

Health & Fitness

Fitness is important during every stage of life

By Jo-Ann Lamon Reccoppa

We all gain weight, lose it, get out of shape, and try to get back into shape again. Health-care professionals urge us to strengthen our bones and our heart, and maintain a certain level of fitness to look and feel healthy at every stage of our lives. To attain this, we need a lifestyle change. Like every journey, the road to good health for everyone begins with that all important first step.

"Obesity in children is now fairly common due to computers, video games, television, and lack of involvement in sports," says Wayne Matus, the owner of the Freehold Fitness Together franchise, (the personal training and fitness corporation), located at 3583 Route 9 north, Freehold. "These kids need some form of physical activity — walking, jogging, just about anything is better than nothing at all."

The problem, as Matus sees it, is lack of enthusiasm — especially for the overweight child who is embarrassed by his or her weight and is sensitive to thoughtless glares and cruel remarks.

"The whole concept of Fitness Together is privacy," Matus explains. "Let's face it, most people don't like to work out around others. We're all self-conscious. Imagine being an overweight kid. That self-consciousness is amplified. That's why we have private suites for training. There is no feeling like you're on display. Every one of our clients can get down to the business of getting fit without distractions."

Getting a kid away from a video screen isn't impossible. Starting small, with 30-minute sessions twice each week, can dramatically change the attitude of even the most sullen adolescent. They become accustomed to physical movement and gain more confidence. They also benefit from personalized nutritional guidance and a log to keep track of eating patterns and fitness progress. Programs are tailored to individual needs, because training sessions are always one on one.



Wayne Matus, trainer and owner of Fitness Together in Freehold, works out with fellow trainer Tori Schierzo.



PHOTOS BY CHRIS KELLY staff

The overweight grown-up can be workout shy as well, yet adults need to gain and maintain a high level of fitness every bit as much as their younger counterparts. With health issues such as diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and a score of other physical ailments, weight, body strength, and flexibility does matter for adults. The right workout can do more than tone and increase energy. It can lower blood pressure and cholesterol, and level blood glucose — often decreasing or eliminating the need for medication.

Other physical limitations arise as we age, and these may make us reluctant to work-out. The thought of physical activity after a knee replacement can send chills down your spine, but in reality there are exercises and machines that can help with the pain and increase flexibility, such as the recumbent bike and the low-impact elliptical trainer (found in the cardio room at Fitness Together).

As we age, we experience bone loss, and women are especially prone to osteoporosis. Exercise builds strong bones and slows bone loss, but it must be the right exercise done the right way — a combination of strength-training exercises with weight-bearing exercises.

Proper nutrition plays a key role in a healthy lifestyle. Programs at Fitness Together include a unique food and exercise progress journal, where meal suggestions are customized to take into account personal preferences and favorite foods — those beloved snacks and meals you simply cannot live without.

"It isn't impossible to get fit," Matus says. "Setting a realistic goal for short- and long-term progress, eating well without deprivation, and becoming accustomed to physical movement are the best ways to go about it. I like to say our Fitness Together clients look good in public because they train in private. More importantly, they feel good, too."

For additional information on Fitness Together's personalized programs, contact Wayne Matus at (732) 431-5555, or visit the Web site at www.fifreehold.com.