

Spice Up Your Workout

By Anna Miller, Group Exercise Director

Group, by definition, is more than one person. Therefore, more conservative guidelines are set for group exercise than that of a personal trainer who works one-on-one or a coach who works with a well-trained athlete. Due to the nature of group exercise, an educated instructor will evaluate two main components-effectiveness and potential risk. With that in mind, the Aerobics and Fitness Association of America or AFAA, which is a nationally recognized organization for group exercise certifications, has developed five questions an instructor should consider when putting together a safe and effective workout for participants.

First, what is the purpose of the exercise? Consider muscular strength or endurance, cardiorespiratory conditioning, flexibility, warm-up, skill development, and stress reduction. Secondly, are you doing that effectively? Consider proper range, speed or body position against gravity. Third, does the exercise create any safety concerns? Consider potential stress areas, environmental concerns or movement control. Fourth, can you maintain proper alignment and form for the duration of the exercise? Consider form, alignment, and stabilization. Finally, for whom is the exercise appropriate or inappropriate? Consider modifications to increase or decrease the level of intensity based on fitness levels.

**Keep your
New Years
resolution alive
by mixing up
your workout
and staying
motivated.**

When choosing a class that suits your needs, consider your goals whether they are flexibility, cardio-fitness or strength training. Once you have determined this, grab a schedule and jump in! Before you begin a new class, it's always a good idea to talk with the instructor before class. He or she can provide valuable information as to what you can expect and what you may want to do to modify. Keep in mind, the first couple of times you try anything new it will seem awkward. The key is to keep going back. The more you participate, the better you will become. The energy in the class provided from the instructor, the music and the workout will inspire you to return and reach your fitness goals.

If you are ready to branch out and try something new to help your fitness goals become a reality, try a group exercise class today!

