

Personal trainer can help you achieve fitness goals

BY KT LEESON
Copley News Service

Often, people don't achieve their fitness and weight-loss goals when obstacles such as work schedules, low motivation or knowing how to begin get in the way.

Physical injury is another cause for throwing in the gym

towel. According to a survey cited in *Sports Medicine* magazine, there was a 50 percent to 90 percent dropout rate in the first six weeks of working out among a group of initially sedentary people due to physical injury.

Scott Lucett, a fitness education manager for the National

Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) — an education company that provides certification and continuing education for trainers — says that the high injury rate is largely due to performing exercises improperly.

For many people, that's where a personal trainer

comes in. And finding the right one is the first step.

"They should have the appropriate credentials, the education and at least two years experience," Lucett said.

Their certification should come from an organization recognized by the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA), which is the governing body for the health and fitness industry.

"Another big component is that the trainer have the ability to work with people," Lucett added. "You can have all the book smarts, but if you can't communicate, build a rapport and make sure the person is comfortable, then it doesn't work."

Valerie Wagner, a personal trainer for 24 Hour Fitness, couldn't agree more.

"You want to make sure that the trainer is someone you can look forward to seeing a few times a week, someone that you mesh well with," said Wagner, who is a certified personal trainer and also holds a sports fitness specialist certificate.

"You need to look for someone to listen to you, your goals, what your needs are and really find out what your health history is and what your general abilities are," she added. "You want a trainer who's going to challenge you. The trainer should moti-

vate you to do, with their help, what you would not be doing on your own."

And, according to Wagner, what a client does outside the training session counts, too.

Lucett and Wagner both say a program that incorporates cardiovascular work, weight management and weight training is the most effective.

When it comes to the fitness part of the equation, variety is a key factor, according to Wagner.

"When you do the same movement for four to six weeks, it's not as effective as it used to be. That goes for cardio and weight training. That's why people hit plateaus," said Wagner, who advises trainers to alternate the order of the exercises, the types of machines and the mode of cardio equipment. Proper form is also essential.

"The body can learn to do something wrong as easily as it can learn to do something right," Wagner said. "The trainer needs to be willing to correct the client on proper technique and form."

The relationship between client and trainer is based on a combination of dedication and hard work from the trainer and commitment on the part of the client.

"People are capable of a lot more than they realize as long as they have someone to be their cheerleader," Wagner said.

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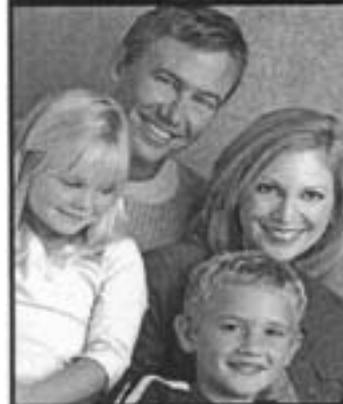
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