



Photos by Jim Berry
Owner Adam Boesel

Human Power: The Green Microgym

By Jennifer Willis
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In a traditional gym, you burn more than just calories when you work out. Electricity used by cardio equipment, lights, fans and televisions runs up the utility bill — and costs the earth, too.

Now, [The Green Microgym](#) on NE Alberta changes all that. Open since late August, this sustainable gym features cork and recycled rubber flooring, solar panels, compact-fluorescent light bulbs — and energy-generating equipment.

“Every time someone gets on one of the machines, they’re creating about 50 Watts per hour,” says Adam Boesel, owner of [The Green Microgym](#). With three spin bikes and the “Human Dynamo” — four bikes driving a single motor — capable of generating electricity, Boesel estimates his gym can create up to 350 Watts at once.

Boesel had worked as a personal trainer and was researching starting his own gym when he stumbled on the idea of creating energy with workout equipment. “I didn’t know anything about electricity,” he says. “I just started doing it myself and found that it was very simple.”

[The Green Microgym](#) takes a three-prong approach to sustainability: creating electricity through both human and solar power; being as energy efficient as possible; and getting involved in the local community.

For \$49/month, members have keycard access to the gym from 5:30am to 11:00pm, 365 days a year. They have full control over their workout experience, from the lighting to the music to the speed of the ceiling fans. In partnership with [The Green Microgym](#) to conserve energy, members turn everything off when they leave.

“If you think about a regular gym, when it’s open, all the lights are on, all the ceiling fans are on, all the TVs are on, the stereo’s loud, no matter if it’s one person or one hundred people in there,” Boesel notes. “That’s very wasteful.”

Professional organizer Anne Marie McClaran joined [The Green Microgym](#) before it even opened. She ran into Boesel and his wife handing out fliers about the gym. “I really liked what he was trying to do,” she remembers. “I went home and enrolled online.”

McClaran lives 20 blocks away and walks or bikes to the gym, which she calls a “good little hub” for the neighborhood. [The Green Microgym](#) doesn’t offer as much equipment as 24 Hour Fitness, where McClaran had gone before, but it does have everything she needs.

“I like the people involved. I like their energy, I like their spirit,” she says. “I look forward to working out anyway, but here it’s an extra good vibe.”

Those who aren’t local can sponsor memberships for low-income families in the neighborhood, and members are credited \$1 for every hour of electricity they generate with their workouts. Once they reach \$10, they can use these credits to buy a t-shirt or water bottle at the gym. [The Green Microgym](#) doesn’t currently offer classes but does provide discounts at Exhale Yoga up the street (10 classes for \$60).

Looking forward, Boesel’s ultimate goal is to get the entire gym — not just the bikes — generating electricity. “The technology is there,” he says. “It’s just a matter of time.”

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