

Greenwood club thrives by catering to families, execs

David Brenner credits the Greenwood Athletic Club with saving his life.

Brenner doesn't think he would have survived a rare operation on his neck in January 1989 if he hadn't worked himself into shape on the high-tech stationary bicycles and treadmills at the club at 5801 S. Quebec St.

"One of the surgeons at the Mayo Clinic told me my physical condition was an important factor," Brenner, 45, said as he racked up miles on a computerized bike last week.

The Greenwood Athletic Club — a \$13 million club that celebrates its third anniversary July 1 — was the newest club in the Denver area until the Denver Place Athletic Club opened downtown last week.

Brenner, a vice president and comptroller at U S West Inc., wasn't alone in working up a healthy sweat last week.

It was 10:30 a.m. Thursday, and the cardiovascular room was packed.

A row of treadmills behind Brenner was filled with people of all shapes, sizes and ages — running and walking. In front of him, a human wall moved up and down on computerized StairMaster stair ex-

ercise machines.

General manager Steve Krum handed water to the perspiring patrons, a routine repeated every 15 minutes by one of the three instructors who paced the floor while giving encouragement and advice to members.

In other parts of the 77,000-square-foot club, a triathlete swam lap after lap in the eight-lane, 25-meter pool; several people jockeyed for position on the indoor track; an instructor helped a woman body builder strengthen her shoulders with free weights; people arrived for squash games; and a low-impact aerobic class worked out.

Only the basketball court, where the Denver Nuggets practice about once a month, was not being used.

"We're one club that has not compromised its pricing, and we're probably the most successful club in the Denver area," says co-developer and owner J. Madden, who recently ordered another \$90,000 in high-tech exercise equipment. "It contradicts everything that is supposed to be happening in the world of athletic clubs."

Since Madden opened the club in 1987 with partner Maricor Inc., the for-profit affiliate of St. Joseph Hospital, more than 1.5 million

people have passed through the club's turnstile.

It has 3,100 memberships representing about 8,000 people. Family memberships cost \$125 a month, plus a \$350 initiation fee, one of the heftiest charges in the area.

A recent survey found that the largest percentage of the club's members have a family income of more than \$130,000, Krum said.

Madden said he was tempted to open a "hard-body singles club," but he said it made more sense to appeal to area professionals and families.

"Actually, marketing studies told us not to open it," he added. The studies showed that the market was glutted with about a half dozen clubs in the nearby Denver Technological Center; Cherry Creek; Aurora; and the Inverness Business Park south Greenwood Village.

Other clubs haven't been quite so successful.

The Sporting Club in the DTC, formerly owned by the Naiman Co. of San Diego, and the International Athletic Club in Aurora, developed by former Denverite Bill Walters, are both owned by lenders and are up for sale.

"Our list price is \$1.75 million" for the Sporting Club, said Charles



J. Madden, owner of the Greenwood Athletic Club, says his club has succeeded without resorting to cut-rate pricing.

Woolley, a broker with Fuller and Co. "It's really unbelievable at that price, and we're willing to listen to any reasonable offer."

Initially, the club lost several hundred of its 1,200 members to the Greenwood Athletic Club but has regained them, Woolley said.

The 53,524-square-foot Sporting Club appeals to busy executives from nearby office buildings, and its monthly dues — at about \$45 for singles — are much cheaper than at Greenwood, he said.

Now that his complex is a success, Madden plans on expanding it to the north, allowing him to ac-

commodate another 1,000 memberships. Madden also is working with Greenwood Village to open a golf course adjacent to his property on the west.

Madden also may buy another athletic club in Arvada.

He is negotiating to purchase the Colorado Athletic Club at Interstate 70 and Carr Street. It is owned by Ron Blanding, the former owner of the Denver Gold football team. He closed the club four years ago.

Fuller and Co. is listing it for \$3.45 million.

— John Rebchook