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Alma Chaidez works out at 3 a.m. at XSport Fitness. SHAUNA BITTLE FOR REDEYE



# THE 3 A.M. WORKOUT

Forget lunchtime spin class. These gym junkies work it while you're asleep 6-7

# FITNESS VAMPIRES

WHO WORKS OUT AFTER MIDNIGHT? GYM MOONLIGHTERS, THAT'S WHO

By Allison Horton

REDEYE

It's 3:15 a.m. on a Friday at XSport Fitness in the South Loop, and Alma Chaidez is nearly done with a three-hour workout.

The wrestler, 5 feet 9 inches of pure muscle, is impossible to miss among a crowd of about 15 patrons as she alternates jogs and sprints on a treadmill. Nearby, the two other members of her team, Hell Fire Symphony, practice power punches on a heavy bag. To round out the workout, the three wrestlers lift weights, attack the speed bag and practice grappling techniques—all before sunrise.

"We like going after rush hour," said Chaidez, 38, of Cicero when she's not in the ring. "In the evening, it is so packed and it is harder to work out. It becomes a distraction."

While 24-hour gyms aren't exactly packed during graveyard-shift hours—only 2 percent of XSport Fitness members work out in the overnight hours, according to Kelly Hundt, director of new business development and marketing—that's a good thing for health-seekers who want to avoid the crowds or who find late-night workouts fit best with their lifestyles.

But is it healthy to get physical at such odd hours?

That all depends, said Dr. Krystian Bigosinski, a sports medicine physician at Rush University Medical Center who works with the White Sox and other local sports teams.

Working out after midnight will deliver the same stress-relief

and weight-management health benefits as any other time of day, Bigosinski said. But those gains shouldn't come by sacrificing a good night sleep.

"Any time a person is sleep-deprived, that can affect their mood, energy level and make them ineffective at work or school," Bigosinski said. "Those are all things that somebody who works out late at night has to consider."

Allen Konchinsky, a licensed trainer and owner of Workout Partnerz, a 24-hour gym in West Town, said that a late-night workout keeps the metabolism going and calories burning for people who eat dinner after 10 p.m. Normally, a big dinner or dessert can turn to fat late at night, which is the time most people tend to put on weight, Konchinsky said.

"Sometimes what you eat one day can reflect the next day," Konchinsky said. "Whether it is the weight of the food or the fact that you took in too many calories, sugar or salt. Your weight can fluctuate from three to four pounds a day depending on what you ate the night before."

Bigosinski also noted there is no solid evidence that late-night workouts make it more difficult to wind down and fall asleep.

"It varies on a person-to-person basis," he said. "Whatever works with your life schedule and how it makes you feel."

ALLISON HORTON IS A REDEYE SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR.



SHAUNA BITTLE PHOTOS FOR REDEYE

## WEE-HOUR WORKERS

Twenty-four-hour fitness clubs tout the convenience of sneaking in a workout any time of day, but does anyone really pump iron or grind out miles on a treadmill in the wee hours of the morning?

RedEye visited four Chicago gyms on a recent Friday between midnight and 4 a.m., and the answer was an emphatic yes. In fact, three of the four gyms we visited were hoppin'.

So who are the people who exercise while the rest of us are sleeping? Meet a handful of the characters we encountered on our after-midnight tour. **A.H.**

12:20 a.m.

» First, we hit Workout Partnerz in West Town...

**Martin Schmalz**  
21, Crete  
Occupation: Repo man



**What is tonight's workout?** Arms, biceps and triceps weightlifting

**How often do you do graveyard-shift workouts?** Five days a week

**Why work out so late?** "It gives me a pump and gets me energized," Schmalz said. That's pretty important for a guy who starts work at 2 a.m.

**What's the craziest thing that's happened on the job?** Schmalz was repossessing a Lincoln Navigator from someone's driveway when the alarm went off. "A guy comes running out of his house buck naked in the middle of winter with a frying pan chasing my truck," Schmalz said. Now you see why he needs to stay in shape!

1:10 a.m.

» Next, we hit Snap Fitness in Old Irving Park...

**Christian Koch**  
29, Old Irving Park  
Occupation: Bond trader



**What is tonight's workout?** Light cardio, weightlifting

**How often do you do graveyard-shift workouts?** Four times a week

**Why work out so late?** Koch is a natural night owl who stays up for overnight trading in Europe.

**What are the bonuses of late workouts?** "It is very quiet. You never have to wait for equipment."

**What are the drawbacks?** Although graveyard workouts mesh with Koch's work schedule, he's "not a person that can work out and [quickly] go to sleep."

