



Sue Bickler

# real people real results

By Jeanette Hurt

**S**ue Bickler worked out regularly, ate nutritious meals and maintained an active lifestyle. But although this Oconomowoc Lake professional would have been considered by many to be fairly fit and healthy, she wasn't personally satisfied so she sought out Fitness Together's personal trainers to help her meet her goals.

After three years of working with Fitness Together, Bickler is more than satisfied with the progress she's made. As this month's success story, Bickler and one of her trainers, Ben Altgilbers, took time out to answer our questions.

**Many people thought you were in good shape before you came to Fitness Together. Why did you decide to come?**

Bickler: "I came to Fitness Together because I was looking to do something more than what I was already doing. I've always been really active. I coach girls' cheerleading, I do a lot of things. But I really needed the accountability of having to be some place at a certain time. Working one-on-one with a trainer like I do at Fitness Together, I don't think there's a better way to achieve a fitness goal. They push you harder than you would yourself. That's why professional athletes have coaches. Before I came here, I knew I could be more fit, but I wasn't able to get to that level of fitness on my own."

**What have you learned by coming to Fitness Together?**

Bickler: "I think one of the key things I realized soon after I started, is that it is the little things that can make a big difference.

There were certain areas I needed to work on, and on my own, I wasn't hitting that target area. They showed me different exercises that challenged me."

**What sort of exercises do they have you do?**

Bickler: "They use the physioball, the balance board and the bosu, which is a half-ball. We do different weight lifting exercises with them that incorporate balance and affect your core, your center of gravity."

Altgilbers: "When you use these different tools, you're engaging a lot more of your core muscles. And we're reaching more muscles with one exercise. It burns more calories and it helps you develop more strength from within. That integrity, that strength, leaves you less prone to injury."

Bickler: "I knew a little bit about core training, but it really was a new concept to me. A lot of people don't realize what core strength is or how important it is."

**How else has Fitness Together helped you with your goals?**

Bickler: "I'm interested in keeping my body fat low and increasing my muscle mass but without bulking up. I was a



Photo by Lee Wickersheimer

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speedskater for years so I can bulk up really easily. I love doing squats, but I don't want to do too many of them because I want to be able to fit into my jeans. There's a fine line between adding muscle and adding bulk."

Altgilbers: "Everyone has a different response to training. That's one thing, as a trainer, we watch carefully. For Sue, for example, we make sure that her exercises don't cause her to lose muscle mass, but they don't increase her bulk, either. We identified how Sue responds to different exercises, and we examined the rep (repetition) range and the resistance level of her weights so that she could reach her goals. We vary the exercises. We also have to create enough variety to challenge her and keep her interested. We change her routines every four to five weeks."

Bickler: "Working out at Fitness Together has definitely made a difference. Let me explain why. I often ask them 'Why am I doing this exercise?' Their knowledge is so great they can always answer my questions. And their answers are really interesting and beneficial."

### How often do you work out?

Bickler: "I try to come here three times a week, and I always come at least

two times a week. I try to do the majority of strength training here. But I also run, I bike. I play tennis. I just try to be active. One of the other key reasons I came here was the stress level. I have five children. I own my own business in real estate appraisals, and when I first started at Fitness Together, I had also just become the first female commodore of the Oconomowoc Lake Club. I really needed some stress release."

### Has Fitness Together helped you manage your stress better?

Bickler: "Oh, absolutely. My husband noticed it immediately. One of the things is I always try to do everything for everybody else, and I don't do enough for myself, which is typical of many women. I do everything for everyone, and then if there's a little leftover, then that's for me. Fitness Together has been something that I do for myself. Having a regular appointment here is time for myself, and this is so much more beneficial than just squeezing a workout in."

### Have you achieved the fitness goals you had before you started with Fitness Together?

Bickler: "I never think I achieve my fitness goals. I always want to be stronger, do more, do it faster. I don't know that I'll ever be happy with my fitness level."

Altgilbers: "That's one thing that has

motivated her to be successful—by not allowing herself to fall into complacency. Sometimes, once people reach a certain level of fitness, they don't try to get to the next level. Sue is continuously trying to do more, there's always something new to try. She really has a good grasp of knowledge of fitness, and she always has a lot of great questions for us as trainers. In fact, she challenges us to come up with better workouts for her, to be better trainers for her."

### How else has Fitness Together helped you?

Bickler: "I have a very slow metabolism, and my weight can easily fluctuate. One thing I've learned here is to try to eat small meals, four or five times a day."

Altgilbers: "We teach people how to eat. You have to eat the right way. It's what you need to do to increase your metabolism, especially once you've reached a certain level of fitness. Once you are fit, it requires more finessing, and it's taking a closer look at the things you might be doing."

### What are your favorite exercises that your trainers make you do?

Bickler: "The harder, the better. I like it when it's something really hard, when I really have to work at it. When I can't do it, I work harder and I just want to do it."

Altgilbers: "What really keeps her motivated is doing things she's never done before. Because she's so fit, she can do things that very few of our clients can."

### What would you want to tell other people who were considering coming to Fitness Together?

Bickler: I tell everybody about Fitness Together. I think one of the key things is the accountability of having to be somewhere to meet someone to work out, and that trainer is not going to let you float through your workout. They keep it really positive, and just the effectiveness of working with a personal trainer is huge. It's a nurturing environment. If you don't have your health, nothing else matters. It affects every area of your life." **FT**

# Real People, Real Results

Lost **9** pounds  
& **2** inches off  
WAIST  
Nikki Etheridge, Brookfield

I have gained more **FLEXIBILITY,**  
better balance,  
& **STAMINA**  
& strength  
than I thought possible.  
Carolyn R., Whitefish Bay

Lowered blood pressure  
from **142/82** to  
**126/80**  
Mike Erwin, Mukwonago

Your Trainers Salute You!

**FT**  
FITNESS TOGETHER  
1 Client 1 Trainer 1 Goal

Our Clients Look Good In Public Because They Train In Private!