



People Making a Difference

Teresa Tapp: The Wellness Workout

Although designed for all ages, Better Body Basics through the T-Tapp technique is a workout routine with high baby boomer appeal. You get results quickly – fat-melting, inch-dropping results. You don't have to give up wine or chocolate to look and feel great and the more you T-Tapp, the less you have to do to maintain.

As program creator Teresa Tapp describes it, the T-Tapp technique is designed to help uplift, tighten and tone, to help boost the metabolism and combat the ravages of time and gravity. The workout is based on a specific sequence of comprehensive, compound muscle movements in isometric isolation, that work layer-by-layer to the core. Every move requires proper body alignment and involves multiple muscles, working muscles at both ends, both origins and insertions, to develop length and leanness not bulk. The focus on alignment and the specific moves are designed to optimise neurokinetic flow and activate the lymphatic system. You get an excellent cardio workout without jumping, resistance training without weights and increased flexibility, balance and coordination through stretching and alignment. In addition, the workout helps the primary body functions of digestion, assimilation and elimination work better.

The sequence of the T-Tapp workout starts with a primary flow stretch and total body moves to "unkink" the spine, put the ankles, knees and hips in line and the shoulders in proper linear alignment. The movements aren't always comfortable. "Typically, we are so out of alignment that we have to retrain muscles to come into play to hold the body in its correct anatomical position. Little moves make a big difference." Fundamental to Tapp's moves is "knee-little toe" (KLT), where the feet face forward, shoulder width apart, and knees push out toward the little toe. "KLT counteracts the pronation that is common as we age, in particular in long-legged, short-torso types. You'll feel it in the abdominals. They cinch in as you push out with the knees and the lower back flattens. It puts your knees, hips and spine into proper alignment."

Tapp is a natural teacher and has an excellent set of instructional videos which talk you through the important body positions and the rationale and benefits of the different moves in her workout. There's no fancy music or choreography. T-Tapp is serious body work. Starting with alignment exercises that send heat up the spine, Tapp moves onto non-impact cardio work to get the metabolic system revved up to burn fat and the lymphatic system pumping. She explains that lymphatic flow only works with muscle movement and stresses the importance of lymphatic drainage in operating a "clean machine" and burning fat. In the second part of the workout, Tapp takes you through balance exercises which have a specific sequential order to fatigue muscle groups layer-by-layer and work to the core.

Do the full routine for four days running and you're pretty well guaranteed inch-loss. "In maintenance mode, you can work the moves into your day. Do knee-little-toe and palms-forward shoulder alignment as you stand in line-ups. Spend a few extra minutes in the ladies room and do the ho-down exercise, that's a great way to combat secretarial spread." You never do more than 10 repetitions of any one of the T-Tapp moves. And you can do the exercises anywhere you have three square feet of space.

Combined elements

Tapp's signature moves combine elements from a number of stretch disciplines – resistance training, pilates, yoga, Tai chi, dance and the Alexander (alignment) technique. "I don't claim to have invented anything new, I bring a physical therapy approach to fitness and have developed application and sequence of movement." T-Tapp moves

require total concentration to hold body position and isolate muscles. With every move, every lunge, plie, ho-down, of well or thread-the-needle, you earn the inch loss. But it's worth it, especially when the dividends can include that coveted side-cheek indent at the top of the thighs.

A walking testament to her technique, Tapp is in her mid-forties, but has the body of a 30-year old and the energy of a teenager. Great body notwithstanding, what is truly striking about this dark-haired dynamo is her vitality. "Fitness is not just about the outside package. The goal is to build internal function for fabulous outer form." Tapp has worked in health, beauty and fitness for 25 years. Her technique has evolved over that time, combining elements of her life, education, personal health challenges and experiences.

Tapp had an early interest in medicine, but ultimately earned her degree in exercise physiology with a certification in teaching. Early in her career she taught high school and worked as a rehabilitative trainer in the sports world. Personal health challenges made her "body aware" at a young age. Tapp lost her mother to cancer and when she herself was just 19, discovered a grossly swollen lymph node under her arm. That led her to focus on cancer research, an understanding of internal systems and to a master's thesis on metabolism in women over 30. A spinal injury led to further work on alignment and muscle balancing and awareness. Then a career shift took Tapp into the world of international runway modelling where "body perfection" is paramount. For 18 years, she worked and travelled in Europe as a "new face developer." What Tapp also developed was an awareness of genetic body types, what exercises worked for different types and body-type-specific workout routines that the models could do in confined spaces in hotel rooms. She paid particular attention to square shoulders and to building great legs and "diva demerers" without bulk.

T-Tapp takes off

For the past seven years, Tapp has been back in North America developing and promoting Better Body Basics through the T-Tapp technique. For three years she was the fitness editor of a national magazine. She has a strong internet presence (www.t-tapp.com) with an active T-Tapper forum. Tapp also travels extensively around North America doing weekend boot camps and sessions in spas and fitness clubs. In terms of timing and relevance, T-Tapp is on the mark. It is an all-in-one package that meets the American College of Sports Medicine's recently updated exercise recommendations which now include stretching-for-flexibility, in addition to aerobics and strength training. Tapp is drawing attention from fitness gurus. Following a successful weekend workshop at the Cooper Aerobic Institute in Texas, the prestigious institute decided that further study on T-Tapp's aerobic and metabolic benefits was warranted. And when an editor at one of North America's most prestigious health magazines lost an inch off her waist in four days, she decided T-Tapp was worth a feature article.