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## NIGHTERS, THAT'S WHO

ment health benefits as any other time of day. But those gains shouldn't come by sacrifice. "If you're sleep-deprived, that can affect their metabolism and make them ineffective at work or school," said Schmalz. "Those are all things that somebody who works late at night has to consider." Schmalz, a licensed trainer and owner of Workout Anytime gym in West Town, said that a late-night workout has metabolism going and calories burning for hours after 10 p.m. Normally, a big dinner or snack late at night, which is the time most people eat, Konchinsky said. "What you eat one day can reflect the next day," he said. "Whether it is the weight of the food or the amount of calories, sugar or salt. Your weight can go up three to four pounds a day depending on what you eat before." Konchinsky noted there is no solid evidence that late-night workouts are more difficult to wind down and fall asleep. "On a person-to-person basis," he said. "Whatever your schedule and how it makes you feel."

REDEYE SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR.



SHAUNA BITTLE PHOTOS FOR REDEYE

3:15 a.m.

**Alma Chaidez** 38, Cicero  
Occupation: Wrestler/administrative support

**What is tonight's workout?** Lifting weights, cardio and grappling techniques  
**How often do you do graveyard-shift workouts?** Five days a week  
**Tell us about your wrestling.** Chaidez, a mother of two, started wrestling in 2002 because she felt it was a great way to express a character through "drama and athleticism with a mixture of violence." Now she enjoys Mexican masked wrestling, known as *lucha libre*.  
**Can you tell us something we don't know about *lucha libre*?** Once a wrestler's mask is taken off in the ring, "your career is pretty much over."



1:10 a.m.

Next, we hit Snap Fitness in Old Irving Park ...

**Christian Koch**, 29, Old Irving Park  
Occupation: Bond trader



3 a.m.

Then we rolled to Fitness Formula Club in Old Town, the only gym that was completely empty. So it was on to the South Loop, where we wrapped up the tour by checking out XSport Fitness ...

**Kezdrich Malone**, 30, Chatham  
Occupation: Illinois Department of Children and Family Services counselor



**What are the bonuses of late workouts?** There's the easier access to fitness equipment, of course. And then there is the lack of distractions, "like a female that might catch my eye and throw me off my whole routine."

**What is tonight's workout?** Upper-body weightlifting and cardio

**How often do you do graveyard-shift workouts?** Five days a week

**Why work out so late?** Malone had just promoted a comedy show in Dolton and wanted to "burn off the energy" before going home.

**Counselor, promoter ... do you have other jobs?** Malone also is a high school football coach in Indiana. Busy guy — no wonder he needs to keep his energy up!

## MAKE YOUR OWN LATE-NIGHT WORKOUT

From unwinding with yoga to getting bumped around in a hockey game, Chicago has something to offer for everyone who wants to work up a sweat after the sun goes down. Here is a sampling of the city's options. A.H.



The Blackhawks' Duncan Keith practices at Johnny's IceHouse. TRIBUNE FILE

### HOCKEY Johnny's IceHouse

johnnysicehouse.com  
1350 W. Madison St. 312-226-5555  
2550 W. Madison St. 312-243-4441

Where better to learn hockey than where the Blackhawks practice? Hockey 101, a two-month class that teaches adult newbies how to skate and handle a puck, runs from 7:20 to 8:20 p.m. Tuesdays starting June 1. Cost is \$205, excluding equipment. If you're looking for something more challenging, Johnny's offers more advanced classes and leagues.

### BASKETBALL

#### The Chicago Sport and Social Club

chicagosocial.com  
Various locations, 312-850-8196

For folks looking for both sport and social in their hoops, try the club's co-ed leagues, which run 6:30 to 10:30 p.m. on Mondays or Tuesdays or 4:30 to 9:30 p.m. Sundays. The cost is \$895 per team or \$105 per person.



MICHAEL TERCHA / TRIBUNE FILE

### RUNNING/BIKING/ ROLLERBLADING

#### Chicago Park District

chicagoparkdistrict.com  
Lakeshore path, 312-742-7529

Perhaps the most beautiful place to break a sweat in the city, the lakefront path does have some limits. The path is open 7 a.m. until 11 p.m. daily. Swimmers can take a dip in Lake Michigan when the city's beaches open after Memorial Day.

### YOGA

#### Bloom Yoga Studio

bloomyogastudio.com  
4663 N. Rockwell St. 773-463-9642

Wind down from a tough day at work with the gentle style of hatha yoga. Beginners can practice basic poses, body alignment and breathing techniques from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Fees start at \$16 per class with discounts if you pay for classes upfront.

### BASEBALL

#### Sluggers

sluggersbar.com  
3540 N. Clark St. 773-248-0055

Maybe it's not technically a workout, but taking some hacks at a baseball in the Wrigleyville bar's batting cages is still pretty cool—especially when you can grab a beer immediately after you take the pitching machine deep. The bar is open until 2 a.m. daily.