

# Gyms are crowded, but not for long

■ Most people need extra motivation to stick with it

**Mark Browne**

*Weekend Edition staff*

Getting time on an exercise machine in a Capital Region gym in January can be as tough as finding a fellow driver to let you in during the Colwood Crawl.

Most years, however, the number of people working out at local fitness clubs invariably dwindles before spring.

Ryan Rhodes, a researcher with the University of Victoria's physical education department, has studied people who go to gyms and found definite patterns.

"We found that extroverts were far more likely to stick to their plans," he says.

Specifically, outgoing people who not only enjoyed their workout activities, but set realistic goals for themselves were the most likely to continue their exercise regimens, Rhodes says.

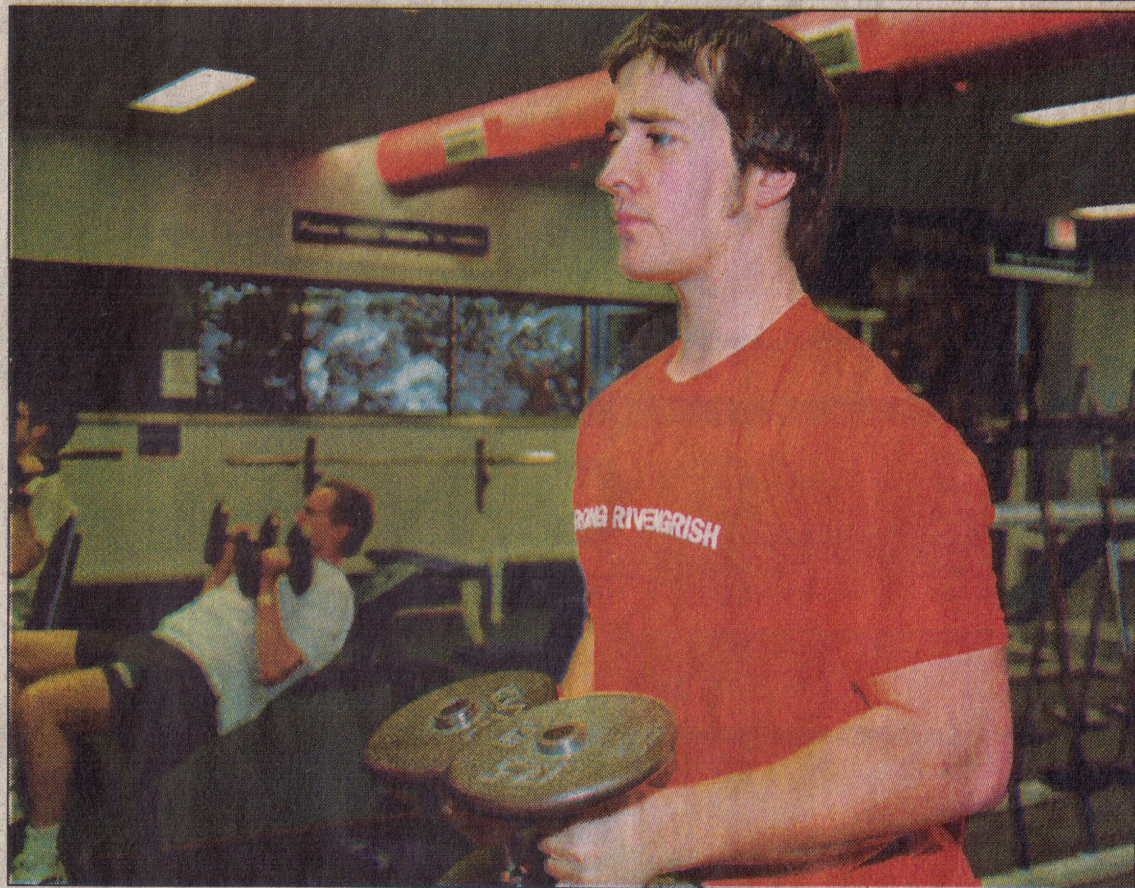
Introverts, he says, tend to prefer working out either alone or perhaps with one other person.

On the other hand, Rhodes notes that extroverts tend to enjoy physical activities involving larger groups, such as team sports. They also tend to lean more toward competitive activities than totally recreational, he says.

Rhodes' research was recently published in the *Journal of Health Psychology*. The study revealed that 57 per cent of people failed to stick with their exercise plans.

He says it's important that anyone, no matter what their personal-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



JEN WALKER/WEEKEND EDITION CONTRIBUTOR

**Ryan Acheson pumps some iron during a recent workout at the YMCA on Broughton Street.**

# Gyms busy —

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ity type, has realistic goals if they want to increase their chance of sticking with their New Year's fitness resolutions.

Having too vague a fitness plan, that is, not having a definite schedule for exercise, can be another stumbling block to maintaining a routine, says Rhodes.

"Just wanting to be healthy isn't enough," he says.

It's important, he says, that people find activities they enjoy to keep working out consistently. For some people, that might mean going for a brisk walk daily, says Rhodes, while others might use music as an incentive to exercise.

Regardless whether you've started a fitness regimen or are still contemplating getting more active, Rhodes points out that working out at a gym isn't for everyone.

"If you didn't enjoy going to the gym last year you're probably not going to enjoy going to the gym this year."

Christian Lanza, a retired member at the downtown YM-YWCA, says he maintains his weekly fitness routine by not slacking off after January.

"I try to come here twice a week," he says, adding that he finds his workouts good therapy for an old knee injury.

Pam Cade, the Y's manager of membership services, admits this is one of the busiest times of the year for the gym.

She says it's not just new members who fill the gym in January — existing members tend to show up at the facility more often as well. But, by the middle of February, the numbers of people working out drop off, she says.

In fact, Cade says the Y sells 30 per cent of its memberships in January and September, another month when many people decide to get in shape.

The Y runs a workshop for its instructors to teach them how to motivate members to stick with their workout routine for longer than 12 weeks.