



News Release

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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Fitness Center takes cycling to the extreme

By Airman 1st Class Amy Perry
437 AW Public Affairs

A new feature in the Sports and Fitness Center allows riders to race through the streets of Paris or climb the mountains in Moab, Utah.

The Interactive Cycling program, the first of its kind in a Department of Defense facility, takes cyclists through a virtual tour with two screen projectors and a software system.

The fitness center not only can claim exclusivity in the military, but also in the entire United States, said Staff Sgt. Margo Ham, 437th Services Squadron Fitness Center NCOIC. Charleston AFB has the only fitness center in the United States to have this program. It has only been used in a few overseas gyms.

The new cycling room can fit 21 people, plus an instructor, to bike through the many scenarios available. There are classes several times a day, six days a week.

Staff Sgt. Anthony Johnson, 437th Operations Support Squadron wing training, has used the cycling class since it began last year, and said he enjoys the atmosphere.

"In the new room, you actually have visualization, and that makes it easier," said Sergeant Johnson. "It gives you something to focus on when you start to get tired. That keeps me motivated.

Other than the "scenery" to watch during the class, this kind of pedaling has many benefits, according to Fitness Center experts.

"Indoor cycling is a great way to get into shape," said Sergeant Ham. "The classes target positive heart rate zones which allow each participant to exercise at the level that is best for them."

The cycles are perfect for people who are just starting a workout program, said Sergeant Ham. The bikes are a nonweight-bearing workout. The average workout burns 500-1000 calories, depending on the intensity.

"If you are looking to lose a few pounds, this is a great way to do it," said Sergeant Ham.

And if someone is having trouble with the Air Force Fitness Test, cycling is an excellent way to increase VO₂ (oxygen intake) maximums, said Sergeant Ham. Most members who attend the indoor cycling classes do well on their fitness tests.

Sergeant Johnson has seen significant improvement in his overall fitness from his year of spinning.

“It helps with conditioning,” he said. “I play basketball, and cycling keeps my leap strong. I also have better cardiovascular health now.”

“I am excited to see our community come together and get excited about fitness,” said Sergeant Ham. “All of the years I have been in the Air Force, it has obvious that fitness has not been a top priority for many Air Force members. With the great leadership here and changes to the Air Force Fitness Program, we should anticipate fitness to be a huge component in the Air Force culture.”

(Media interesting in covering this new interactive cycling program, should call MSgt Angel Newman or SSgt Pam Smith at 963-5608)