Tapp's balance challenging exercises and focus on neurokinetic flow are in line with latest trends in rehabilitative physical therapy. It's also worth noting that Spa trends for 2002, as predicted by Spa magazine, say fitness and treatment bounds are looking at an anti-dieting thrust, for programs that deliver tangible results with less jumping, more resistance training and a focus on core-stability. In all, the thrust is towards combating degenerative illness and staying young.

70 pounds off and seven sizes smaller

There's a growing group of T-Tappers across North America who say T-Tapp does just that. Testimonials from fitness clubs and weekend boot camps credit T-Tapp with inch-loss and reshaping and doing away with



"stretching skimp," "bowlegs bumps," "turning powder" and "miripudge." Tapp's website features pages of success stories, including that of Denise Hentze who lost 70 pounds and went down seven dress sizes without dieting. When an ABC news anchor in Texas lost inches and gained energy after just a week, she broadcast the news. ABC calls it "The Workout that Works." PBS Houston has recently done a T-Tapp documentary. And *Woman's World* ran a cover story last August calling T-Tapp a fat-melting routine, resulting in 4 million hits on Tapp's web site within three days.

Health benefits

When Tapp does her workout, the almond sized lymph node under her arm virtually disappears for several hours. A 70-year-old T-Tapper is grateful for the significant bone mass improvement from the resistance aspect of the workout. And a number of T-Tappers report significant reductions in blood sugar levels following the routine, in particular following the "ho-down" exercise.

► A year ago, Arnee Dubousson, 54, an executive assistant to the president of a Houston-based international shipping company, heard about T-Tapp on the radio. As Dubousson describes her situation, she was at home, gravely ill. She had been diagnosed with diabetes a couple of months prior, was "grossly overweight," suffering heart problems and was a candidate for an insulin pump. "I did not want to go on a pump. That spoke invalid to me and I just wasn't ready for that." She called the radio station and won free tickets and T-Tapp tapes. Dubousson recalls that she could barely walk into the hotel for chest pains. A year later she is a different person and the spectre of the insulin pump is a distant memory. "Teresa is my guardian angel. I had to start very slowly, but she coached me along. Two months after starting T-Tapp I took my last dose of medicine. I've dropped four sizes and today I control my blood sugar with nothing more than T-Tapp exercising. Teresa gave me the opportunity to take back control of my life."

► A former marathoner in her fourth pregnancy last year, Rebecca Chazan, 34, of San Diego had a difficult case of gestational diabetes. "I was on an extremely strict diet, medicine three times a day and I'd have to walk two to three miles after each of my three meals to try and keep my blood sugar under control. It was very difficult to regulate and I was finally hospitalized." With a healthy 11-month old, Chazan is now pregnant again with her fifth. "I immediately saw my endocrinologist and we anticipated a repeat of the diabetes. I'd known about Teresa Tapp for a while through the health and fitness world, so I decided to give her program a try. My biggest problem is right after breakfast so I do a 40-minute T-Tapp routine in the morning. My blood sugar is almost too low after the workout. At night I do two-minutes worth of the ho-down exercise. I haven't had one incidence of elevated blood sugar. My doctor is closely monitoring my progress. I'm right in the mid-range of what they'd like me to be in. My blood sugar is better than pre-pregnancy."

► Steve Daughtery, 54, of San Francisco read about Teresa Tapp in *Woman's World*. Once a decathlete, by his own admission he had grown older, slower and fatter. "I'd done it all, the total gym, everything. I had a treadmill, solaflex, the sit up thing, everything. I got the T-Tapp tapes and within 30 days was down three notches in the big Harley-Davidson belt. Five months later I'm down five notches. I've lost a total of 10 1/2 inches and 26 pounds. My wife Becky and I now do just 15 minutes of the workout five days a week and that's enough to maintain. The more you do, the less you have to do. We like food and we're wine nuts. With T-Tapp we can indulge." Daughtery says his blood sugar was elevated and his vision blurry prior to trying T-Tapp. "My eyes were getting progressively worse and just before I got on the program, I spent \$298 on glasses. Now my blood sugar is down and my vision is blurry with the glasses. I rarely use them."

Tapp is looking at pursuing a grant to do a formal study on the T-Tapp blood sugar connection. With Native American heritage, she plans to focus on a native community. "As you know, native, Asian, black and hispanic heritage puts you at greater risk for diabetes. The anecdotal reporting of T-Tapp benefits in this area is very exciting. A formal study would give me an opportunity to make a big difference. And that's my mission, to make a difference in fitness and preventative wellness through movement and education. To give people an understanding and awareness of body mechanics so they can regain control of their own bodies."



T-Tapp Targets

1. Body alignment.
2. Muscle tone without bulk.
3. Bone mass through resistance training.
4. Stretching and flexibility.
5. Balance and co-ordination.
6. Cardio health without jarring impact.
7. Neurokinetic flow.
8. Lymphatic drainage.
9. Metabolic rate increase.
10. Fat-burning.
11. Inch loss and reshaping
12. Torso-type specific needs.
13. Focus and concentration.
14. Rehabilitation of joints.
15. Common sense eating - no dieting.