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Media Release – Small Group Training – A Great Way to Exercise

From: NZ Register of Exercise Professionals



Small Group Training - A Great Way to Exercise

The small group training session style of workout has continued to gain popularity with participants finding it a cost-effective way to get personalised attention, social interaction and an effective workout.

Simply put, small group training is a style of personal training, where a group of exercisers work with a personal trainer, getting a group workout with the added advantage of focused individual care. Small group training became popular originally in the guise of 'boot camp' style sessions, and while these remain popular, there are also many more options for those looking for a different style of workout to cater to their personal preferences and exercise needs.

Recent research from the Journal of Strength and Conditioning has looked at the benefits of small group training, and in particular sessions which allow individuals to work on independent, adapted exercises in a group setting. The research showed success for the participants as they engaged in an exercise programme that facilitated positive social interaction and supported them while exercising. While the physical fitness benefits were noted, the research also looked at other indicators, acknowledging that exercise has health benefits beyond physical ones.

Social: A group exercise session is an effective way to engage with, and be supported by, like-minded people. In a small group session the notion of 'everyone looking at me' is replaced by 'everyone is supporting me'. The small group size and format means that participants get to know and trust each other as well as the exercise professional leading the small group. Opportunity for one on one attention facilitates a feeling of belonging and ability to get feedback.

Financial: Working with a group makes the session with a personal trainer more cost effective. Even those working one on one can benefit with the addition of small group training as well as one on one sessions. While the benefits of working one on one with an exercise professional are not in question, for those on limited budgets having options for individualised programme is important.

Intrinsic motivation: The research made some interesting discoveries around motivation; something that all veteran and new exercisers struggle with. The attention and support from a trainer allows for meaningful goal setting and problem solving with the group setting creating self-reliance.

Choosing your Group Training session: One of the benefits of small group training is the personalisation. Many of the benefits above were the result of this 'one on one in a group' style so it's worth looking for a session that offers this in some form.

Not all small group trainers are created equal. In fact in NZ a person with no qualifications can set up and call themselves a trainer. That's why it's important to make sure your session is operated by someone with the right education, has plenty of experience, and who can offer you encouragement during and between sessions. By choosing a Registered Exercise Professional you can be assured your trainer knows their stuff.

Some things to consider before getting started:

- If you are new choose a programme that has ten or less people in it to ensure your trainer can give you the support you need.
- Talk to the trainer prior to signing up to make sure their training style is the right fit for you

References:

- REPs website www.reps.co.nz
- Research: Sharing a Personal Trainer: Personal and Social Benefits of Individualized Small Group Training <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28353489>

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