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The Next Range of
Golf Practice Facilities





Building A Healthy Fitness Program

A Five-Part Series

The Right Fit

Successful fitness programming stays in step with fitness trends, while balancing the needs of members with smart investments.

By Brandi Shaffer, Associate Editor

Few things are more overwhelming to an exercise novice than setting foot into a gym for the first time.

Faced with rows of cardio equipment, pulley systems secured to stacks of weights, and any number of rubber balls, bands and mats in group fitness rooms, it's difficult to know where (or how) to start.

Successful club fitness programs cover a lot of ground. With a wide variety of members passing through the fitness center, it's necessary to create programs that welcome the young and the old, the non-fit and the fit, and everyone in between. As with exercise itself, fitness programs must achieve and maintain balance to stay healthy and relevant, keeping trends in check with the needs and wants of members.

Appealing to the Masses

All fitness trends are built around basic movements, allowing for progression by speed, complexity of movement, or the addition of weight. For example, spinning classes incorporate a skill (bicycling) often established in adolescence, but add pedal resistance, and varying speeds and positions, to make the exercise more difficult. The familiarity of riding a bike could be part of the reason why spinning has remained a mainstay in fitness centers for decades.

"Spinning classes can be programmed according to any age and all stages of fitness," says Karen Sullivan, Director of Fitness at The Kansas City Country Club (KCCC) in Mission Hills, Kan. "I can't have a class with only two people, so we have to look at the overall appeal of a trend."

Crossfit, which incorporates high-intensity interval training, heavy weight-



In addition to conducting one-on-one training to assess and alleviate injury-prone movements, Pam Owens, Royal Oaks CC's TPI-certified Fitness Director (in lower photo, in black), holds group programs and clinics that focus on common weak areas for golfers.

lifting, and exhaustive calisthenics, has proven controversial recently, as some health experts are concerned about the

safety of this intense form of exercise, particularly if the trainers and trainees are inexperienced. Still, the trend is pop-



A Five-Part Series

In 2014, *Club & Resort Business* has presented a special, five-part series on how properties can create and maintain attractive fitness centers that will appeal to the most fitness-minded of members, as well as those who might need a little push.

This fifth and final installment, on **Programming**, parses through fitness program options, from individual instruction to group classes. It also considers member involvement, coordinating with other departments, and adjusting to trends.

Part One ("Blueprints for Wellness," February 2014) focused on **Fitness Center Layout**, outlining the organizational and design elements that can be key to member engagement and distinguishing the club as a preferred destination, vs. a "big-box gym."

Part Two ("Functional Fitness," April 2014) focused on **Equipment Purchasing**, detailing the basic exercise equipment needed to build a fitness center that matches membership demographics to facility needs.

Part Three ("No Train, No Gain," August 2014), on **Staffing**, focused on in-house vs. managed facilities, full-time vs. part-time and contract employees, and making the right matches between instructors and the overall membership.

Part Four ("Back to Basics," October 2014), on **Operations**, explored fitness center hours, pricing, access during staffed and unstaffed periods, maintenance, and extra services.

Previous installments can be read at www.clubandresortbusiness.com

ular among the fitness-minded.

"Crossfit would not be ideal for our population," says Grant Worthington, Director of Sports Operations at Addison Reserve Country Club in Delray Beach, Fla. "But there are aspects of circuit training that we can incorporate."

Royal Oaks Country Club in Houston transformed a difficult physical feat into a more attainable one with its mini-triathlon. Participants used the club's heated pool for 20 minutes, followed by 20 minutes on an indoor bike, then 20

minutes on a treadmill, all while keeping track of their own mileage.

"You're dealing with people who aren't super serious—they're not triathletes," says Fitness Director Pam Owens. "But they want to do things that make them fitter."

On the other hand, some fitness programs will amplify the intensity of existing sports. Royal Oaks has introduced "speed golf" to members (see photo, opposite page). Players follow the traditional rules of golf, but rather than rid-

Tip-Top Trends

STAYING IN STEP WITH FITNESS TRENDS is imperative for any club with a fitness center. Fortunately, resources—often free online—are readily available. To offer a glimpse of what will get members talking next year, The American College of Sports Medicine published its "Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends for 2015: What's Driving the Market":

