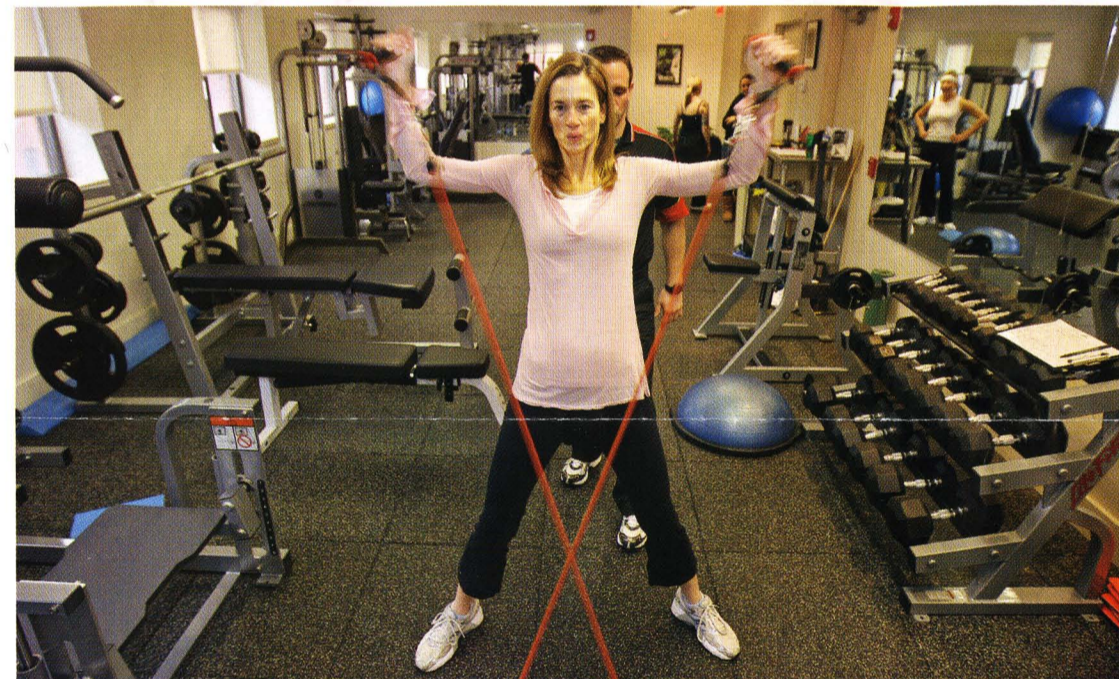


Joe Zarett keeps the area's powerful looking and feeling great.

