

For Gordon Trotter and Mike Delalio, Moving Strong Means Moving Right

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Mike Delalio and Gordon Trotter at MuvStrong. (Gavin Menu photo).

By Annette Hinkle

In late May, MuvStrong, Gordon Trotter and Mike Delalio's new 2,400 square foot training facility, opened on Springs-Fireplace Road in East Hampton Inside, you'll find a lot of what you would expect to see in any fitness facility including weights, benches, bars and mats.

But you'll also find a lot of what you don't expect — open space.

That's because one whole length of MuvStrong is given over to a stretch of artificial grass and it's here where clients do most of the groundwork — both literally and figuratively — as part of an evaluative functional movement screening before they ever pick up a single weight.

"We try to make you move better before we add weight," explains Mr. Trotter.

The initial evaluation involves clients walking the length of the studio several times and performing specific tasks, such as lunges, squats and bar work while either Mr. Trotter or Mr. Delalio watch closely and take notes as they assess the individual's ability in seven different movements.

Does one shoulder dip as the person walks? Does a foot turn out? This series of movement tests let the trainers know where this particular body is not moving at maximum potential.

“We see what you should do and what you’re not doing and put it back,” explains Mr. Trotter who notes that everything in the body is connected, and everything needs to move independently.

The types of problems that Mr. Trotter and Mr. Delalio typically see in clients are spines that don’t move, hips that can’t rotate or flex and ankles that are locked up. Many of the early goals at MuvStrong are centered on loosening these areas, especially the hips.

“The first goal is to move the pelvis and back independently,” explains Mr. Delalio.

“Then you get the hips going, then the shoulders go,” adds Mr. Trotter. “If we can get you to move your hips, you take pressure off your knees. The shoulders and hips are intricately tied to each other through the spinal cord.”

“When people say they have a sore lower back, it’s usually down here, the center of your mass,” he adds, pointing to that spot on his back. “If you can’t move your hips, you get that movement out of the back.”

Mr. Trotter, an avid rugby player, and Mr. Delalio, a former physical therapy assistant, began working together as trainers a few years ago at Lift Hampton and describe themselves as strength and conditioning coaches. Over the years, they have added a range of training techniques and methods to their repertoire in order to have a full spectrum of tools available for clients.

In many cases, they note, just using one’s body weight in working out is the most effective — and that’s also where the open space at MuvStrong comes in handy.

“Not everything works for everybody,” explains Mr. Delalio. “We’ve exposed ourselves to kettle bells, power training, all these things so we can figure out what works good for you.”

“That’s the key part of it for us,” adds Mr. Trotter. “There’s no one answer, otherwise it would be easy.”

Because it’s personalized and specific, Mr. Trotter and Mr. Delalio find their method is extremely effective for a wide range of clients — from those who may have trouble moving and in need of starting a routine, to physically fit athletes focused on upping their game.

“We have 70 year olds to 20 year olds,” says Mr. Trotter. “We also have a few young guys from Montauk’s surf community — Travis Beckmann, who’s trying to get on the pro circuit, and a friend of his, Jesse Joeckel.”

Mr. Trotter notes that in Mr. Joeckel’s case, when he first came to MuvStrong five weeks ago he was experiencing hip pain if he surfed for more than an hour at a time.

“Ten days ago, he went out and surfed for five hours straight,” adds Mr. Trotter. “We saw and understood what he was doing and changed the movement pattern and now there’s no pain.”

What’s good for surfers is also good for people as they age, and maintaining a range of motion is in many ways even more important for those who are older and whose habits are more firmly ingrained.

“In your 20s and early 30s, you can do what you like, and you may be sore, but you’re not breaking patterns that are breaking you,” says Mr. Trotter.

“When you get older, all those things you always got away with don’t work anymore,” adds Mr. Delalio. “Your body says ‘I’m not happy.’”

For that reason, Mr. Trotter admits and Mr. Delalio are hard on programming and isolating those specific places in each client that need to get back in line.

“It’s about how you move and a reason for what you’re doing,” he says, “and getting you to move in a way you’ve struggled with in the past.”

And when they find there are certain movements that are simply impossible for their clients, Mr. Trotter and Mr. Delalio will refer them to physical therapists or other professionals who can help alleviate the problem and restore movement.

“We want to build a network of people we can refer you to if we can’t handle the issue,” explains Mr. Delalio

“There are times when you need hands-on manual help to open up the pathways and get movement back,” adds Mr. Trotter. “Then they can come back to us and we can load them with weight.”

Mr. Trotter and Mr. Delalio work with clients either one-on-one or in small groups of two to four, and because the results of their initial movement screenings are charted, they are able to make personal adjustments in the workout to maximize results.

“The end goal is to get a small population that can move weight,” explains Mr. Delalio. “Unless you can move and move well, it’s not worth the time and effort.”

“The first rule is do no harm. The second is kick their ass,” he adds. “Anyone who wants to change how they feel on a daily basis, feel free to walk in.”

MuvStrong is located in the One Stop Market complex at 289 Springs Fireplace Road, East Hampton. Call (631) 527-5755 for information on their program.