

CHARLES HARRIS, PERSONAL TRAINER

BY KATHRYN LANDES

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In 1994, I graduated with a computer graphics degree from Catonsville and I haven't spent a day I working with computers since. Sitting in front of the computer all day? I didn't want to do that. I love adventure, taking the risks. If I wasn't a trainer, I would be in the paparazzi trying to take pictures of Janet Jackson and Madonna, traveling around the world. But right now I train because I believe that I can sculpt bodies. It's like doing my art.

My day starts at 5:30 a.m. and sometimes ends at 9 p.m. That's the only drawback: long days. I need to be full of energy for each client—most don't realize that you work with people all day long. They're not worried about the other 19 people that you're training.

My clientele is 95 percent women right now, between the ages of 25 and 55. I just draw women. I think women are more teachable. Guys feel like they know it all.

Weight lifting scares most women; they think that if they lift weights, they'll get big like a man. That's the biggest myth out there! When I created my *Chisel-It* program three years ago, I took weights into the aerobics studio to introduce women to lifting. And they'd say, 'Well, this isn't so bad. I'm starting to tone a little bit and I'm not getting big.' Then they go home and try to take on their husbands after three sessions! There's something about weight training that makes you feel cockier. Instead of the boy at the supermarket helping you with your bags, you snatch them up yourself. It makes you feel good.

Most of my clients have been training with me for over a year, and they look fantastic. Other clients are seasonal. Around New Years people get into the, I want a new body by January 1st mentality. That normally lasts for six weeks and, by the middle of February, it dies out. People quit because they don't make time to work out. Life sometimes gets in the way, but people need to realize that working out is a *lifestyle*. If you look at it like that, nothing will stand in your way. Another problem? Getting people to give up the chocolate.

I enjoy motivating people. I always do something different, something creative. My clients don't know what to expect and I keep them moving and before they know it, their 60 minutes are up. The biggest high I get is when someone tells me that they feel good about themselves and I can look in their eyes and see that their self-esteem is better than it was weeks ago. It's better than the money to me.

I find that clients do become attached and I think it's because they aren't getting the encouragement from home or from the boss. They're not getting that 'great job' pat in the back. A trainer can fill a lot of empty spaces. You have to really know people well, know how to relate to them. That's more important than telling them to do a hundred pushups. If they trust you, clients will come and tell you their life story. I love it."