

Group Fitness, Individual Results

Spiece Fitness' Group Fitness programs generate a buzz and yield real results for its members.

article by Michele DeVinney • photographs provided by John Otto and Spiece Fitness

If you still think of a big jeans store and an affable guy with a camel when you hear the name Spiece, then you may not realize that it is now the name of one of the biggest and most multidimensional fitness complexes in the area. With cardio and strength training equipment, swimming pools (with aquatic classes), basketball courts and a licensed SPINNING® facility, Spiece Fitness has steadily grown the services it offers since opening in 2003.

But increasingly it is the Group Fitness programs that are generating the most buzz and are earning high marks with the center's members. Currently featuring Group Power® (a weight training class), Group Centergy® (featuring yoga, pilates and T'ai Chi), Group Step® (step aerobics training) and Group Groove® (dance fitness), Spiece Fitness adds Group Kick® this month, launching its kickboxing program on Saturday, October 18, with an open house for anyone interested in checking out the facilities.

What makes the Spiece Group Fitness classes unique is the careful attention paid to the content of the classes. While many other fitness classes are left to the variable abilities and creativity of the instructors, Spiece uses licensed routines generated by Body Training Systems, a group headquartered in Marietta, Georgia. Every quarter,



Lisa Click, group fitness director; Anne Davis, executive director; and Robert Justice, membership director.

new programs, including notes, choreography, music, DVD instruction and the opportunity for continuing education, are released, providing the instructors with a fresh approach to the class and those who attend the classes a chance to reinvigorate their exercise routine. The training for the instructors is the key to the program's success.

"Our instructors go through rigorous training," says Lisa Click, director of Group Fitness for Spiece. "Each submits a video and is given a pass/fail grade. What's great about the programs is that there are 300 hours of research behind every class. Most people who teach don't have 300 hours of prep time. Our instructors have to be certified, and then we have a mentor program for them to continue to learn until they're ready to go live with a class."

It's not just the instructors who benefit from the rigor of the Group Fitness programs. Members who attend the classes are guaranteed the same quality of class no matter who is teaching it.

"Every instructor is given the same training and is using the same licensed program for that quarter," says Click. "So if someone is sick or unable to teach on a particular day, there won't be any change in the quality or approach to the class.

Everyone has their own style, of course, but the actual class content will not change. So from a participant's standpoint, you know you're going to get a great class no matter who is teaching it."

Another benefit—and perhaps the most important one of all—is the greater likelihood of success for those who participate in Group Fitness. Click cites studies that show that 90 percent of those who exercise prefer to do so in groups. With motivators like social interaction and accountability to a larger number of people, fitness hopefuls are far more likely to maintain a fitness regimen in a group setting than they are when they go it alone on a treadmill or other machine. Spiece knows that if people succeed, they are far more likely to keep coming back—so the success of its members spells success for its business, as well.

"Ninety-four percent of those who workout in a group renew their memberships," says Click. "There's so much hype in the fitness industry, but many people who walk in the front door walk right out the back one. If people try to find time to fit in exercise, they are less likely to do it. But if they know they're scheduled to be here at 5:15 in the morning, then they really do come.

What's great about the programs is that there are 300 hours of research behind every class

~ Lisa Click, group fitness director for Spiece

"Most gyms collect money by hitting you with the hard sell," she continues. "We don't want to be like that at all. We provide a comfortable, welcoming atmosphere. We want our members here as much as possible, and we want them to bring their friends—and we want them to stay. There's a 50 percent retention rate among those who don't take classes. But you're more likely to leave a treadmill than a class. If you stay and take the classes, you will get results. For this reason, classes at Spiece are included in membership at no additional charge."

Of course everyone knows they should exercise, but the surest way to make it a habit is to make it enjoyable. That sounds like a contradiction to most people—exercise is a good time? But Click says it is possible.

"Our first goal is for people to have fun. We use fun music, have energetic, motivating instructors, and the participants get into the experience and entertainment of it. We want them to feel like they're at a rock concert, while getting a great workout and burning up to 950 calories," she says.

With licensed workouts that change every three months,

members also look forward to the new program launches, which herald the beginning of a new quarter in Group Fitness.

"Everyone gets excited and starts asking 'When's the launch? When's the launch?'" says Click. "It's a real event."

The routines can be modified to any fitness level and instructors are taught to be aware of new members who are joining the program, as well as those who may need to adapt the routines to their individual abilities.

Click reminds

anyone interested in Group Fitness that "your neighbor is not your opponent" and that each person needs to be aware of their own needs and goals. There are also classes offered at different times each day to suit busy schedules.

But even now, after five years as a successful fitness center, Spiece is still trying to get the word out to Fort Wayne about what it has to offer.

"People still come up to me and say 'I didn't know this place was here!' or 'I thought this was a jeans store,'" says Robert Justice, Membership sales director for Spiece. "But once you come here and experience what we have to offer and the classes that we have, it's easier to keep you. And that's just good business."

"There are two things we hear people talk about all the time," says Executive Director Anne Davis. "One is the cleanliness—members frequently comment on how clean our facilities are and how much they appreciate that. But they also say we have good people. We don't just have staff who clock in or teach a class and leave. Our team really does care. When someone walks in who wants to get in shape and doesn't know how, our employees will say 'I can help this person.'" •



Group Centergy®



Group Kick®



Group Power®



Address: 5310 Merchandise Drive
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825

Phone: (260) 483-1415

Owner/Executive Director: Anne Davis

Years in Business: 5 years

Web site: www.spiecefitness.com

Number of employees: 75

Products and Services:

Health club, day spa, physical therapy, pro shop, bistro, lap pool, therapy pool, group fitness, personal training, sports performance, youth programs, child care, nutrition, office space and educational services.