

BUSINESS

The next big thing in fitness weighs in at new Bird Rock gym

By Meredith Wade
LA JOLLA LIGHT

Beads of sweat collect in dark patches on Robert Sylvester's clothes. Panting, he pushes himself to follow trainer Sarah Lurie's insistent directions.

"You are doing great," Lurie said encouragingly. "Deep breaths. Be explosive."

Sylvester tightly grips what looks like a black iron cannonball with a handle as he does various stretches and jumps. The sound of upbeat pop music mingles with grunts of determination.

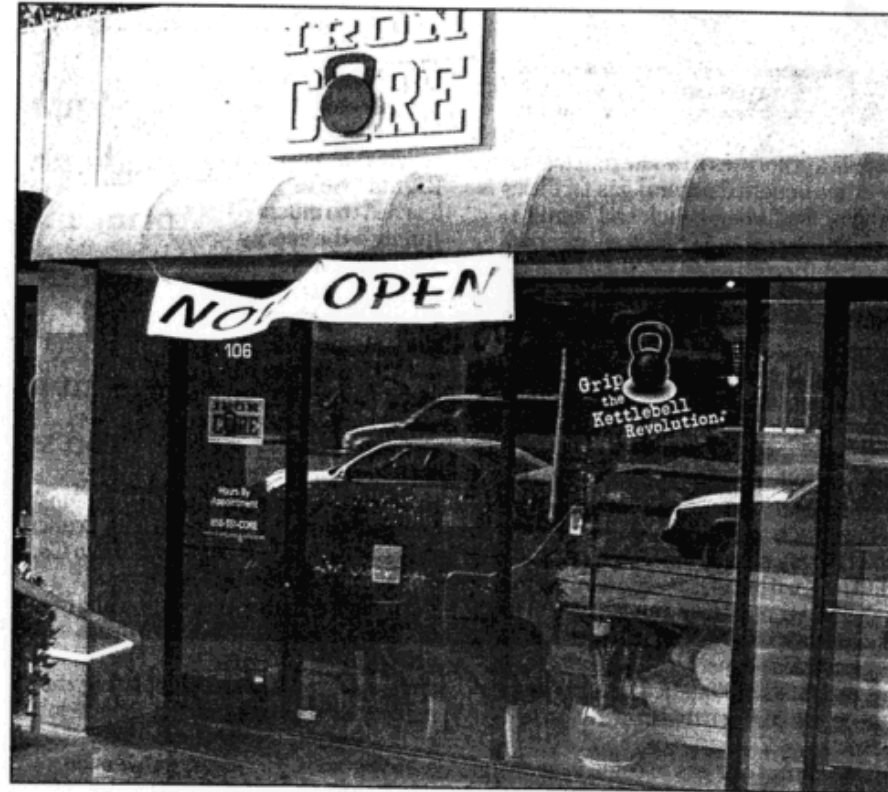
When Sylvester begins to tremble like a leaf, Lurie gives him a short break and demonstrates the movement she wants her client to imitate. Her petite frame leaps into the air effortlessly, the black weight in her hand moving farther and farther off the ground. Her feet land softly on the silver foam mats that line the floor.

Lurie's perfectly defined arm and abdominal muscles give a testament to the effectiveness of her workouts. And her exercise routine centers around one thing: kettlebells.

Weighing between 9 and 88 pounds, the chunky kettlebells are the latest trend in fitness training.

Lurie is the owner and founder of La Jolla's newest workout facility, Iron Core. She opened Iron Core's doors Oct. 23 and has been trying to spread the word about the benefits of kettlebell training.

"This is the type of training that everyone needs because it gives you functional strength. I am excited to



WILL CARLESS

Iron Core hopes to get La Jolla interested in the latest fitness trend: kettlebell training.

bring it to the public," Lurie said.

Iron Core is one of two gyms in the country that work exclusively with kettlebells.

"Every exercise you do with a kettlebell works your core, so you get very strong," Lurie said. "The results are

fairly instant."

Sylvester grunts as he flips the kettlebell around his body. He never stops smiling. After only three sessions with Lurie, the 40-year-old said he can already tell a difference.

"I can tell that I have more strength

and more mobility," he said. "I am so hooked I have already ordered kettlebells for myself."

Students train in classes with less than six people or individually with a personal trainer.

Lurie is one of four trainers at Iron Core. Every instructor has an athletic background, a bachelor's degree in a health-related field and is Russian Kettlebell certified. Kettlebell training has been used in Russia for more than a hundred years, but has only been practiced in the United States for three.

"Most Americans are taught to exercise like body-builders," said trainer Steve Cotter. "That is just not appropriate for most people. This is a better way of conditioning all muscles at the same time."

Cotter, a 34-year-old martial artist, used to train eight hours a day. After starting a family, he no longer had that much time to devote to staying in shape.

"I needed a way to be more efficient and smarter with my time," he said. "I think kettlebells are designed for people looking to push themselves at a high intensity."

A kettlebell workout usually takes around 45 minutes, but can take as little as 15 to 20 minutes.

"This is a great workout for many people in the modern world who are really busy and need to get the most out of their time," Lurie said.

Each client is given a physical

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readiness test prior to beginning a regime. Trainers modify routines based on student's abilities and goals.

Kettlebell routines focus on building strength in muscles that are used in everyday activities, as well as giving a full cardiovascular workout.

"Previously in my workouts, I hated weights but loved doing cardio," Sylvester said. "As you can see from my huffing, puffing and pouring sweat, this helps me get my cardio fix."

Based on the way a kettlebell is held, its weight varies and so do the muscles being engaged. Because of its handle, routines include flipping, swinging and catching the kettlebell, as well as lifting it. A routine will use all ranges of motion, so joints and muscles are strengthened from all angles.

Lurie and Cotter also teach students proper breathing and stress reduction techniques.

Iron Core does not have any mirrors or televisions. Students are encouraged to focus on the inside first and the outside later.

Lurie said lots of La Jollans have been interested in her gym and its concept. She has had one client sign up for every day Iron Core has been open.

"I want people to feel free to come in and try a couple of movements," Lurie said. "Usually people will try kettlebells once and are hooked."

Prices for kettlebell training at Iron Core range from \$40 for a one hour group session to \$200 with a personal trainer.

Iron Core is at 5726 La Jolla Blvd. Call (858) 551-2673.