

Celebrity booty: How body part worship and lateral trainers are shaping fitness

America has long been a culture obsessed with youth, fitness and sex appeal, but in today's world, a noteworthy body part can actually catapult a starlet from obscurity to fame in a nano second. The body part du jour? The butt.

Try to imagine a world where Jennifer Lopez wasn't blessed with that famous rear view. Would she still be a star? In her case, it seems likely. But could Kim Kardashian boast nearly 10,000,000 twitter followers without *her* celebrated posterior? Would anyone even know Pippa Middleton's name?

Indeed, Hollywood today is chock full of women as beloved for their ass-ets as for their talent: think Beyonce, Jessica Alba, Sofia Vergara, Jessica Biel, Salma Hayek, Megan Fox.

Admirers like to look at these women on the screen and the magazine page, but in a results-oriented society, they are doing more than just looking; they are actively coveting. The fans may be walking the block instead of the red carpet, but they want their own butts to look as good as their idols' while doing it.

Not an easy task, given how notoriously difficult the glutes are to target and to shape. But the fitness industry has recently responded, particularly in the form of lateral trainers. In fact, the Helix, a new lateral trainer introduced at IHRSA 2010, actually bills itself as "the first aerobic machine that also kicks your butt."

The Helix promises its users strength-training caliber results *while* blasting fat and calories, something difficult to do before the product's introduction. This should ensure glute-targeted results in a quicker time frame.

Helix Co. CEO Lenny Snyderman explains it this way: "Because the Helix moves side to side, it recruits more muscles. It targets the entire leg 360 degrees, not just the front and back of the legs like all the other aerobic trainers in the gym. This translates to incredible results for the inner and outer thighs, and it really shapes the glutes. Try doing that with an elliptical. You just can't."

Hollywood personal trainer Gunnar Peterson agrees. Arguably the industry's most respected fitness guru, with a roster that has included both J. Lo and Kim K, Peterson has been a vocal fan and early adopter of the Helix since 2009 when he secured an early model for his Beverly Hills studio.

All of this is making the Helix extremely popular on the fitness floor. "The Helix is by far our most popular piece of cardio equipment," says Dick Weber, owner of B Real Fitness in Camarillo, California. "I have several units and plan on buying more. If Helix was to franchise, I would be their first customer."