

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)**Sidebar**

Green Gym Equipment Gaining Popularity

By Stephanie Bloyd, senior associate editor



Kinetic Cycling in Brentwood, CA, hosts five spin bikes retrofitted with user-generated energy devices produced by The Green Revolution, Ridgefield, CT. Photo courtesy of John Scarangelo, Kinetic Cycling.

OVERLAND PARK, KS ♦ Students at the University of Oregon recently started seeing the light about renewable energy ♦ literally. At the May debut of the school ♦s elliptical machines retrofitted to tap user-generated energy, officials hooked up one of the machines to light bulbs to physically show students the energy they produced. One of the three bulbs was an energy-efficient compact fluorescent bulb (CFL) to further drive home the point.

♦ When you turned on the first incandescent bulb, you could really feel the resistance in your feet because you were connecting to the electric grid, ♦ says Dennis Munroe, director of physical education and recreation at the University of Oregon (UO). ♦ With the second light, you felt even more resistance. But since the third light was a CFL, you barely detected a difference because it used less energy. ♦

UO estimates that if the 20 ellipticals retrofitted with ReCardio devices are used by its students for six to eight hours a day, they will produce about 6,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, which is

about enough to supply a small, energy-efficient house for a year.

Together with solar photovoltaic (PV) panels installed on the school's rec center roof in 2005, the university's renewable energy projects provide some savings on its energy bills, though to Munroe, that's icing on the cake.

It's probably more about education than dollar savings, but that's what we're here for, he says. The PV makes electricity for the building every day, and ReCardio collects energy from machines. Both together have a net effect of reducing the speed of our energy meter.

Exercise equipment retrofitted to create energy is making waves in the fitness industry and beyond. Although the amount of energy generated probably isn't enough to cover a club's total power needs, it can reduce utility bills, depending on local utility codes. Plus, the educational and public relations (PR) aspects that the machines provide can translate into member retention since they add incentives for people to exercise.

Joe Cirulli, owner of Gainesville Health and Fitness Centers (GHFC), Gainesville, FL, says his club's ReCardio fitted machines have generated a positive image for the facility.

It makes the members feel good to know that we're doing renewable energy projects, because we get such good PR for it, and as the country and our members continue to be concerned about environmental issues, anything you can do for good PR in your community has got to be helpful, he says.

Cirulli has initiated a number of green projects in his clubs, including recycling, low-flow shower heads and motion sensors for lights. GHFC also was a beta test site for ReCardio fitted ellipticals.

The ReCardio system has given members a chance to do something productive, and in some cases, makes exercise more rewarding, Cirulli says. Often times, it's a cumulative measurement to help people stay motivated and on a routine.

Cirulli met ReCardio founder Hudson Harr at a University of Florida meeting of the school's entrepreneurs club. Harr says the ReCardio system currently is in about a dozen fitness facilities nationwide, but he expects 30 clubs and universities to come online with the system in the next few months.

The ReCardio parent company, ReRev.com of St. Petersburg, FL, also is in talks with Precor for a possible future partnership, he says. Precor's ellipticals use small generators rather than alternators, making them easier to tie into the electric grid, he notes.

Many of the company's early adapters have been universities, Harr says, because of the product's strong educational aspect, in addition to schools' diverse funding options.

UO received funds from several sources to buy and install the 20 ReCardio devices on its ellipticals. Some \$7,000 came from an EWEB Partners in Education Grant, \$12,000 from the UO Office of Sustainability and \$2,880 from the UO rec center advisory board.

Green exercise studios also are attracting Hollywood investors, such as Ryan O'Neal, who signed on as a financial backer for Kinetic Cycling in Brentwood, CA, says owner John Scarangelo.

Kinetic Cycling is a newly opened spin and yoga studio that hosts five spin bikes retrofitted with user-generated energy devices produced by The Green Revolution, Ridgefield, CT. Kinetic Cycling holds about 40 spin classes a week, and an individual can produce about 100 watts an hour on the retrofitted spin bikes. Scarangelo says he hopes the energy produced in the classes will pay for the 1,450-foot studio's monthly electric bill.

"We don't think we're going to power the whole city of Los Angeles, but the concept of our gym is to raise community awareness and do it with health," Scarangelo says.

Scarangelo designed the studio to be energy-efficient by choosing low-heat LED lights as workout room lighting, which use a total of 300 watts of energy when they're all lit. In addition, Kinetic Cycling hosts a filtered water vending machine for use with reusable water bottles.

The Green Revolution's spin bike technology is currently in four facilities nationwide, with installations planned for 20 more by the end of the year, says Michael Curnyn, chief marketing officer for the company. To best leverage the investment for the retrofits and inverter, he recommends that clubs connect a minimum of 15 bikes.

To be able to use a single green spin bike in his small Portland, OR, facility, Adam Boesel, owner of The Green Microgym, developed his own custom retrofit device. His equipment also is tied to the electric grid, which he says should help save costs and track the energy generated.

"The interesting thing about the fitness industry is that people say [that] 20 years from now, the machines will generate all the energy, but I think it will be based on supply and demand and what's available," Boesel says.

Though green exercise equipment is in its infancy, the potential for greater energy savings and member retention strategies makes it an area to watch in coming years.

Find this article at:

<http://www.fitnessbusinesspro.com/forprofits/0601-energy-projects-club-efficiency/index2.html>

 [Click to Print](#)

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.