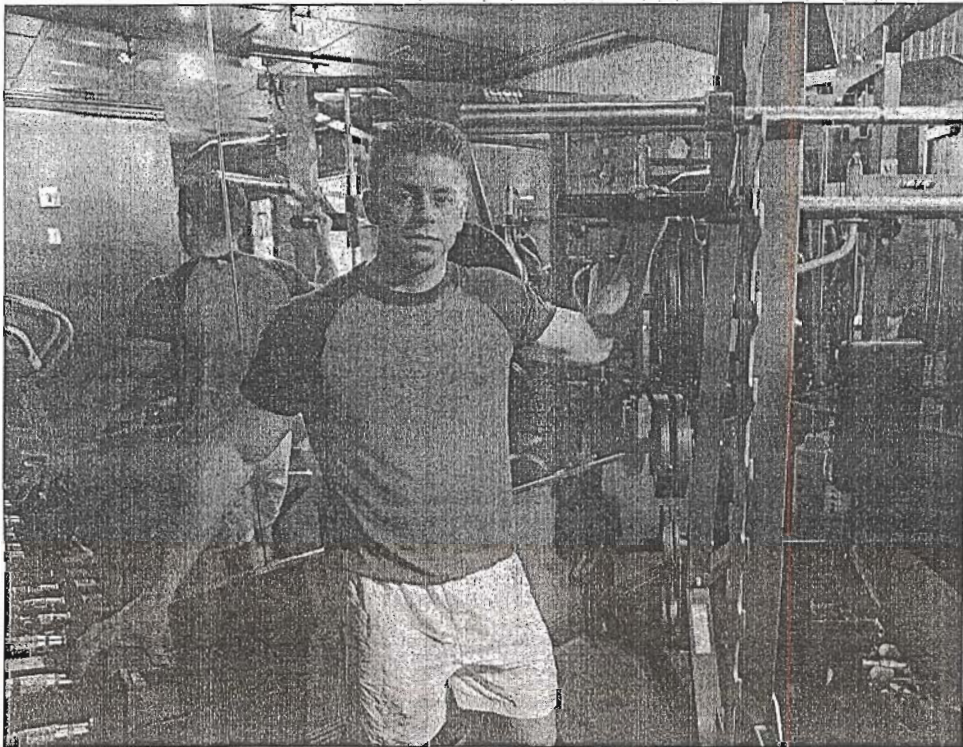


BAYSHORE GARDENS



Times photo — JOSEPH GARNETT JR.

Jorge Tapias, 28, is opening Brooklyn Fit, where he will give private physical training sessions to clients in South Tampa. He'll also emphasize the importance of nutrition.

Trainer is pumped up about one-on-one shop

■ Soccer experience, psychology and knowledge sculpt a new personal training business.

By JONATHAN MILTON
Times Staff Writer

For personal trainer Jorge Tapias, South Tampa, with all its fitness-conscious people and health-oriented businesses, seemed the perfect hub for his training studio.

So he decided to turn an old beauty parlor at 3401-B S MacDill Ave. into Brooklyn Fit, scheduled to open Sept. 16.

He named it after his former home, a place known for its strong attitude.

"I was working out of a studio on Howard (Avenue) and I saw the need for a small place where you can train on a one-on-one basis," Tapias said. "This is a personal environment where it's just the trainer and the client. A lot of people are intimidated by commercial gyms because they're going to be seen by other people."

Tapias, 28, describes the gym as feng shui meets the workout studio, with its deep red walls, mirror tiled ceiling and flat-screen TVs.

Although South Tampa fitness buffs have their choice of training studios and gyms,

Tapias thinks he offers a unique approach.

"I think I bring something new to the table because I have such an emphasis on nutrition. And with minor in psychology, I feel that I can motivate people," he said. "Every trainer brings a different style. I like to customize each client's diet and keep an eye on their progress."

Sessions range from \$40 to \$55 an hour. Tapias also offers a 24-hour support service for clients who need nutritional advice.

"It's not boot camp here," he says. "I make this so that everybody can do it."

Tapias attributes some of his athletic knowledge to his professional soccer experience.

"I went to the minor leagues when I was 14 and then I made Division 1 in Spain when I was 17. Throughout that soccer process, I always had conditioning coaches, and they showed me the different sides to fitness," he said. "I always remember saying that when I stopped playing soccer, I would want to get into personal training."

Tapias finds the most satisfaction in improving people's lives.

"Being healthy and feeling fit is so important. It's good to wake up in the morning and like what you see in the mirror," he said.

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