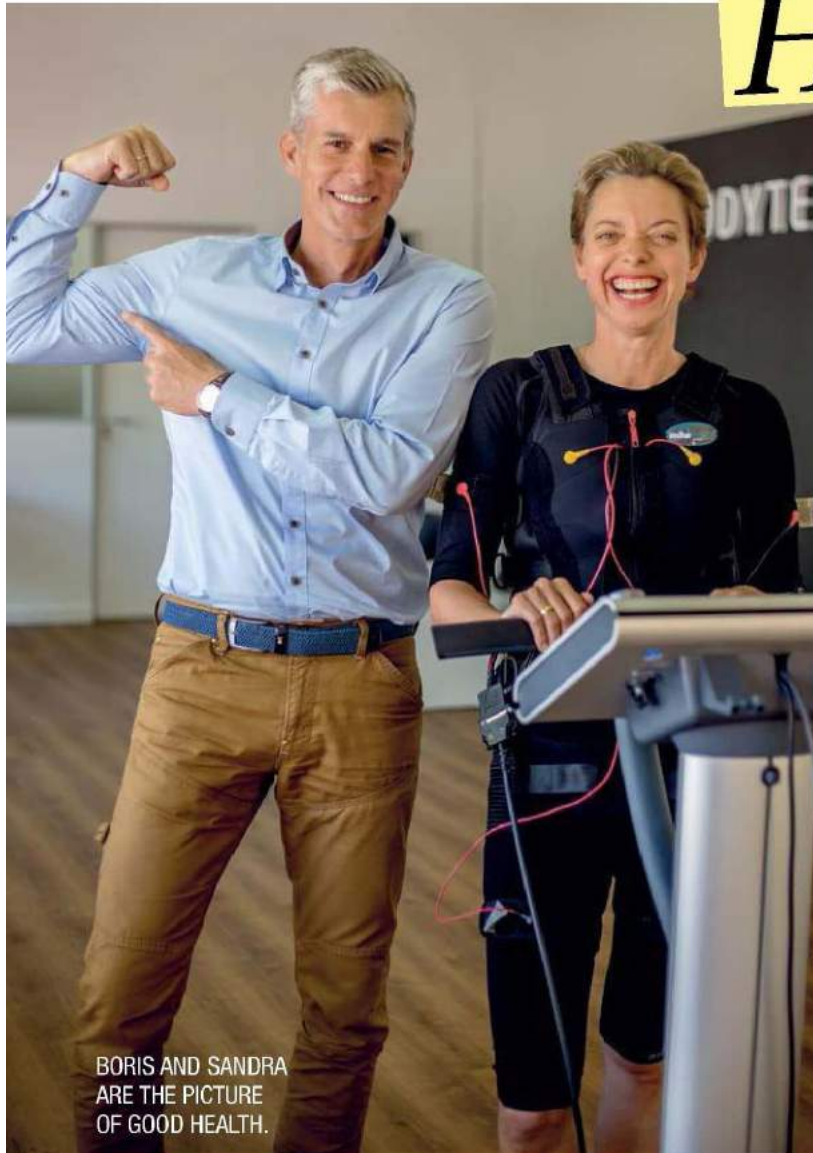


exercise

BY: KRISTEN BIRCH

How to

TRAIN IN YOUR COFFEE BREAK!



BORIS AND SANDRA
ARE THE PICTURE
OF GOOD HEALTH.

‘EXERCISE IS A DIRTY WORD. EVERY TIME I SAY IT, I WASH MY MOUTH OUT WITH CHOCOLATE,’ SAID PEANUTS CREATOR CHARLES SCHULTZ. HERE’S THE PERFECT SOLUTION FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO GET THEIR GYM SESSION FOR THE WEEK DONE AND DUSTED IN JUST 20 MINUTES!

being hooked up to a machine for 20 minutes might not sound too tough, but Electro Muscle Stimulation (EMS) is not about filing your nails while a machine does the work for you. You’ll be sweating within the first minute or two, and you’ll get an intense full-body workout that leaves your muscles aching for the rest of the week.

