

Personal trainer's programme focuses on getting youngsters into shape

Putting exercise back into children's lives



BODY SOLUTIONS: Greg Pye, pictured with his wife Charlotte, says modern lifestyles are affecting the health of our children.

by DAVID HOLMES chief reporter

A FORMER Royal Marine is helping to cut the next generation down to size through a programme of exercises tailored to the needs of each child. Personal trainer Greg Pye, 27, who operates Body Solutions in Chester and Wirral, says children are ballooning in size because of a variety of reasons connected with our modern lifestyles. Mum and dad are less happy about their youngsters burning off energy outside because of traffic and stranger danger. Parents have less time to enjoy a kick-around with their kids because they are working round the clock to cover the mortgage. And children are only too content to sit in front of the TV or Playstation. Middle class angst is driving some of these parents to hire personal trainers like Greg to ensure their children grow up healthy and free of the bullying and teasing often experienced by the overweight. Greg, who lives in Neston, said eight of his 38 clients are children and all but one is overweight. He said: 'Everybody has been leaping on the property ladder and trying to go a bit higher. With mortgage rates increasing, parents are finding they are working every hour God sends. A lot have got to the

point where they don't want the child to be unhappy, if the child is a little bit overweight. 'A week doesn't go by without you seeing an article on obesity. It's such a major problem and there are lots of diseases linked with obesity. We want to nip it in the bud before it becomes a problem.' Greg, whose office is based in West Kirby, believes parents are keeping their children indoors for well-intended reasons. 'A really big factor comes down to a safety point of view. A lot more problems have been presenting themselves over the past 10 years, particularly paedophile problems,' he added. 'Equally I blame the Playstation culture - kids sitting in and not going out. The activity of running around is done through

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PERSONAL TRAINER GREG PYE

a screen. I think that's a lot to do with it.' Greg might have been put through a punishing regime when he was in the forces but he says the key to keeping children motivated is to make the exercises fun. He certainly doesn't want to be seen as a drill sergeant, although some boys like the idea of undertaking a military-style programme. Greg, who is running the New York marathon for Barnardo's next month, tailors each child's routine around sports or activities they are already interested in. Activities are carried out in the house or the back garden, if the weather is fine. 'You don't need a lot of space to put a programme together,' said Greg, who doesn't believe in checking up on whether his young buddies have been keeping up

the good work while he's away. 'They usually tell me. They will say 'I've been out on my bike three times''. Likewise, he tries to steer youngsters in the right direction in terms of nutrition. But the last thing he wants is to create a hang-up about food. Weight training is out of the window, given such strains could be damaging to young muscles and joints in the process of developing. And Greg is all too aware generally of the need to be careful when dealing with a body which is still growing. Greg charges £20 for a 45-minute session and a slightly cheaper rate for block bookings. He is married to childhood sweetheart Charlotte who comes from Hawarden. They both attended Chester Catholic High School in Handbridge where they met. Charlotte is 15 weeks' pregnant and working with children is proving a two-way learning experience. Charlotte, a massage therapist, runs a clinic at Abbots Mead by the Northgate Arena in Chester which specialises in sports therapy as well as pre- and post-natal massage for women and babies. ■ For more information call Body Solutions on 0151 625 6001.