

INDUSTRIAL STRENGTH

## Worcester, Home Of Love Handles

Fledgling company stays true to its roots

By Matthew L. Brown  
Worcester Business Journal Staff Writer  
July 6, 2009

---



Perhaps the byline above should be: Billy Mays. What I'm about to explain is a product perfect for the type of infomercial featuring the bearded pitchman.

But Love Handles is notable for more than its novelty or its obvious usefulness and "why didn't I think of that?" common sense. The product, and the two women who invented and are about to bring it to market, are from right here in Worcester.

Joanna James came up with the idea for Love Handles while she was in college. She was a frequent walker and noticed all the different baby strollers she shared her walkways with did nothing to move, let alone exercise the arms and upper body.

She thought that if a stroller could be designed with handles similar to those found on an elliptical machine, a whole host of fitness, family and time management problems could be solved.

But that was college, and nothing came of the idea until about a year and a half ago. That's when she brought up the idea with Mary Moschos. Moschos "took it a step forward and said, 'Make it handles that can attach to any stroller,'" James said.

So, there it is: Handles that would be at home on a piece of gym equipment that can be attached to the handles of virtually an stroller to allow moms and dads to get a little upper body exercise while out for a walk with junior.

And the resistance of the handles can be adjusted, too.

Why didn't you think of that?

## **Stroll Away The Pounds**

From the beginning, James and Moschos, neither of whom had any entrepreneurial or manufacturing experience going into this — James is a journalist by profession and Moschos was in real estate — made a commitment to keep the design and production of Love Handles in the United States.

“When we started out, people tried to start steering us to China and we were pretty determined that we wanted to keep the business in the U.S.,” Moschos said. “We were lucky to find people here in Worcester.”

“The beauty of this is if you have a concept you really believe in, you have to do the legwork and the research, but you can find the right people,” James said. “We were lucky to find people here in Worcester and that made it perfect.”

Through Richard Kennedy at the Worcester Region Chamber of Commerce, the Love Handles ladies were introduced to the contract manufacturing division of Coghlin Cos. in Worcester, known as DCI.

DCI has taken the Love Handles idea through several design iterations and has helped James and Moschos choose the right materials and mechanisms to make Love Handles work. The company may even end up manufacturing Love Handles when all is said and done.

James said the journey from idea to actually hitting the market in coming weeks has been “frustrating, exciting and fun.”

And who needs Billy Mays, when you’ve got Mary Moschos: “This comes into play because it saves people time and money. You don’t have to go to the gym and there’s no time away from their child.”

More information about Love Handles can be found online: <http://www.lovehandlesinc.com>.