Boris Leyck discovered the wonders of EMS during a business trip to Munich in 2010. After hearing about the concept from a friend, he gave it a try and was blown away by the effect it had on his muscles. After failing to convince his wife Sandra of its merits, he put her on an 11-hour flight to Frankfurt for a 20-minute session, just so she could experience it for herself. ‘As soon as I got home, we began writing the business plan, and a year later we opened our first BODYTEC EMS training centre in the City Bowl. Six months later, a second one was opened in Newlands,’ says Sandra.

Although BODYTEC is fairly new to South Africa, EMS training has been used by athletes (including the legendary Usain Bolt) and sports rehabilitation centres for many years – and now this unique and innovative technology is available to the rest of us.

How does it work?

Our muscles contract in response to electrical impulses and with EMS, an electric current trains every muscle in the body at the same time. At BODYTEC, you wear a suit dampened with water over special clothing that prevents anything from interfering with the current as it surges through your body. A jacket with electrodes goes over the clothing and the electrodes are fastened around the upper arms, thighs and buttocks. These electrodes lead to a console that shows what intensity is being used for each muscle group, as well as when the current goes on or off.

What do I do?

During the trial session, your trainer turns each muscle group impulse on individually and increases it to a level that is comfortable but also optimal for each of your muscles. For example, you may be able to withstand a stronger current around your thighs than your triceps. Once the level of intensity is established, the training begins. 'A qualified trainer guides you through a 20-minute session during which you'll be told to do regular low-impact exercises like lunges, squats and bicep curls,' says Boris. 'You complete each move while the current pulses for four seconds. Then, during a four-second break, you change position. The current increases the intensity of each contraction, and the intensity can increase in every successive session.'

Is this exercise for me?

'As a long-distance and trail runner, I'd never been inside a gym. It's way too intimidating and I

wouldn't know how to use the machines or weights,' says Sandra. If you're in the same boat, BODYTEC might work for you. It's for anyone aged 18 to 85, and allows for one-on-one training away from the stuffy environment, confusing machines and 'bunnies' grunting next to you at the gym. 'Our oldest client, Nola, is 86 and she started training at 82,' says Boris. 'EMS is gentle on the joints. When Nola started out she was due for a hip replacement, but after training at BODYTEC for a while, the doctor said she no longer needed the op!'

Do you really exercise just once a week?

Most clients attend BODYTEC once a week, as recovery takes about 72 hours, but some enjoy power-walking or swimming the next day to loosen the muscles. 'Recovery time varies from person to person, but it's important to recover fully before doing high-intensity exercise again,' says Boris. Both he and Sandra attend one session a week, then do cardio exercise like running or cycling a few days after training.

What about results?

EMS improves muscle tone and strength, overall fitness, speed, endurance and flexibility, and you should see results after six sessions. 'If you do pull-ups at the gym, this mostly works your shoulders, and if you do three sets of 10 reps, your muscles are only contracted for about 30 seconds in total,' says Boris. 'But with BODYTEC, every muscle is contracted regardless of what exercise you're doing. So 90% of all muscles are under tension for 10 minutes.'

Is this a weight-loss programme?

'If people come to us hoping to lose 10kg, we tell them that EMS is not a weight-loss regime. But you will lose weight as a result of BODYTEC – unless you're eating more than you need,' says Sandra. EMS focuses primarily on muscle strength and full body toning, and an increase in muscle density can lead to some weight loss.

What else can BODYTEC do for me?

According to research completed by the University of Bayreuth, Germany, BODYTEC decreases chronic back pain by as much as 88.7%. Forty-nine participants with severe back pain went to training for five weeks and not only found a great decrease in pain, but also a huge increase in mood and vitality. 'Most of us no longer do manual labour, which would increase core strength,' says Sandra. 'At BODYTEC, the impulses go into deeper muscle tissue and into the small muscles along the spine that cannot be reached during a typical gym session, effectively strengthening your core to support the lower back.'

Cost and availability

A trial session costs R195. After that, there are different packages, ranging from 10 sessions to six- or 12-month contracts. The cost is based on the package purchased, but starts at R225 per session. BODYTEC is a franchise in South Africa. There are 11 studios in the Western Cape, one in KZN and 15 in Gauteng, with a further six on the way. Go to bodytec.co.za to book a trial session. ■