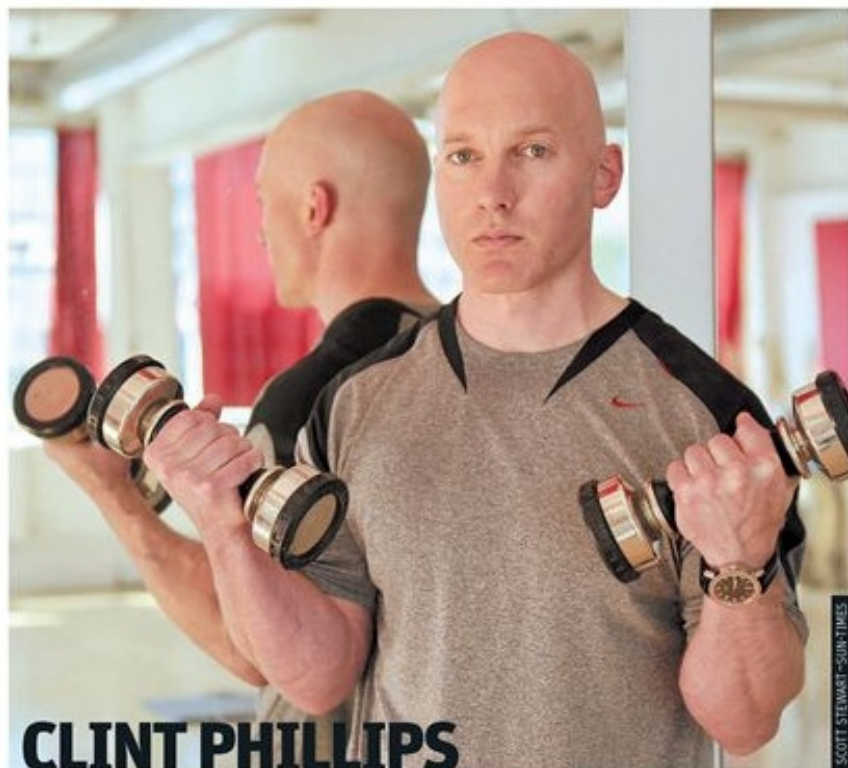


FROM THE COVER

# TOP-NOTCH TRAINERS

Chicago's best fitness gurus tell what they do to motivate all kinds of clients



**CLINT PHILLIPS**

Fit Chicago, Chicago and suburbs, (312) 371-6107

Fun, creative workouts are Phillips' forte. The former Army sergeant knows how hard it is to keep people energized about doing the same exercises over and over again. So, he likes to throw in "oddball" twists to spice things up, he says. "A lot of times in clubs, you see trainers who have the entire routine written out on a clipboard, and it's probably the same routine they gave just about every other client," Phillips says. "Our clients, they never know what's coming next."

## HOW TO CHOOSE A PERSONAL TRAINER

- **Ask for references:** If a trainer can't or won't put you in touch with satisfied customers, there's probably a reason.
- **Check their credentials:** Look for certification from reputable organizations such as the National Academy of Sports Medicine, the American College of Sports Medicine and the National Strength and Conditioning Association.
- **Don't shop by price:** Experienced

trainers usually charge at least \$70 a session. Those who charge less tend to be less experienced. But that doesn't mean the most expensive trainer is the best, either.

- **Be wary of promises:** Some trainers may try to rope you into a long-term commitment by promising to turn you into David Beckham in two weeks.
- **Make sure they're interested in you:** A good trainer asks you de-

tailed questions about your medical history and lifestyle before you even touch a treadmill. And during workouts, they're keeping an eye on you, not the clock or their cell phone.

- **See if you click:** They're called personal trainers for a reason. Similar personalities are an obvious plus in getting the most out of your relationship with a trainer.

Monifa Thomas

BY MONIFA THOMAS | M1THOMAS@SUNTIMES.COM

Having a personal trainer can make the difference between saying you're going to get in better shape and actually doing it. ¶ But just because a trainer looks good in a tank top doesn't mean he knows how to help you meet your goals. ¶ The Sun-Times did an informal poll of fitness professionals in the Chicago area to see who they'd rate among the top personal trainers, based on factors such as experience, approach to fitness and ability to motivate clients. ¶ Here are some of the names that stood out:

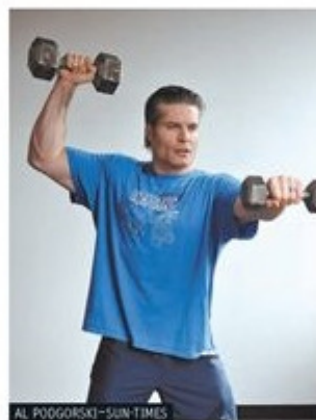
### DUANE MALO

Defined Fitness, Chicago, (773) 251-0095

A triathlete and body-builder who also does martial arts, Malo is a well-rounded trainer who "works with professional athletes down to little old ladies," he says. He also has a background in physical therapy, so he knows how to deal with clients who have pre-existing injuries. "My first approach is to really understand where the client is coming from," Malo says. "You really need to know [that] before you know where they're going to go."



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### JOHN TURK

Fearless Fitness, Chicago and suburbs, info@johnsturk.net

Turk is an actor who's had bit parts in "The Dark Knight" and "Prison Break." But in his day job, he trains fellow body builders and also business-people. Turk says he "stresses to people that working out isn't just about looking in the mirror and wanting to look better. It's about how you feel and how you live your life." By the same token, he's also a stickler about proper nutrition, which he says is half of the equation.

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