

WAVE machine gives good vibrations

Elvis Stojko a prime advocate
Improves muscle tone, circulation



Judy Steed

Through a maze of suburban housing in Milton, the fluorescent pink sign jumps out: "Little Warriors ages 5-12 Kung Fu."

The little warriors are in school today, and the proprietor of the Fighting Arts Centre, kung fu master Glen Doyle, is ready to do his daily session on the exercise machine I've come to try out, known as the Wholebody Advanced Vibration Exercise, or WAVE. When his student, former World Champion skater Elvis Stojko, is in town, he takes a turn on it, too.

The 300-pound machine with the gleaming aluminium platform was brought to Doyle's martial arts studio because of the kung fu master's connection to the machine's creator and its

prime advocates, including Stojko.

The technology behind it was first developed in the 1970s for Russian cosmonauts whose lengthy space trips left them with reduced muscle and bone mass — to the extent that they had to be wheeled off their space ships.

Intense vibration, Russian scientists discovered, cause involuntary muscle contractions that quickly improve circulation and muscle tone, activating the fast twitch muscles that enable us to stand up and jump.

Over the next decades vibration machines were commercialized and, by early 2002, Jasper Sidhu, a chiropractor and kung fu practitioner, was using such a machine for patients at his Windsor rehabilitation clinic.

He became convinced of the efficacy of high intensity vibration for everyone from paraplegics to sedentary seniors to athletes — as evidenced by Stojko, whose says his skating and martial arts expertise are enhanced by regular sessions on WAVE. (Stojko has been training with Doyle for years, as has Sidhu.)

However, Sidhu felt existing machines had limitations: The platform was too small and couldn't handle people who weighed more than 250 pounds.

Two years ago, Sidhu started "developing a better mouse-trap," as he puts it. And so WAVE was born, with the help of the federal government's Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP).

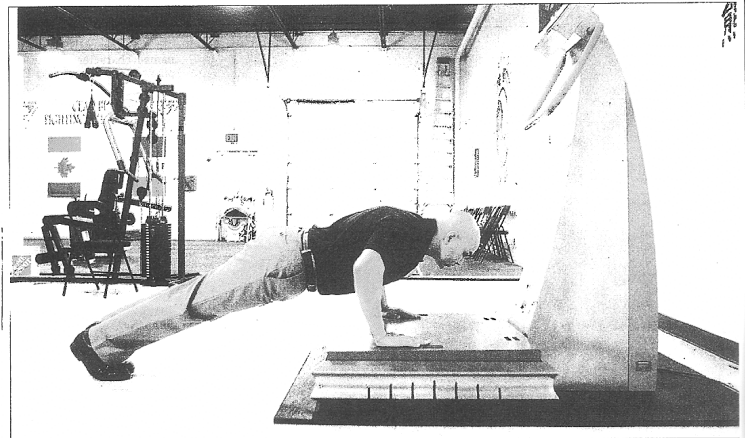
John Sylva, a Windsor engineer, came up with a design — now patented — that positions two motors beneath the platform to make it vibrate vertically. "It's better for the joints to vibrate in one direction," Sidhu says.

After Doyle demonstrates WAVE exercises using straps, Sidhu gets me up on the platform. He starts me at a vibration rate of 20 times a second. (It can go up to 50 times a second.) The shaking is powerful but gentle, simulating the body's natural "stretch reflex." I am instructed to balance on my feet, lifting my heels slightly, so the vibrations don't rattle my head. (A typical session lasts 15 minutes.)

Right away, I like it. The involuntary contraction of muscles in my legs is not uncomfortable.

"It's similar to the knee-jerk reaction when your knee is tapped by a reflex hammer," Sidhu says.

I can feel how good it is for general body circulation and toning, but I won't lose weight on it. WAVE is not a weight-loss machine, though Sidhu says it can assist people on the road to losing weight by helping them be-



Dr. Jasper Sidhu's results show six months of WAVE vibrations achieve the same strength gains as six months of weight training.

JIM ROSS PHOTOS FOR THE TORONTO STAR



Reporter Judy Steed rides the WAVE — Wholebody Advanced Vibration Exercise — machine.

come stronger.

For seniors, those with chronic conditions such as fibromyalgia or obese people, WAVE is a way to begin strengthening the body. It's good for arthritis — there is no stress on the joints and diabetics gain circulation improvements.

"A 90-year-old man with advanced diabetes saved his feet by getting on WAVE," Sidhu says.

He has embarked on research to demonstrate WAVE's efficacy. So far, his results show that six months of WAVE vibrations achieve the same strength gains as six months of weight training. A study of post-menopausal women showed bone density gains.

Elite athletes such as Stojko can do power training with WAVE, jumping on and off the machine repeatedly. "Elvis does squats, calf lifts and push-ups on the machine," Sidhu says.

"I simply vibrated my hands, using a strap attached to WAVE, and experienced extraordinary relief from chronic RSI — repetitive strain injury — caused by constant typing.

WAVE costs \$18,450 and is manufactured in Windsor. Launched last month at Can-Fit Pro, North America's second largest health and fitness expo, it garnered a lot of interest. Sidhu envisions WAVE at airports, seniors and fitness centres and rehab clinics.

For more information, www.waveexercise.com.