250 and up.

Michelle Lovitt

Lovitfitness
1222 Selby Ave.
310-487-1051
We didn't want to run a marathon; hell, we didn't even care about losing weight. We just wanted to be able to jog with our dog. Lovitt, who has trained Courteney Cox and Amber Valletta, said no sweat. She stuck us on the treadmill with a heart monitor, and

then we did weight training exercises, using a resistance band instead of free weights because we told her we bulk up easily. She promised that after six weeks of working out with her, we would no longer be panting like a dog during a run. One-hour session, \$175.

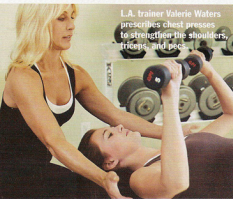
Nancy Kennedy

323-656-5362

Kennedy's home studio, quietly tucked away in the Hollywood Hills, looks more like a bed-and-breakfast than a gym. We worked our abs by the pool area, and just as we started to feel like we were on holiday, we went inside for triceps, biceps, and chest exercises with five-pound dumbbells, followed by squats done while holding a weighted ball to improve our balance. Then it was back to the pool—twist our arm—for step aerobic moves. One-hour session, \$90.

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L.A. trainer Valerie Waters prescribes chest presses to strengthen the shoulders, triceps, and pecs.