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FITNESS PROFILE

## Getting back on the cutting edge

By [Paula Rath](#)  
Advertiser Staff Writer

Timothy Scanson of Salt Lake was sidelined from exercise with severe back problems just three years ago. He credits the core and back strength he gained through Pilates with bringing him back to health, enabling him to pursue his passion, fencing. Now his 9-year-old granddaughter, Ashley, has taken up the sport.

Scanson is fortunate that his company, Waikiki Trader Corp., has cardio equipment, a weight room and showers. This enables him to get in at least 30 minutes of cardio every day to round out his fitness regimen.

**Name:** Timothy Scanson

**Age:** 50

**Profession:** Accountant

**Height:** 5 feet 8

**Weight:** 165 pounds

**Workout habits:** "I either walk three miles or ride a stationary bike for 30 minutes every day. I do 10 to 15 minutes of Pilates stretches to my leg and back muscles every day. I do two one-hour Pilates mat classes a week, and I fence twice a week for two to three hours."

**When and why I started working out:** "In January 2001, I stepped on a scale, something that I had been avoiding for years. I was over 200 pounds, and it really shocked me. I decided to change my lunch habits from fast food every day to raw vegetables. I also started riding a stationary bike every day for 30 minutes. The results were amazing; I lost 65 pounds in four months and went from a 40 waist to a 32 waist. Now that I was in the best physical shape of my life, I decided to try something that had always intrigued me: fencing. Via the Internet, I made contact with coach Tony Nishimura and the Hawaii Fencers club. They meet at the Pacific Buddhist Academy. I started taking lessons in foil, and by the fall, I was competing in tournaments. Towards the end of the tournament season, in April of 2002, my back gave out on me. It wasn't specifically due to fencing but rather a combination of sitting at a desk for 30 years, a couple of accidents in my teens and all the current exercise that I was doing. I spent the next year pretty much in bed. ... Dr. (Bernie) Portner recommended that I try Pilates, and that was how I ended up with On Balance Studios. ... After four months of Pilates, I was no longer taking pain pills. Toward the end of 2003, I started to think that I might actually fence again. ... I will always have back problems, but thanks to Pilates, I no longer have to suffer with the pain."

**My good foods/bad foods:** "Good: I eat raw vegetables for lunch every day. Bad: Coffee and ice cream."

**My biggest motivator:** "That would be my granddaughter Ashley. She has recently taken up fencing, and I'm looking forward to competing with her in tournaments for many years to come."

**My biggest roadblock to fitness:** "Staying healthy. I tend to push myself beyond the limits of what my 50-year-old body can take."



Timothy Scanson, left, works out with foils with the help of a Hawaii Fencers instructor.

Dayna Harris

**What saves my sanity:** "Fencing. It's like nothing else I've ever experienced, and nothing clears the mind of everyday stress and chaos like facing an armed challenger on the strip. It requires both physical and mental agility."

**My next challenge:** "To become a rated fencer. Right now, I am unclassified."

**Advice for those in the same boat:** "My back injury changed my life; Pilates help me to get my life back. I highly recommend it to everybody. Most importantly, go with a certified instructor. Both of my instructors, Lisa Robertson and Jessica Dung, are extremely knowledgeable on the human body, and I've learned a lot about managing and taking care of my body from them."

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