

Lessons Learned

- The ideal **class size** is 10 - 12 people. This should be based on size of room, amount of equipment, and experience of participants. A smaller class allows you to keep an eye on everyone and give individual attention to those that need it.
- A second instructor (such as a Physical Therapist) can be helpful in the beginning to ensure everyone gets off to a good start and understands the exercises and where they should or shouldn't be feeling it.
- After about 4 weeks participants know what's expected and have a good understanding of the core group of exercises and the additional instructor is probably not necessary.
- Targeting a group in the same department works best to sustain exercise after the class ends. The group tends to support each other and peer pressure works. It also allows injury rate data to be compared year to year in a single department.
- Work conditioning is important even for physically active jobs.
- Leadership support is critical.
- Employee involvement and enthusiasm is contagious.
- Develop a structure from the beginning that includes program expectations & guidelines.
- Set an attendance policy.
- Develop an application even if you allow all department employees to participate. This allows the individuals to commit to program and they are more likely to be successful.
- Require medical clearance prior to the start of the program. This will not eliminate workers compensation claims from the exercise program but it will reduce the likelihood of occurrence.
- Provide materials post program such as handouts with the exercises to allow the participants to continue on their own or in small groups.
- **Keep it Simple.**