

BY SANDRA LOWE SANCHEZ

In 1995, Rick Martinez became an R.N. Shortly after, the nursing shortage that gripped the country took hold. His response to this was starting a medical staffing company, MedTrust Staffing LLC, helping to place nurses and other allied health workers in Texas hospitals and alleviating their shortages. But several years ago, Martinez says he believes he found another way to better impact the health care crisis — get people fit and keep them out of hospitals and nursing homes all together. In 2007, he opened up Alamo CrossFit, a company which he describes as the “only true school of fitness in San Antonio.”

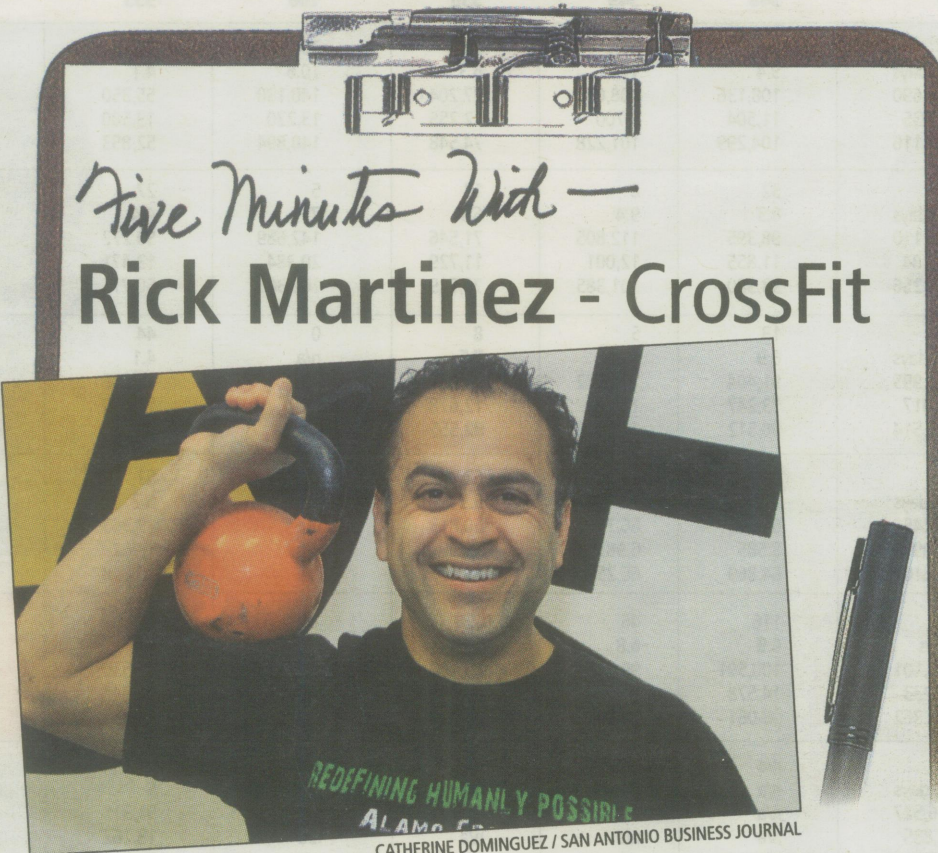
Martinez’ team at Alamo CrossFit is comprised of four full-time coaches, including himself, and six assistant coaches. He recently spoke to the Business Journal about the strength and conditioning program that is one of the fastest-growing fitness methods in the country.

Q. How did you discover CrossFit?

A. In 2005, I was serving as a captain in the U.S. Army at Walter Reed Hospital. I’ve been an R.N. since 1995. I was a reservist and was called to active duty in support of Operation Enduring Freedom for a solo assignment, meaning I had to leave my family back home in San Antonio. I was looking for a fitness program to get into when a CrossFit gym opened up across the street from my apartment.

Q. What’s so great about the program?

A. Every day we run, jump, push and pull things, lift objects off the ground and put



things overhead. CrossFit takes all those natural movements and puts them into an incredibly effective fitness program. It incorporates everyday movements into a fitness program that will keep you active and healthy for life. At Alamo CrossFit, we also stress nutrition. I am a personal testament to this exercise. I have had seven knee surgeries. Doctors have told me I should lay off my knees or I would need a knee replacement. I believe in Western medicine, but I also believe if we can treat the patient

rather than the symptom ... that when we treat the body as a whole the results are fantastic.

Q. What segment of the population is best suited for this type of program?

A. Our members range in age from 12 to 67. CrossFit works with the belief that the needs of the Olympic athlete and the grandmother differ only by degree, not kind. As a nurse I’ve seen people go to nursing homes not because their heart

failed or their liver failed, but because they can’t get off the toilet anymore. CrossFit is suited, honestly speaking, for anyone who wishes to get fit, stay fit and spend a long healthy life out of a nursing home.

Q. How did you come to start Alamo CrossFit?

A. When I was leaving active duty, I had to make a choice. I could come back to San Antonio and go work in the ER where I could help one person at a time or I could embrace what CrossFit teaches and help more people get healthy and fit and stay out of the ER. I purchased a license for CrossFit and opened up a gym in a shopping center on Blanco and Cadillac Drive. The license allows us to use the CrossFit name but, unlike a franchise, we can decide where we locate and how much square footage we need. And we have the freedoms to create a program the way we envision it.

Q. How does your gym work?

A. Right now we have about 150 members. I know every one of them. We don’t have contracts. I would rather have a person come in here and work out every day than have a person sign a contract and pay a monthly charge and never show up. We do not have an open gym format. We work in packages that range from \$150 to \$200. Ninety percent of our people are in a class. A smaller percentage work one-on-one with a coach. We schedule anybody who is interested for a free intro. We go through our baseline that includes giving the person the opportunity to do a 10-minute exercise routine to develop a baseline. For more information, visit our Web site at www.alamocrossfit.com.