

Business profile

The business of staying healthy

South African personal trainer Luke Taylor has taken his knowledge gained from working alongside top business people and professionals to new levels as he creates health products for people too busy to go to the gym.

HEALTH, so the old saying goes, is wealth. For rising star of the fitness world Luke Taylor, that could be true in more ways than one.

Taylor, who originally hails from Durban (and now lives in Wandsworth), has just launched his own DVD specifically geared towards the busy (and successful) businesspeople who make up the majority of his clientele.

It is the latest success in Taylor's career, who also writes for *Men's Health* magazine and is a fitness coach for the Football Academy, from where many young Premiership stars start their careers.

Taylor has honed his personal training skills over the last eight years, after moving to London in 1998. In this time he has managed to build a substantial client base in London that includes many business professionals, professional athletes.

As his profile has

increased, Taylor has also concentrated on a variety of other projects, of which the DVD is the latest.

Having studied ergonomics and qualified in its assessment, he has also gone on to set up a consultancy specialising in the workplace to help businesses become healthier, injury-free and happy places to be.

The release of the DVD represents a high point in Taylor's career – and is the culmination of his recent success.

"The idea to produce and release an instructional DVD came about through a number of my clients requesting them as ways of keeping up with their programmes while away on business.

"Most of my clients are busy professionals and keeping in shape is crucial. It is also very hard sometimes to keep up with a routine when you are forced to cancel sessions and this was a way of getting around it."

As he explains, it was

produced with a hotel stay in mind.

"The idea is that you can do a full workout with the minimum of fuss – no fancy equipment nor huge amounts of space are needed.

"Of course, that also works fantastically well at home and for anyone who finds that their schedule doesn't allow for easy access to staying fit."

For Taylor's clients, staying healthy is a critical part of staying successful and at the top of their professional game.

"Recent studies have proven again that exercise is the ideal way for people to unwind from the pressure and stresses of everyday work," he says.

"As a result of this increase in activity, productivity and motivation also increases, making businesses more profitable and less stressful," he adds.

"The typical profile of many of his clients is of a person who grew up playing

a lot of sport through school and university, but who has found it increasingly hard to stay in shape as the years (and work pressures) increase.

"The frustration for a lot of these guys is that they know they should be doing more or that they shouldn't have let themselves get unfit.

"But once we get into a good programme, then it all starts to come back. I have one client, in his fifties now, who used to be overweight but is a sprinter when he was younger. After training together for while he can now beat me over 50m, so he obviously still has something there. It's just a case of bringing that out."

Although he has produced his DVD with his clients in mind, he says that its unique approach and accessibility make it an ideal workout for anybody.

"It has everything – two levels of difficulty, a post-workout stretch routine, all on screen, easy to read cues

as well as online help and guidance," he says.

For Taylor, the preventative cure that fitness and health training offers is the real benefit.

"Wellness, staying free of ill health, is best achieved by staying healthy. It is a message you don't maybe hear enough sometimes, but by keeping fit you are preventing ill health more effectively.

"That makes sense from a number of points of view. On a personal level alone, you can save yourself a lot of pain and stress by being healthy while certainly from a business perspective, your employees are going to be more productive with less days being lost to absenteeism."

Like many a South African in the UK, Taylor is taking a philosophy and turning it into profitable business.

For the good and well-being of many of us, let's hope he continues.