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Total Gym® Corporate Backgrounder

When Tom Campanaro developed the Total Gym® incline bodyweight trainer in 1974—the fitness industry’s first functional training and conditioning machine—the benefits of exercise were barely a blip on the public consciousness.

Nearly four decades later, and with operations in 23 countries, Total Gym has catapulted into television history and made its mark as an industry leader that remains at the forefront of innovation in physical therapy, athletic training, home and commercial fitness. As a manufacturer of functional rehabilitation and conditioning equipment, Total Gym provides a wide array of innovative products to 14,000 physical therapy clinics, athletic training facilities, hospitals, universities, professional sports teams and health clubs worldwide.

“Our goal is to manufacture and deliver products that set industry standards of excellence and value,” said Campanaro. “Total Gym products are designed to help people achieve health, fitness and rehabilitation goals and to bring value to the industry and the end user.”

Continuous product innovation and evolution has helped Total Gym pursue its mission to bring to market safe, effective and user-friendly equipment. The company’s flagship Total Gym incline bodyweight trainer product line is designed based on the principal that functional exercise—or the re-creation of natural body movements during exercise—is the quickest and most effective path to fitness. Total Gym delivers the proven benefits of functional exercise using bodyweight as resistance against gravity to facilitate a shorter, more efficient workout that produces superior results.

The Total Gym incline trainer engages all muscle groups, providing over 250 exercise choices that offer total-body training in all planes of motion, including multi-plane movement for performance training and rehab; upper and lower body stretching and strengthening and cardiovascular exercise. Benefits include: increased muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, agility, aerobic endurance and improved metabolic function.

Getting Started

In 1974, Campanaro went to work with DynaGym, an exercise equipment company that produced a low-end version of an incline plane training device that used an individual’s bodyweight as resistance. In hopes of improving on the machine, Campanaro founded Total Gym Corporation with partner Doug Marino in 1974. Dale McMurray and Larry Westfall joined the company within the year. They developed the Total Gym incline trainer, a high-quality version of a machine where by changing the body position on the glideboard, one could perform any exercise and incorporate the use of multiple muscle groups together in any plane of movement, now referred to as “functional training.”

With the fitness craze of the early 80s on the rise, Campanaro began forging relationships with specialty fitness equipment stores. This and Total Gym's regular presence at trade shows helped the company to sell 36,000 Total Gym machines in 1984. Reorganized as Engineering Fitness International (d.b.a. efi Sports Medicine®) in 1987, Campanaro discovered that a significant bearing or 'unloaded' training for their patients. Total Gym's entry into the rehabilitation community brought the company increased credibility. From 1986 to 1996, efi built Total Gym into a strong, well-respected brand, setting the stage for its launch into a bigger market.

Infomercial Explosion

Recognizing the potential reach of infomercials combined with television—the medium that could provide comprehensive demonstrations—Campanaro licensed the Total Gym brand in the direct response and retail markets to American Telecast Products, LLC, in 1996. The company signed actor Chuck Norris, a Total Gym user for more than 20 years, and model/actress Christie Brinkley as the product spokespersons.

Currently, the Total Gym infomercial is the industry's longest-running and most successful; broadcast to 85 countries and credited with sales of over four million Total Gym incline trainers worldwide.

The Pull of GRAVITY®

Though Campanaro and his partners had the opportunity to sit back and bask in the wild success of the Total Gym infomercial, Campanaro instead took the company into new territories by launching the GRAVITYSystem® to the health club industry in March 2003. True to form, he did it with the goal of bringing value to each entity and individual who touched the product.

GRAVITY is a turnkey business program for commercial fitness and rehabilitation facilities, offering unparalleled program variety, specialized Total Gym incline trainer equipment, instructor education and marketing support materials available at GRAVITYClubhouse.com. GRAVITY puts Total Gym equipment to maximum use featuring commercial grade models Total Gym GTS® and the motorized Total Gym PowerTower®, with advanced features and accessories. Like all Total Gym models, the GTS and PowerTower use an individual's bodyweight as resistance against gravity, utilizing a dynamic cable-pulley system and free-rolling glideboard on an incline plane. The machines facilitate more than 250 resistance training, stretching and Pilates exercises. Today, more than 3 million GRAVITY workouts are offered each year around the world.

Total Gym Products Earn Endorsements, Awards

Total Gym products, used by hospitals, athletic trainers, fitness and sports medicine professionals throughout the world, are recognized as the most effective tools for functional rehabilitation, strength and sports-specific training, injury prevention and overall conditioning. Professional athletes also benefit from the equipment. The Total Gym incline trainer, for example, was used as a training tool by the USA Track and Field Gold Medalist Jackie Joyner Kersee, as well as by Men's Figure Skating gold medalist Evan Lysacek. Athletic trainers with the Chicago White Sox, Super Bowl XL & XLIII champions the Pittsburgh Steelers and the Seattle Seahawks turn to Total Gym PowerTower to get their athletes game ready.

The American Council on Exercise (ACE), the nonprofit watchdog organization that regularly conducts university-based studies on the claims and effectiveness of infomercial products, cited Total Gym in its publication *ACE FitnessMatters*[®]. In 1999, an editor's note stated: "(Total Gym) has largely relied on the product's merits to make the sale—not on outrageous claims."

In 2009, a groundbreaking rehabilitation study, conducted by researchers at San Diego State University and the University of Toledo's Health Science Campus, found that the Total Gym incline trainer could be used to accurately measure functional status of patients recovering from lower extremity injuries.

GRAVITY, with its unique combination of equipment and programming, continues to build significant interest among health club members and brings an early return on investment to club owners. The program is used in over 1,500 commercial facilities and is offered in major health clubs around the country: Town Sports International-owned Boston Sports Club, Frog's Club One, Equinox Fitness Club, Crunch Fitness, Gold's Gym and even on Royal Caribbean's "Oasis of the Seas," the largest cruise ship in the world. In addition, GRAVITY received three prestigious awards in its second year including the One Body One World (OBOW) "Innovation Award" from the East Coast Alliance (ECA), the "TUV Innovation Award" from FIBO in Germany, and the "Best of Show" at FILEX in Sydney, Australia.

Returning to its Roots

In February 2011, efi Sports Medicine officially returned to its roots with a full circle rebrand to Total Gym, the name that started it all in 1974. By reclaiming its original name, the company leverages the strength of the Total Gym brand that has achieved huge success across multiple markets including physical therapy, athletic training, commercial fitness and in the home. Coinciding with the rebrand to Total Gym, the company introduced a new line of Total Gym bodyweight trainers, featuring the innovative, all-new Total Gym GTS and Total Gym PowerTower models, and the newest model for small footprint facilities and home training, the Total Gym Sport[®]. Improved function, usability and style have been designed into all equipment, each of which can be utilized with Total Gym's versatile and revenue-generating GRAVITY fitness program.

As a globally recognized brand, Total Gym continues to lead the industry with innovative functional and bodyweight training products.

For more information about Total Gym equipment and the GRAVITY program, please visit TotalGym.com or call (800) 541-4900.

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