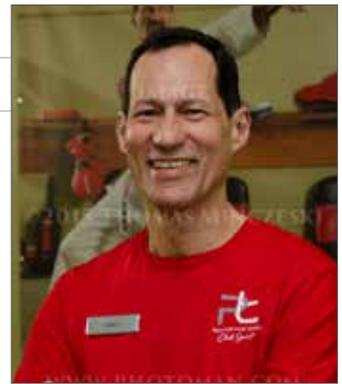


# Building Fitness

INTO YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE

BY MICHELLE LASSLE



PEDRO BERNARDY

As an eighth degree black belt, Pedro Bernardy has dedicated his life to his craft. After seeing Bruce Lee on television's *The Green Hornet* at the age of 13, Pedro loved the way the actor could move his body. "I had never seen anything like that before," Pedro said. "However, at that point in time there were no real karate studios around where I lived in Pennsylvania." Because he grew up suffering from periodic malnutrition, Pedro never played any sports, nor did he have an interest to. "I was very shy," Pedro said. In 1973 a studio finally opened in his town, so at the age of 20 Pedro began formal training and has continued his journey ever since. "Martial arts allowed me to be able to prove that I could do something if I wanted to."

After moving around from Pennsylvania to Chicago and then to Los Angeles, Pedro found himself immersed in an Okinawa community where he met a karate master from Japan, where the art originated. "I was able to train with people I'd only read about before," Pedro said. Then in 1980 Pedro embarked on the trip of a lifetime; he traveled to Okinawa with one of his teachers to seek instruction. "It was like another world. One of the master's colleagues, who had never accepted a foreign student before, allowed me to train with him." Pedro's experience taught him that martial arts is lifelong and that normal, everyday people can be masters of the craft, unlike the westernized version that most are exposed to.

It was with a desire to learn how to take better care of himself that Pedro originally began weight lifting. "I bought a pair of weights and began training in my basement with body building magazines," Pedro said. "I became more involved with martial arts and more of a competitor, so I wanted to understand how to get that performance

edge." In 2003 Pedro decided to enter the fitness industry full time, switching from his 25 year career in information technologies. "I saw an opportunity to use the experience I had with martial arts and help other people." Pedro joined the American Council on Exercise (ACE) certification program to become a personal trainer, and he became involved with the National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) to earn their certification as personal trainer and exercise specialist. Over the years Pedro has also earned his certification in other areas like nutrition, TRX, and others.

Even though Pedro joined the fitness community out of his love for staying active, his career change was sparked by something much greater than that. A few months prior to switching paths Pedro's daughter was diagnosed with cancer. "I had taken some time off work to reevaluate my life and figure out what I truly wanted to do," Pedro said. "I took a part time job folding towels and teaching people how to do some basic exercises at the ClubSport in San Ramon." Pedro had continued working 80 hours a week as a manager of ROSS stores while using his job at ClubSport as a means of recovery. Then one day while driving home from work, Pedro saw that a ClubSport was opening in Walnut Creek. "I went in and interviewed for a part time position doing the same thing as in San Ramon," Pedro said. "Then one day a fitness director asked me if I wanted to become a personal trainer." Pedro had no idea what that would entail, so he did some research and saw an opportunity. "I had a desire to leave a legacy for my daughter who passed away at 13. I wanted to do something to keep her memory going and help the people that had helped us during her illness."

At Renaissance ClubSport Pedro offers one-on-one personal training, small group

sessions, and martial arts classes from ages four up to adult. His range of experience allows him to work with an array of demographics, from young children all the way up to seniors dealing with chronic illness, injury recovery, and surgical procedures. Pedro strives to find a holistic approach by examining people's lifestyle patterns, sleep patterns, and how they handle stress. He tries to help people improve their functional fitness by making them strong and capable. "All that training helped me to cope with my daughter's illness and continues to." So, Pedro wants to spread that experience to help others in the same way.

To avoid injury during everyday tasks like getting on a ladder to clean out the gutters or digging a hole to fix a sprinkler leak, Pedro recommends working on balance, stability, and overall strength. "You want to make sure you have the proper mechanics so you don't overdo it," Pedro said. "You want to replicate those movements on a regular basis."

- *Don't sit at your desk all day and then come to the gym and sit down to exercise.*
- *Even at home, try not to sit all day.*
- *Replicate any movement that might cause you injury, like turning around and picking something up off the floor.*

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