

# A Healthy Choice Opens for Key Coasties

Story and photos by PA1 Krystyna Hannum, D7 Public Affairs

KEY WEST, Fla. -- A large, bright bow hung across double doors at the end of a dimly lit passageway, demanding the attention of a group of Coasties gathered before it.



KEY WEST, Fla. -- Burning calories on a total body trainer, MK2 Scott Southwick of the MAT team finishes up his workout. Members of the MAT are required to work out for one hour, three days a week. Coast Guard photograph by PA1 Krystyna Hannum.

A seven-year dream and hours of team effort came to fruition the morning of March 7, as Capt. Scott Buschman made the ceremonious, gold-scissor snip through the ribbon stretched across the gift-wrapped door. The smell of rubber matting and paint greeted the crowd as they strolled through the doors and into Sector Key West's brand new gym.

Buschman, Sector Key West commander, was Group Key West's deputy commander in 1999 when he realized the unit's gym needed some serious attention. Two small rooms on separate floors within the barracks housed the extent of the fitness

equipment, not much more than a nautilus machine, two bikes and a bench.

"Some of our people had a vision and wanted to build an adequate space for personnel to work out," said Buschman. "With over 700 active duty Coast Guard people in the Florida Keys and thousands passing through each year on cutters, it is critical we have a superior facility to provide for their quality of life, their wellness, and their physical fitness."

"We have a great wellness committee and as they and others get excited about the gym and working out, it will get others excited and working out too," said Buschman.

It has taken a team effort to create the new gym, from searching for funding for new equipment, to nailing down the best location for the space (the gym moved three times before settling in the current location on the first floor of the Sector building). Through the years, money filtered in through ISC Miami Worklife Health promotion program, Coast Guard Health promotion program, Coast Guard morale fund, the Coast Guard Foundation and Evergreen Funds.

The outcome is a space filled with Total Body Trainers, universal machines, free weights, a speed and punching bag, peg board, and four 32-



KEY WEST, Fla. -- With a snip of the scissors, the new gym opens. The space has total body trainers, universal machines, free weights, a speed and punching bag, peg board, and four 32-inch flat screen TVs. Coast Guard photograph by PA1 Krystyna Hannum.

inch flat screen TVs.

“I love the new gym,” said Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Scott Southwick, stationed at the Maintenance Augmentation Team (MAT). “It’s great compared to the dungeon that we had before. Now there are more machines, more equipment, more TVs, more everything.” Members of the MAT team, a tenant command on the base, have mandatory workouts Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Sector personnel also have mandatory workouts.

For those not required to stay fit but choose to, the gym is open 0530-2200 everyday for active duty service members and their dependants, Reservists, Auxiliaritsts and local law enforcement agencies. In addition, Key West is a frequented port of call for visiting cutters, resulting in thousands of people each year making their way through the gym.

**USCG**