Positively Fit

OK, you didn’t win any summer swimsuit competitions. Now, let HIVer and pro trainer Jeffrey Gross buff you into fall.

September 1, 2005 By Laura Whitehorn

Jeffrey Gross
47,Chicago
Fitness trainer
Diagnosed 1985

As a kid, Jeffrey Gross says, “I sucked at team sports. I was the last one picked.” So he turned to gymnastics and later, as an adult, weight training. The workouts pumped more than Gross’ muscles—they helped give his HIV a working over.

“In the early ’90s, I developed AIDS and fell to 89 pounds,” the 5’6", 140-pound stud reports. “I had to leave work—I hit bottom.” Once his protease-inhibitor combo kicked in, Gross got back into fitness, believing it would boost his immune system. Indeed, the workouts “caused an increase in T cells and a decline in myv iral load,” he says. “That only happens with an aggressive workout,” he adds, “but even less ambitious regimens can help you feel good about yourself and balance mind, body and spirit.” Gross now runs BYOB (Build Your Own Body; BYOBJeff@aol.com) and designs fitness programs for HIVers at Chicago’s Rush University Medical Center. “It’s something I can give back to the community,” he says.

All this exercise fits Gross to a (muscle) T. With 1,000 T cells and an undetectable viral load, he’s managed to deflate his belly lipoaccumulation—notoriously hard to reverse because it settles around the internal organs. “It took me six and a half years,” he says, “but I’ve reduced that lipoaccumulation by 90%.” No sweat.

Proper Behavior
Gross promotes “the three Ps” for safe, successful workouts: Proper form (do the exercise correctly), proper clothing (wear stuff you can move in and supportive, comfortable shoes) and proper nutrition (smaller, more frequent meals and eight daily glasses of H2O).

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