

BUSINESS PROFILE: Progressive Health Innovations in Port Moody

Device helps athletes build strength

By Jason Roessle

THE TRI-CITY NEWS

A strong base is essential to a stable structure and the human body is no exception. Images of strong, healthy athletes tend to focus on awesome abs, bulging biceps and chiseled chests, but a new exercise device promises to strengthen the part of the body from where most kinetic energy originates.

Port Moody based Progressive Health Innovations' (PHI) lead product is a foot and ankle strengthening device that is starting to generate a buzz in the sport trainer community.

AFX uses a variety of resistance bands allowing for foot and ankle exercises that can be used for both conditioning and rehabilitation for everyone from top-level athletes on down. Your foot slips into a black enclosure which is tightened with velcro straps. The resistance bands extend up to a metal bar which in turn has handles attached to it allowing for a variety of full-range exercises.

PHI was founded by a trio comprised of Coquitlam chiropractic doctor Jordan Myers, and SFU alumni Matt Ferguson and scientist Rick Hall.

Myers noted people have inherently weak feet because the majority of us walk around in hard-soled shoes and moving about on relatively flat surfaces, said Ferguson, who sits as the company president and chief executive officer.

One day in 2005 the three professionals sat



IN QUOTES

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MATT FERGUSON, PHI CEO

down and formed PHI and shortly thereafter, began work on AFX. It took one year to come up with the device, two years to design it and for the last year and a half, PHI has been marketing the device to a myriad of sources, such as Simon Fraser University's basketball teams and professional sports team trainers.

"We've placed [AFX] strategically with high performance athletes," said Ferguson, including the Seattle Seahawks, Phoenix Suns and Toronto Raptors.

Meyrick Jones, who runs Port Moody's Innovative Fitness in Suter Brook, has been using AFX for the past three months.

He reports better foot strength which "has improved every aspect of every sport I do." The multi-discipline Paralympic athlete is aiming to compete in cross-country in 2012 but also competes in trail running, 10K and half-marathon races with a focus on triathlon.

Demonstrating the device for *The Tri-City News*, Jones shows the full range of motion he's able to use, getting to those hard to target muscles and tendons in the foot and ankle.

PHI also garnered international exposure last week as the AFX was shown off at the Sports Technology and Innovation event at the B.C. Showcase at Robson Square, where Olympic athletes and passersby looked over made-in-B.C. advanced sport technologies.

For more information visit afx-online.com.

FEET FACTS

- The average person takes 8,000 to 10,000 steps per day, adding up to approximately 184,000 kilometres, which is enough to circle the globe four times.

- Seventy five per cent of all people will develop a significant foot and ankle issue at some point in their lives.

CRAIG HODGE/THE TRI-CITY NEWS

Meyrick Jones demonstrates the new ankle-strengthening device developed for performance athletes.

