

KEEPING IT PERSONAL

According to the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA), about 12 percent of gym memberships begin in January, making it the peak month for people to sign up. However, research also shows that a large portion of these members tend to drop off within the next few months.

“Gyms know that the majority of people won’t come in after January or February,” says Better Bodies owner Mitch Schroder. “They’re making a fortune off of people who are locked into a membership they are no longer using.”

Better Bodies in The Village of WestClay takes a different approach, offering personal training-focused memberships on a month-to-month basis.

“We have to make sure we’re truly providing service for people where they’re going to improve a lot,” Schroder says. “If we don’t, we won’t see them again.”

How does the Better Bodies team earn the trust and commitment of their clients?

“It’s a whole different level of professionalism, competence and kindness,” Schroder says.

These values are at the heart of what has kept Schroder and Better Bodies in business for 30 years, despite the odds against the survival of fitness facilities.

“We have clients who have been here for decades,” he says.

Client loyalty and an emphasis on quality, service and knowledge have contributed to Better Bodies being named Best Personal Training Facility in the area for 13 years in a row.

Helping People

From an early age, Schroder wanted to be a doctor. When his grandfather had a stroke, he saw what the physical therapists did for him and decided that’s what he wanted to be able to do for those he served.

However, at some point, he had an epiphany.

“Why am I letting ailments happen to people as opposed to going out and trying to prevent them?” he asked himself.

He set out to change the model, and the result is the Better Bodies’ approach he refers to as “pre-hab.”

Better Bodies routinely sees clients referred to them, sometimes before or after surgeries. Many of those referring doctors are Better Bodies clients themselves, including psychiatric practitioners who recognize the importance of regular exercise for mental as well as physical well-being.

Asking the Right Questions

For Better Bodies, the process begins with an extensive evaluation.

“When we come in for an assessment, we’re looking at everything about a person,” Schroder says.

They record measurements like body fat, flexibility and circumference. They look at medical history, familial risks and medications as well as habits, nutrition, sleep and water intake.

This thorough evaluation allows trainers at Better Bodies to develop a personalized approach for each client.

“We do different things with different people, and that’s the joy of true personal training,” Schroder says. “It’s not where you’re at, it’s where you’re going.”

Getting the Right Answers

The one constant in every client’s individualized plan is that each training session runs an hour so that there is adequate time for warmup, power, strength, cardio, shaping, toning and stretching.

“It takes 22 minutes to get into the fat burning zone,” Schroder says, “so when people are paying for a half hour, they’re only burning fat for eight minutes. Whereas if we have them for an hour, they can have a huge afterglow where they continue to burn fat at a higher rate even after their workout.”

Trainers also advise clients on nutrition to make sure they have the right fuels before and after workouts.

Emphasis on Education and Knowledge

Better Bodies offers each client a proprietary book with both educational and tracking components.

However, Schroder isn’t just focused on educating clients.

“My favorite thing is mentoring people,” he says.

Schroder works hard to make sure Better Bodies brings in the best trainers and interns from all areas of expertise, like physical therapy, chiropractic and exercise science, and from all over the world, from places like China, France and Mexico. He has even had two trainers work with Olympic teams.

Beyond recruitment, trainers must pass a challenging test and go through a 27-step orientation in order to become an employee.

“We also spend a lot on our people’s continuing education,” Schroder says. “We make sure their certifications are valid and up to date so that we have competent people working with whoever comes in.”

This robust vetting and training process along with the thorough assessment of all clients is why Schroder can claim that in years of appointments, his trainers have seen no injuries.

Giving People What They Want

Better Bodies also offers equipment no one else in the area has, such as the Concept2 DYNO, and they provide individual bathroom and shower rooms.

Schroder says they are grateful to serve the people in this area and to offer them the best personal training experience.

“We care a lot about our people,” Schroder says. “Everything we have is because of them.”

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From the Better Bodies Blog

Overall Benefits of Fitness

Working out can be a great way to improve your physical health, mental wellbeing and overall quality of life. Here are just a few of the benefits.

Stress Reduction: When you exercise, your body releases endorphins, which are natural mood-boosting chemicals that help you feel good. Regular exercise has been shown to reduce stress levels, lower anxiety and improve overall mood.

Self-Esteem: As people become more fit and reach physical goals, they often feel a sense of accomplishment and pride. This can help improve self-esteem and confidence, leading to a more positive outlook.

Sleep: Getting enough sleep is crucial for good health, and regular exercise has been shown to improve sleep patterns, leading to better sleep quality and increased energy levels throughout the day.

Brain Function: Regular exercise increases blood flow to the brain, which can improve cognitive function, memory, focus and performance.

Social Connection: Joining a gym or fitness class can help you meet new people and form supportive relationships. This can be especially beneficial for individuals who struggle with social anxiety or isolation.