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Slay dragons on an exercise bike

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By ELSA K. SIMCIK / Special Contributor to The Dallas Morning News
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Keith Anderson admits he looks a bit crazy when he does his cardio workout on a stationary bike.

"All of a sudden I'll have this burst of speed where I'm standing on the pedals, going as fast as I can. And they must wonder why," the 52-year-old says of his fellow gym members at Anytime Fitness in Oak Cliff.

The reason? He's chasing dragons.

Anderson isn't riding just any stationary bike. It's an Expresso Fitness bike with a TV in front of it. But instead of watching CNN, users can program their ride so they're racing through the Swiss Alps or cycling on the California coast or, in Anderson's case, playing a dragon-killing video game.

"You're getting points by killing dragons; you're propelling yourself by pedaling your bike," he says. "I'm sweating profusely by the end of it."

Renee Reed, co-owner of Anytime Fitness, says the Expresso Fitness equipment, which they purchased in May 2008, "is really engaging. That's the word everybody uses to describe these bikes."

She says people get a better workout when they're engaged.

"Lots of times people are flipping through a magazine when they're on a bike or they're watching TV. They're doing anything almost to disengage from the workout. It might make time go by a little faster, but you don't accomplish as much."

Users of the Expresso Fitness bikes can even log in with a password and the bike will store all their data – best time, calories burned, heart rate. "You can even log in from your computer at home," says Reed. "Some people just thrive on seeing something quantifiable. 'My heart rate went down, I got faster.'"

While Anderson says his weight has never been a problem, he does see improvement in his body after riding three to four times a week for the past eight months: "At my age the quantifiable results for me are being able to see the muscles in my stomach."

Elsa Simcik is an Atlanta-area freelance writer.

Find an Expresso

Want to chase dragons, race your friends or ride through the Peruvian mountains? These are some of the area gyms that have the bikes to help you do it.

YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas

Various locations

www.ymcadallas.org

214-880-9622

JCC of Dallas

www.jccdallas.org

7900 Northaven Road, Dallas

214-239-7155

Anytime Fitness, Roanoke

www.anytimefitness.com

1212 N. Highway 377, Suite 115, Roanoke

817-229-4083

Anytime Fitness, Dallas

www.anytimefitness.com



Expresso Fitness
Program your ride on
Expresso Fitness bikes for
video game races and
other fun distractions.

611 N. Bishop Ave., Suite 100, Dallas

214-948-6161

Anytime Fitness, Cleburne

www.anytimefitness.com

1301 W. Henderson L3, Cleburne

817-641-5333

Health and Athletic Center of Flower Mound

550 Parker Square, Flower Mound

972-539-2582

Anytime Fitness, Arlington

www.anytimefitness.com

W. Bardin Road, Suite 120, Arlington

817-472-6402