Helping others take charge

What do you do to keep fit?
I do 10km runs after work two to three times a week, either around Sentosa or on the treadmill in my gym. Running alone helps me unwind. I also swim 20 laps during weekends.

I do circuit training, high-intensity interval runs, weights training and lift kettlebells – hand weights shaped like cannonballs.

I stand on a vibration plate machine in my gym and work out on it every day. The machine subjects the body to many small vibrations per second, which, in turn, help build up muscle mass, strength and flexibility.

I believe we should not bore ourselves with a single type of training in the gym. The body needs variety to achieve significant improvements.

As a fitness trainer, I’m always ready to work out with my clients to spur them on.

Are there instances when your client is an even bigger fitness buff than you are?
I used to train a guy who represented France in the under-21 rugby league. He had three times my energy level, so it was hard for me to exceed his expectations of a fitness trainer.

I’m currently working with an 11-year-old girl who plays tennis competitively. She is super fit, so I’ll make sure I get sufficient rest before my training sessions with her.

Has there been a time when you were not fit and fab?
Yes. When I was 18 years old, I was obsessed with having big muscles. It was not sustainable.

So I was crazily gaining mass and taking in calories until I hit my heaviest at 92kg when I was 22 years old.

I did not know the right way to achieve a muscular physique.

I lifted weights almost every day, but I also ate five to six meals a day, taking in lots of carbohydrates and protein. I also ate junk food and succumbed to sinful indulgences.

What is your diet like now?
I start the day with a glass of warm water, then take honey, berries or Chinese wolfberries – about 20 pieces at a go.

I believe the morning is the best time for the body to absorb nutrients, after eight hours of fasting.

After that, I may head to the hawker centre or coffee shop at 8.30am to have two soft-boiled eggs, coffee without sugar and two slices of bread. Or I have yogurt or energy bars at home.

For lunch, I may have fish soup with rice or grab a salad from the supermarket.

I always have macadamia nuts, almonds and dried cranberries for a late afternoon snack.

My ideal dinner dish is grilled salmon. Salmon is known to have high levels of omega-3 fatty acids.

I may not have regular meals because of my job – I may finish work late – but I make it a point not to miss my meals, so I will have dinner as early as 5pm on some days.

Do you count your calories?
I don’t exactly do so but I try to keep my calories within what is recommended for my activity level, which is between 3,100 and 3,300 calories a day.

It is good to know how much one has consumed but it is insufficient because it does not take into account the nutritional content of the food.

What are your indulgences?
I have macadamia ice cream about once a fortnight and I have a soft spot for Peranakan desserts such as bubur cha cha.

What do you do to relax?
Running after work helps me to unwind. At other times, I listen to soothing music.

What are the three most important things in your life?
My career, my family and the wisdom to get through life.

What is your secret to looking fabulous?
I don’t think I look fabulous. I hydrate myself with enough water every day and make sure I take enough dietary fibre.

Would you go for plastic surgery?
I would if I have to. To me, plastic surgery is very much like reconstructing a certain part of the human body.

You see a knee surgeon for a broken knee, so likewise, you will see a plastic surgeon for a broken nose.

Do you think you are sexy?
Yes. I guess we all have that little confidence in ourselves, right?

Keith Tan

AGE: 26
WEIGHT: 79kg
HEIGHT: 1.83m

ABOUT HIM: These days, Mr Keith Tan is the proud owner of the plush Allicone Wellness gym at Amara Sanctuary Resort in Sentosa, which he opened in March this year. But just five years ago, the way ahead did not seem so clear.

Then, he was juggling school with being a part-time fitness trainer at a commercial gym in Suntec City.

He shuttled between school and the gym five days a week, sometimes working till 11pm. Those days were “not easy”, he admitted, but he pressed on.

After he graduated with a degree in banking and finance from the Singapore Institute of Management in 2009, and obtained certification as a fitness trainer from the Singapore Sports Council, he decided his career would be in personal fitness training.

Having no place to call his own, he would buy gym memberships for himself and his clients to use the gym at the Conrad Hotel. Or he would make house calls.

Finally, with two partners and an investment of $100,000 for a 50-per-cent share, he opened his own gym in March.

He named his gym after the aileron – the hinged flap attached to the wing of an aircraft to provide control – because he wants people to have control over their health and not fall ill.

Asked why he picked Sentosa, the bachelor said: “I would rather be a prime mover in a new place, than the last to hop on the bandwagon, which would be the case if I had opened another gym in the Orchard area.”