



FARRELLS AT 5:15

Here's what matters to me now: I'm strong. Stronger than I ever knew I could be.

BY SANDRA HUME

ONCE YOU GET PAST *the obvious impossible task—getting out of bed—the hard part's over. Heck, by the time you really wake up at, say, 5:30, you're almost halfway through your workout.*

IT'S THE MIDDLE of the night and I'm taking orders from a guy with tattoos and a do-rag. His Harley is probably around the corner. The ink on his upper arm is moving quickly but—am I reading the word “Aryan”? The quote on the wall in front of me is unapologetic: Unless you faint, puke, or die, keep going.

What if I cry?

It's only Monday. Of the first week. And I guess it's morning, technically, but it's January and sunrise is still a couple hours off; the rational people are sleeping. Yet here I am, punching and kicking and trying to keep time with thirty other people doing the bidding of a guy with a stopwatch. Quitcher bitchin, I chide myself, yawning even as I slam the heavy bag (jab cross) with my right boxing glove, then my left. You did this. On purpose.

I blame Groupon. Recently, no doubt bored of my incessant complaining about the third-baby weight I couldn't seem to shed, a friend sug-

gested Farrell's Extreme Bodyshaping. I checked out the website. Conclusion: Way above my level. But two weeks later, there it was in my in-box, the deal of the day, daring me. A 10-week session guaranteed to work. “Results are typical,” said the tagline. They even awarded \$1000 to the people whose bodies changed the most. Conscious of the eleven months between now and my 25th high-school reunion, I clicked. Two more clicks and I was in like Flynn.

I've never been a workout maven, opting for tapas-style exercise over anything with the whiff of commitment. I spent a decade sampling. I learned to run. I Zumba'ed. I spun. I did Pilates and kicked the air and downward-doggedly stretched my body into unnatural positions. I gasped through a handful of 5Ks and swam in mud. In the past I'd been able to get myself out of maternity pants twice. This time? Nothing doing.

As a first-timer at FXB (as it's known), I had to commit to a daily

workout time. Evenings were out; I was too busy chauffeuring my kids. Mornings? Even 6:15 was too late, and even though I worked from home, having a toddler made 9:15 a crapshoot. I closed my eyes, held my nose and selected 5:15 am. Who needs sleep? I could do anything for ten weeks. Even pre-dawn workouts. Right?

January gave way to February. I learned to sleep in my workout clothes, and to wash my sweaty wrist wraps as soon as I got home from kickboxing days. Sore muscles the day after resistance-band workouts became a given. I yawned and relegated *Parenthood* and *The Good Wife* to weekend catch-up marathons, because once the kids were in bed, all I wanted to do was follow suit.

I still went, six days a week. I liked that there were no gimmicks. Leave your complaints at the door, we were told, right next to your excuses. Everyone's tired, everyone's busy. We all owe it to ourselves to prioritize our

health. I drew inspiration from Becky, the gym's co-owner who was a cancer survivor, and from the instructors who worked out right alongside us when they weren't teaching class. So what if my toddler had kept me up all night with an earache, dropping off to sleep only twenty minutes before my alarm? I went to class, because that's what I did now. I went to class.

And something started to happen. It got easier. I made a discovery: Once you get past the obvious impossible task—getting out of bed—the hard part's over. Heck, by the time you really wake up at, say, 5:30, you're almost halfway through your workout.

I could see why, more often than not, the thousand-dollar winners came from 5:15. Sometimes circumstances dictated I had to work out at 9:15; once I even went in the evening. It always felt strange. I couldn't duplicate the 5:15 energy. It was almost like: Hell, we're awake and we're here, at the gym at five in the freaking morning. We may as well work our asses off. The 45-minute sessions toned me mentally and physically in a way I hadn't seen since...well, ever. I got myself to twenty push-ups, on my toes like the boys. Then thirty. Then forty.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE

Embarking on a personal experiment to reclaim creativity. *BY SARAH BEEK*

LIVING IS A FORM *of not being sure, not knowing what next or how. The moment you know how, you begin to die a little. The artist never entirely knows. We guess. We may be wrong, but we take leap after leap in the dark.* —Agnes de Mille

Modern, adult life can be rough on any kind of creative existence. Even if one is able to resist the Siren calls of Facebook and Youtube, there is still, for most people, the need to earn a living, the need to clean and eat, the need to maintain relationships with other

If the early-morning workout achievement is pretty nice, enjoying the fact that you've done so can be even better. Kid wakes with a fever that keeps him home from school? Good thing I already worked out. Long workday that chains you to your computer later than you want? Thank God I made it to the gym early. A big lunch that leaves you lethargic come evening? I really don't feel like exercising—oh, snap! I already did!

I've been at FXB for a year. I'm still working on weight loss, but I'll always be doing that, because food trucks. And breweries. And chocolate.

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Nothing is as I thought. The do-rag-sporting instructor has a day job as an elementary school principal. He does not ride a Harley. Those tattoos that so intimidated me the first day? They're Greek for faith, love, and hope. That roomful of strangers—I now know their names. We greet each other with smiles and encouragement, wave tiredly to one another as we leave. Parting words are superfluous. We know we'll all see each other tomorrow.

humans. Add children and the equation gets even more skewed. For me, creativity naturally arises when the necessary requisites of solitude and unstructured free time are combined. But what happens when those things are seemingly impossible to come by?

I have been on a quest to figure out how to be a writer within the confines of my fairly fettered life. It is not easy. There doesn't seem to be a road map, not a lot of examples of mothers of young children who were able to maintain a consistent writing practice and get their work out into the world.



Feng Shui (fəŋ-shwē)
The ancient Chinese art of arranging surroundings to create a balanced, nurturing and empowering space.

{ Get Your Balance On }

FENG SHUI INSIDE OUT

Five simple ways to harmonize your space.

Fort Collins certified Feng Shui practitioner Lucile Lunde works with clients to transform spaces and create balance and harmony. Her consultations are practical and contemporary, with a focus on solutions that are easy to implement. Here, Lunde shares five simple ways to harmonize.

1.

DE-CLUTTER

If you don't use it or don't love it, get rid of it. When you let go of items that have negative associations and don't add value to your life, you release stuck energy.

2.

INCREASE POSITIVE MESSAGES

Display symbols of your goals and hang pictures of you and loved ones looking happy and healthy.

3.

MAKE YOUR ENTRYWAY WELCOMING

The entrance sets the tone for the rest of the house. Create an inviting, bright and tidy entrance that makes you and your guests smile.

4.

CREATE A PERSONAL OASIS

Your bedroom should be dedicated to rest, rejuvenation and romance. Choose colors, materials and furniture that support these processes.

5.

BRING NATURE INDOORS

Household plants not only symbolize life and growth but also produce oxygen and purify the air in your home. Add plants with rounded leaves to add nourishing chi.

► **ESSENTIALS:** Feng Shui Inside Out owner Lucile Lunde offers residential consultations, home staging and professional organizing services. 970-219-2760, fengshuiinsideout.com