

How to **Help the President Shape Up** by Ted Vickey '91 H&HD



People would always ask me, “Do you work out with the president?” And I’d say, “No—I love my job too much.” Can you imagine the stress? Let’s just say you’re spotting him on dumbbell presses and a dumbbell falls and hits him in the head. As much as they say they put their pants on just like you and I do, you and I don’t run the free world.

My job was to serve the staff, and he just happened to be one of the people we took care of. The Oval Office would call and say, “Ted, we need an elliptical machine, a bike, and a stepper delivered to the West Wing.” Once I got a call saying, “The president is flying to Central America, and he wants to run while he’s on Air Force One.” We got one of those fold-up treadmills, and I had to check with some experts and crunch numbers to make sure it would be safe to exercise at that altitude.

The president can work out wherever he wants. At the White House, he has equipment in the residence, or he can work out near the pool. Either way, there are 20 people making sure you don’t get in.

I was executive director at the White House Athletic Center for 11 years, through Bush, Clinton, and Bush, but the presidents never came over to the main fitness center. If they did, it would put a stop to everything. Everyone would want to work out with the president or just say hi. And interruptions aren’t conducive to a good workout.

—*Ted Vickey, founder and president of the fitness consulting company FitWell Inc., is former executive director of the White House Athletic Center. He stays fit in Vienna, Va.*