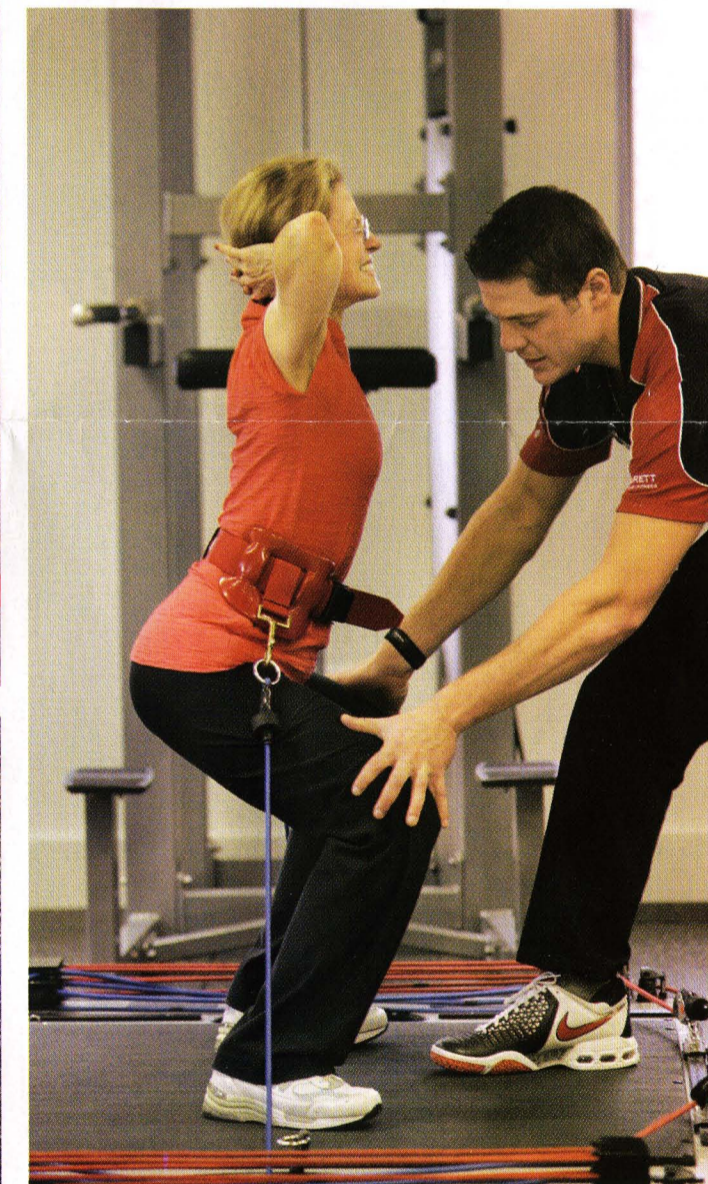
**Trainer Adam Ruff helps Laura Keeler** with the rope machine at Zarett Rehab & Fitness. Below, Joe Zarett sits in the main workout area of the facility near Rittenhouse Square. "We pick the right machines," he says.



To build up her leg muscles, Laura Keeler walks on the treadmill backwards. "I love the attention," one patron says.



Amy Brownstein performs the shoulder crossover exercise at Zarett's, guided by Tony Casoli.



Cindy Shaffran, left, does stomach crunches lying on a soft plastic dome. Above, Connie Smukler, aided by Adam Ruff, exercises her leg muscles, working against the resistance of elastic cords attached to the belt around her waist.

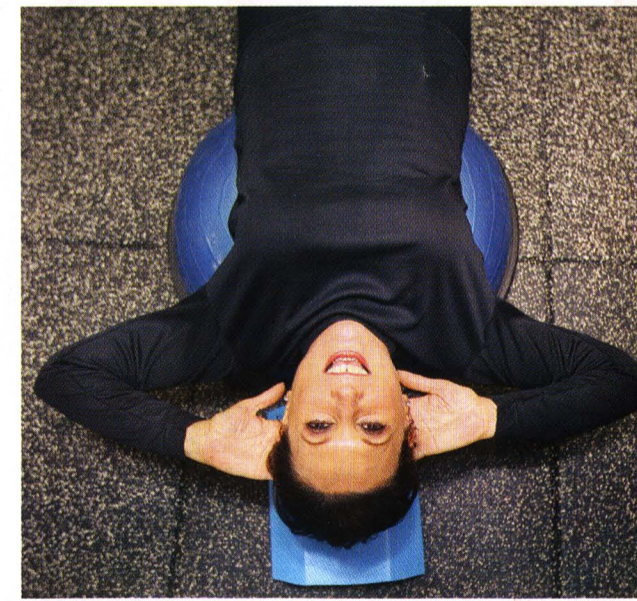
continued from previous page

up half the business. Not to drop names, but Sen. Arlen Specter and his lawyer son, Shanin Specter; Tastykake chief executive Charles Pizzi; Sharon Pinkenson, head of the Greater Philadelphia Film Office; the Rosens (Paul, uber-lawyer, and Wendy, prez of Friends of Rittenhouse Square); artist Diane Burko, known for her large-scale landscapes; and lots of top docs and jocks all go to Zarett's.

Zarett says that many of his clients live nearby, on or off Rittenhouse Square. But a good number travel an hour from the Main Line. On Sundays, the place "looks like an Italian funeral," he says, "with all the limos parked out front."

