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.**