

SPORTS & RECREATION

Brother, sister turn Juno gym into place fit for good health

By JODIE WAGNER
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When Rick Opton decided to open a fitness studio this past spring, the first person he called was his older sister.

Keo Opton, a longtime fitness trainer and former bodybuilder, had years of experience managing health clubs in the Boston area, and her brother was hoping she would consider moving to Florida to help him get his business going.

"I (needed) a really strong general manager, and I already knew what Keo was doing up in Boston," said Rick Opton, 43, a longtime Jupiter resident and former software salesman who opened Loggerhead Fitness on June 3. "... So I called her up and I said, 'Keo, I can't do this if you don't come.'"

She didn't need much persuading.

Within a week, Keo Opton, 45, sold her house, packed up her car and moved to South Florida, despite having no idea what her brother's Juno Beach gym looked like.

"She walked in a week before we actually took ownership," Rick Opton said. "The old owners had left suddenly, so there was nobody running the place. She walked in and she started to do what she does best, which is she brings structure and organization and cleanliness. I needed that at that time."

So did Loggerhead's members, many of whom had belonged to the facility when it was Waterfront Fitness and had become disenchanted with the way it was being run.

Some longtime members who chose to leave have been lured back by the Optons, who hope to cater to women in their 50s, 60s and 70s, which is the backbone of their clientele.

"Seventy percent of our members are women over the age of 50," Keo Opton said. "So... we're very focused on teaching them how to balance and how to be stable and how to coordinate their



CYDNEY SCOTT/Staff Photographer

bodies."

Integrating functional training into many of the aerobics programs offered at Loggerhead Fitness have helped in that effort.

"Our focus here is the exercise science behind the movements that we teach people and train people to do," Keo Opton said. "Functional training is a buzzword in the fitness industry right now, but no

one really knows what it means.

"It means training your body for what you like to do and what you want to be able to do and what it can do with the appropriate strength and balance in the core and back."

The Optons couldn't be happier with the progress they've made with the club in the past five months.

"Every single week, the club does better and better and better, with the exception of (Hurricane) Wilma hitting us hard," Rick Opton said. "We are on a roll."

Loggerhead Fitness, 901 Donald Ross Road, will have a grand opening ceremony 5-9 p.m. Thursday. For information, call (561) 625-3011.

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Siblings Rick and Keo Opton opened Loggerhead Fitness in June. When Rick asked Keo to help him with the business, she sold her home in the Boston area, packed her things and moved to South Florida.