1. **Body Weight Training:** Body weight training uses minimal equipment, making it more affordable. Not limited to just push-ups and pull-ups, this trend allows people to get "back to the basics" with fitness.
2. **High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT):** HIIT involves short bursts of activity followed by a short period of rest or recovery. These exercise programs are usually performed in less than 30 minutes.
3. **Educated and Experienced Fitness Professionals:** Given the large number of organizations offering health and fitness certifications, it's important that consumers choose professionals certified through programs that are accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies.
4. **Strength Training:** Strength training remains a central emphasis for many health clubs. Incorporating strength training is an essential part of a complete exercise program for all physical activity levels and genders.
5. **Personal Training:** More and more students are majoring in kinesiology, which indicates that they are preparing themselves for careers in allied health fields such as personal training. Education, training and proper credentialing for personal trainers have become increasingly important to the facilities that employ them.
6. **Exercise for Weight Loss:** In addition to nutrition, exercise is a key component of a proper weight-loss program. Increasingly, health and fitness professionals who provide weight-loss programs are incorporating regular exercise and caloric restriction for better weight control.
7. **Yoga:** Based on ancient tradition, yoga utilizes a series of specific bodily postures practiced for health and relaxation. This includes Power Yoga, Yogalates, Bikram, Ashtanga, Vinyasa, Kripalu, and others.
8. **Fitness Programs for Older Adults:** As the baby-boom generation ages into retirement, some have more discretionary money than their younger counterparts. Therefore, many health and fitness professionals are taking the time to create age-appropriate fitness programs, to keep older adults healthy and active.
9. **Functional Fitness:** This is a trend toward using strength training to improve balance and ease of daily living. Functional fitness and special fitness programs for older adults are closely related.
10. **Group Personal Training:** In challenging economic times, many personal trainers are offering more group training options. Training more people at a time makes economic sense for the trainer and the clients.

ing a golf cart, they run between shots. An extra benefit of the practice is the increase in pace of play, with nine holes taking about 45 minutes, Owens says.

“Some people just want to play fast, and some just want to get a better workout from golf,” Owens notes.

Though trends, by definition, come and go, fitness trends can be particularly fast-moving, making it challenging to create an annual plan and budget. At KCCC, Sullivan says she attempts to forecast her programming schedule at the beginning of the year, but has to reassess the offerings year-round.

“Things can change so quickly in our industry that you never saw coming,” Sullivan says. “Like rowing machines—in the past 6 to 8 months, they have become the big buzz.

“Some [trends] are flops, but you have to figure out which ones have staying power,” she adds. “But as long as you’re not investing a lot of money, it’s OK to bring in Zumba or Tae Bo or kickboxing—as long as it’s safe, why not bring the buzz to your facility?”



PHOTOS COURTESY ROYAL OAKS CC

A handful of members at Royal Oaks CC participate in “speed golf,” during which players run between shots. “Some people just want to play fast, and some just want to get a better workout from golf,” says Pam Owens, TPI-certified Fitness Director.

Mixing It Up

When it comes to a good workout, variety is what adds spice to a fitness regimen. Consistency is paramount, of course, but it’s easy for interest to fizzle out when the movements become too commonplace.

“In private clubs, we don’t have the turnover that other fitness clubs do,”

Sullivan says. “We have members for a lifetime, so keeping their interest is more challenging for us, because they’re not moving from one fitness center to another. We are it, and we have to stay new and fresh.”

At KCCC, Sullivan tries out new programming by offering a one-time class, to see what the results and feedback

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will be. If the class gets good feedback, the club will offer a six-week session, and once it runs its course, the staff will decide whether to make it a permanent part of its fitness programming.

One fitness trend that has been successfully implemented at the club—much to Sullivan’s surprise—is *barre*, a ballet-inspired workout that focuses on proper body form to strengthen feet and legs, increase extension and improve flexibility. For these classes, the only necessary investment is the *barre* itself—a stationary handrail that participants use to keep their balance. “My personal feeling is that *barre* will be popular for a year or two,” Sullivan adds.

Some trends manage to stand the test of time, even though they may wax and wane in popularity. Most club fitness centers, gyms and studios continue to offer pilates and yoga, and even combine the two with other fitness methods, injecting body strength with cardio.

Sometimes, what creates a buzz in a fitness environment is not based on the exercise itself, but on trainers. At KCCC, a young trainer developed a bootcamp-style program, called “Fit Chicks,” that

incorporated current music and appealed to girls in their teens. It proved to be tremendously popular and when the trainer left the facility, the program suffered. “You have to have the personality to drive the population in,” Sullivan says.

While a club will often be able to make educated guesses about what fitness trends members might enjoy, deciding what programming to implement can still be a case of trial and error.

“Zumba did not work for us,” Sullivan laughs. “I know it has worked for other facilities, but it was fun for one class and then the members were over it. It may be because our members are a bit more reserved, or it’s just too much of a novelty to them.”

Other programs that Sullivan describes as more personal in nature can also have

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—Grant Worthington,
Director of Sports Operations,
Addison Reserve CC



difficulty getting off the ground. For example, Sullivan notes that she offered a smoking cessation class, and while many members lauded the idea, nobody actually signed up. Similarly, group-oriented weight-loss programs have also stalled at KCCC, with members instead opting for a one-on-one program with a dietician or trainer.

