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Brian Bourkland helps Daniel Millikan with his regimen. Bourkland, 51, is a master-level bodybuilder who has competed in five bodybuilding shows since 2012.

Middle age muscle

At 51, Brian Bourkland teaches clients how to get in great shape

By Marcela Creps

It's just a few days before Thanksgiving, and Brian Bourkland is working with two clients.

As pop music plays in the background, Bourkland gently leads two women through exercises with free weights. Despite his muscular physique, Bourkland is almost quiet as he directs the women.

With Bourkland, don't expect a drill sergeant bark to drop and give him 20. This is a man who believes in fitness and wants others to feel the same way.

"I started weight training when I was 14 in my parent's basement because I didn't fit into high school sports," said Bourkland, 51.

He didn't stick with a fitness regime his entire life and admits to reaching his 40s and deciding it was time to get back in shape.

"I got to a point where I was looking for someone to help me," he said.



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He started at a local gym, but he found he was doing exercises just because everyone else was doing it. Eventually, he began training with Dave Drake, a local bodybuilder who inspired Bourkland.

So at the age of 47, Bourkland made two significant changes in life.

First, Bourkland went back to school. He didn't start his career with an interest in exercise. He has numerous degrees including two master's degrees in music. But when he found that helping people lead a healthy life was his passion, he went back to school to earn a degree in exercise science from Concordia University-St. Paul.

Second, he began training as a bodybuilder, and he is currently active in the masters division and has competed in both the Indianapolis and Indiana State Bodybuilding Championships.

"First of all, it was nerve wracking, but I've learned to become more comfortable with it," he said.

His physique has also led to some interesting job offers — Bourkland was asked to be an art model at Indiana University. It's not an easy job as he has to stand still for a long period of time. He's had limbs fall asleep and muscles tense and cramp, but his body provides great shadows and light. "I've been described as fun yet challenging to draw," Bourkland said.

As an A.C.E. certified personal trainer, Bourkland works with clients in both a private exercise studio and at Anytime Fitness. He's got a calm energy that appeals to people as he tries to guide them to a healthy lifestyle.

"I draw people to me, and I hope I leave them with an inspiring motivation to change their life," he said.

There were little signs that maybe helping train people would be a passion. Bourkland admits that in a previous job, he'd get excited about the company's wellness program and want to motivate people to make positive lifestyle changes. He considers himself a quiet leader who tries to set a good example for his clients.

Bourkland often works with clients over the age of 40 where there is still a chance to reverse or prevent conditions that come with aging. For him, it's never too late to get in shape and prepare for the unforeseen.

When asked what can be someone's downfall in their quest to get healthy, Bourkland pointed to consistency. Getting in the habit of making exercise a part of your daily routine is important.

"When you don't have the desire to exercise, you need to go anyway," he said.

To help get into a routine, Bourkland sets re-occurring appointments with his clients so they can get on a good schedule. Then he focuses on form and what he calls "old-school fundamentals."

"I'm almost like a tutor — a tutor for fitness," he said.

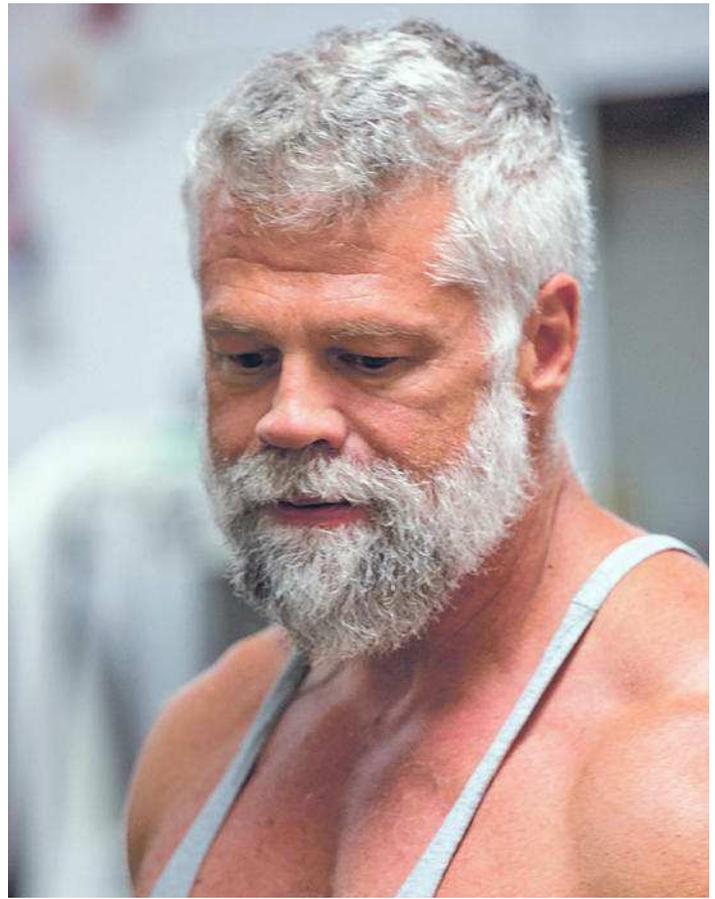
When setting goals, Bourkland said it helps to be realistic. Sometimes people try to do more than they can and that can lead to frustration that leads to quitting. He said people can benefit from finding a good trainer for at least six months. That time-frame will help someone learn what they need to know as well as establish a pattern for working out.

If someone is already working out and not getting good results, it may be time to find a trainer. It's not cheap, but Bourkland said people need to consider the long-term costs. Medical bills and prescription costs to deal with a health problem could be astronomically higher than what it costs to find a trainer who will help stave off those health problems.

"It will save you a lot of time and frustration in the long run," he said. "If you want to make a change in your life, you need to make an investment." ■

More information

To learn more about Brian Bourkland, visit www.brianbourkland.com, email brianbourkland@att.net or call 812-345-0804.



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