Many initially came as patients under doctor's orders. Now fixed, they still seek supervision two or three times a week at the strictly-by-appointment-only, 7,000-square-foot center, which got a posh makeover several months ago. Those 90-minute fitness sessions, complete with a team of exercise physiologists who guide every squat and leg lift, don't come cheap — \$95 and up a visit. They do, however, keep the body tuned like a Bentley, to hear devotees talk.

"It's the perfect fit for me," says Constance "Connie" Smukler, 71, half of the philanthropist couple known for supporting Jewish causes. Understand, this is no day at the spa. On a recent Friday morning, trainer Tom German has Smukler walking backward on an inclined treadmill with a 20-pound vest. "Long strides," he says. "Just like that. Perfect." "I love the attention," Smukler says, noting that she has dropped two pants sizes since she joined nearly three years ago. "You can't get in trouble here." Zarett, who checks in with each client, prides himself on creating a tough workout that never leaves the body sore and unable to move the next day. "We recognize imbalances," he



In the last three years, the fitness clientele at Zarett's has grown to about 500.

half of the philanthropist couple known for supporting Jewish causes.

Understand, this is no day at the spa. On a recent Friday morning, trainer Tom German has

Smukler walking backward on an inclined treadmill with a 20-pound vest.

"Long strides," he says. "Just like that. Perfect."

"I love the attention," Smukler says, noting that she has dropped two pants sizes

since she joined nearly three years ago. "You can't get in trouble here."

Zarett, who checks in with each client, prides himself on creating a tough workout that never leaves the body sore and unable to move the next day.

"We recognize imbalances," he

says. "We pick the right machines." The Zarett method comprises a cardio and strength workout, stretching, and massage. Regimens are custom-designed — and reevaluated at each visit.

"I feel 72 when I come in and 52 when I leave," quips 62-year-old attorney Thomas A. "Tad" Decker, president and chief executive of Center City's Cozen O'Connor, as he shifts to free weights under a trainer's watch.

Not everyone loves the actual workout. "I don't," allows Shanin Specter, 51, a partner at the law firm Kline & Specter. But he does love the results. Zarett "really understands the body and what makes it work and what makes it improve."

Mr. Fix It came to America from the Soviet Union at age 15 with his parents and sister. Zarett earned a master's degree in physical therapy and then worked in rehab for several years before he opened his own facility in 1995 in

the drab basement of 520 S. 19th St. His reputation spread by word of mouth among top athletes (tennis star Pete Sampras has visited) and the area's well-to-do.

One wall of the gym is plastered with pictures of a smiling, barrel-chested Zarett next to some of those names.

In 2007, he bought the building — its front doors are stamped with a bold red Z, like some superhero's lair — and began major renovations.

Now, the facility is sleek, upscale elegance: blond wood furniture, original artwork (by his artist clients), spacious private showers, a 200-gallon saltwater fish tank.

But no bank of plasma screens, despite requests.

No, says Zarett. That "would be a distraction." ■

Contact staff writer Lini S. Kadaba at 215-854-5606 or lkadaba@phillynews.com.

# Elite exercise

By Lini Kadaba INQUIRER STAFF WRITER  
Photography by Michael Bryant STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Joe Zarett, Mr. Fix It to this city's movers and shakers, keeps the power brokers, socialites, and various elites moving and shaking.

And standing taller ("We fix people's posture," he likes to say).

And playing better (tennis, golf, and squash, but of course).

And generally looking wonderful enough to go backless at the charity ball.

"Appearance means a lot to my clients," says

the 44-year-old physical therapist who heads Zarett Rehab & Fitness, housed in a three-story brick building on 19th Street, not far from Rittenhouse Square. "We keep them looking good, looking great."

Indeed, Zarett's rep is not only as the place in town to heal, but, increasingly, as the place to get in serious shape. In the last three years, its fitness clientele has grown to about 500 and now makes

continued on next page

continued on next page

