

Apex Fitness' bodybugg

By: Justin Cates

It looks like a ladybug, only it has two small lights for eyes, a power button for a mouth, and a strap where the legs should be. It is the bodybugg, and thanks to Apex Fitness' Steve Datte and Kim Slover, I am now a bodybugg user and fan!

It, and what it provides as a platform, is the future, and the future is here. For years and years, one with enough time, paper and a calculator could track their calories, both in an out. But, what to do with and how to organize that information in a form that can provide beneficial analysis was another story. Until bodybugg...

Don't get me wrong, kinesiologists can do it manually, for a fee of course, but now, one without any background in exercise sports science can get knee deep in advanced calculation within minutes.

The bodybugg is much more than a simple calorie

counter, however. We have seen those before. They are embedded in our treadmills, ellipticals, stair climbers, bikes, and even some of our watches. Instead, the bodybugg is a piece of hardware backed up with great software that can show your members more about themselves and their bodies than they can imagine.

First, they start out by creating a bodybugg profile. Here, they input facts about themselves including height, weight, measurements (optional), eating habits, training tendencies and goals. From this information, the bodybugg software creates a program suited to their own individual needs. If they are trying to lose weight, it shows them how to program a healthy daily calorie deficit to get to their goal weight by a date they designate. If they are trying for performance, it will create a diet for them taking into account the need for higher carbohydrate intake. And, it can handle every

step in between; Weight gain, Performance with Weight Gain, Weight Maintenance, Weight Loss, Performance with Weight Loss, and more!

Next, it is time to set up the bodybugg hardware for the first time. Once connected to their computer, the bodybugg software loads all of the necessary body parameters to correctly track their progress throughout the day.

Now, they are all set. As it is worn throughout the day, it accurately tracks calorie burn, steps and activity time. With the addition of the optional display device, they can actually see their progress throughout the day in real time. If they compare workout results tracked by bodybugg with those calculated by the equipment they use, they will see quite a difference. The reason is the bodybugg tracks results based on the information it has about its user and its constant contact to the skin, not just a formula based on height, weight and exercise

time and intensity. At the end of the day, the user wirelessly loads his burn data to the web-based bodybugg software.

So, what about the intake side? Each day is broken into 6 meals/snacks; Breakfast, AM Snack, Lunch, PM Snack, Dinner, and of course, a Late Night Snack. For each of these, the user has the option to prepare and eat the meal recommended by the bodybugg software, search for the meal they ate in Apex Fitness' extensive nutritional database, enter a personal recipe, enter the nutritional facts from the package (cereal, canned items, microwave dinners, etc.) or skip the meal. Now, when I first learned this process was manual, I thought it might take more time than I was willing to put in; however, the exact opposite is true. Because the bodybugg software is web-based, the user can input his intake data anytime from anywhere, and believe me, it only takes a minute for a snack and up

to five minutes for a meal, but the valuable information it provides is worth the minimal amount of time required.

In fact, that is a good question... Why go through the effort of tracking individual meals? Well, as I said before, the bodybugg system doesn't just count calories. Yes, knowing whether you have a deficit or surplus today or over time is important. But, for performance athletes, knowing your carbohydrate intake is important; for weight gain, you need more protein; and for weight loss, deficits are great, but keeping fat content down is important too. Well, the bodybugg software tracks it all: Calcium, Carbohydrates, Cholesterol, Fiber, Protein, Sodium, and Total Fat (including Saturated) and saves the results so the user can view them graphically over time. This allows him to compare their daily results with their own historical values.

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This is important because one saying they are going to lose weight for the New Year is not enough. In a society where we work more than we rest, fast food is everywhere, and the daily commute is the only movement some can manage, weight loss is not easy. It is a learning experience, and that is where bodybugg truly excels. It can teach the user how to maintain their body from the ground up.

So, how does all of this affect you as a club owner? Well, it is all about the members. That is why our industry exists, and the bodybugg helps bridge the gap between your members and nonmembers alike. For some of your new members, who may be out of shape or unhappy with the way their body looks, bodybugg can help show them tangible results, even if they cannot yet see it in their own body. This allows them to score victories, even on days off, and that will help with early program adherence, which as we all know, is a huge issue in member retention. Once results, such as weight loss or muscle gain, are actually visible, the new member more times than not will share his results. Someone might ask him how he did it, or even better, they will compliment him on his results. This creates motivation you cannot teach or coach. This will emotionally bind him to your club, and he will be more likely to recommend your facility to his friends and family.

For new members, the bodybugg is a first step. For society, it is a great step in the battle against obesity. Because of the way the bodybugg system is designed, people who use it will be more conscious of what they are simply unaware of; how easy it is to eat too much and how a little bit of exercise (using stairs instead of the elevator or pacing while on business calls) here and there can really add up. Small decisions every hour can and will provide a person with great personal success, and such is the case with developing a healthy lifestyle. Most importantly, this is what bodybugg can provide your members. It can teach them the lifestyle change that is necessary until evolution catches up with the industrial revolution.

(Justin Cates is President of CLUB INSIDER and may be reached at: Justin@clubinsideronline.com)

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