Addison Reserve CC, which offers 40 group fitness classes during its busy season, purchased a body composition scale two months ago that determines water weight, skeletal muscle mass, and

Kids on the Move

AS A GENERAL RULE, Addison Reserve Country Club does not count children as a significant portion of its membership demographic. However, during the holidays, the Delray Beach, Fla., property sees an influx of children, and opted to use this opportunity to educate youth about exercise through introductory classes.

“We don’t allow kids to work out in the fitness center until they are 12 years old, and then they have to be accompanied by an adult until they’re 14,” notes Director of Sports Operations Grant Worthington.

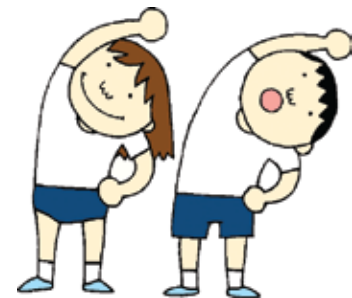
But the club now offers a four-week “Kids Circuit” training program that focuses on a different aspect of exercise with each class. Circuit training incorporates short spurts of multiple exercises throughout the course of a workout, a structure that is ideal for kids who lack the attention span of adults and can get bored easily. The program included:

- Week 1: **Flexibility**—Stretching before a workout to warm up muscles and decrease likelihood of injury.
- Week 2: **Agility**—Coordination and quick movements to benefit performance in sports, increasing power and reaction time.
- Week 3: **Cardio**—Building a strong and healthy heart, burning fat and supplying oxygen to the body.
- Week 4: **Balance**—Maintaining position of moving or changing through many positions to reduce risk of injury, benefit sports performance, and improve breathing.

To give the class a visual structure, kids receive a laminated bookmark at the end of each lesson that features cartoon characters and summarizes what they learned that week (see image above).

CLASS 1- WEEK 1- FLEXIBILITY

DEFINITION: MOVING JOINTS AND MUSCLES IN A FULL RANGE OF MOTION AS KIDS GROW INTO ADULTHOOD



BENEFITS

- Helps better sports performance
- Relaxes tight muscles
- Helps prevent muscle injury

body fat. The system holds data for up to 100,000 people, so the club incorporated the data into training.

“People can compare their body composition after a month or two of training and make decisions based on results,” Worthington says. “We want to have an idea of where you’re at; the concept is to give people another tool to work with—and everyone likes data.”

Certified Results

Offering varied programming can not only get members into the fitness center, it can also give them direction in their personal fitness journeys.

Certified through the Titleist Performance Institute (TPI) in the fitness track, Owens conducts clinics, programs and one-on-one training with golfers at Royal Oaks. Before designing a program for golfers, Owens assesses their balance, stability, mobility, strength and movement. For example, she observes them doing a deep squat—and if they can’t do it, she tries to figure out if it’s because of a lack of ankle or hip mobility, upper-body weakness, or core instability.

“Certain patterns will lead to the propensity for injuries,” Owens notes. “Lower-back injuries are the most common, and that often means there’s immobility in the hips and upper back. Preventing injuries is one of the biggest ways to help golfers.”

Owens then works with the club’s golf pros to develop solutions. “The golf instructors and I put our heads together and I try to explore the issue in the gym, to see why the member isn’t able to do certain parts of their swing,” she says.

In group settings, Owens still conducts assessments. To test balance, she asks participants to close their eyes and balance on one foot, to see how long they can stay upright.

“The average PGA Tour player can balance with eyes closed for 25 seconds or more,” Owens says. “Everyone wants to compare themselves to the professionals, so sharing that information gives them a goal.”

Owens also offers 3-D stretching clinics, during which golfers go through an hour of stretching (see photo, top of pg. 45) to reach the parts of the body that are supposed to be mobilized, then work on stabilizing other areas. She also conducts a lean-eating crash course, to teach athletes about eating anti-inflammatory

Classes that incorporate targeted stretching can significantly decrease the likelihood of injury among those who play “striking” sports such as tennis and golf.

foods, how to have good body composition, and eating for overall health.

“So many golfers are exhausted after nine holes because they haven’t eaten enough or haven’t kept up with hydration,” she says.

Royal Oaks’ Power Up clinic caters to the golfer over 40, implementing exercises to combat the age-related fitness decline.

The basic aspects of TPI training naturally extend to other sports as well, Owens notes. “Generating power to swing a racquet is not that different from swinging a club or throwing,” she says. “‘Striking’ sports are very similar—you start from the ground and generate thrust. If an athlete is ready for it, then

we’ll work on powerlifting, and take parts of those lifts to generate speed or power from the lower body.”

Ultimately, both broad and highly specific fitness offerings are beneficial to a club’s bottom line. “Any sport-conditioning programs you can offer are great,” Sullivan notes. “We want our members to be members for a long time, so we offer things that [promote] longevity [and can help get] a couple more years of golf [or other sports] out of them.” **C&RB**



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