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Beausejour

Taking Charge of Fitness

The goal of Beausejour’s “Take Charge” program is to improve the overall health and wellbeing of participants who are feeling unfit and generally not exercising. Thirteen people signed up for this year’s 12-week program.

The eight people who completed the mid-term assessment all rated the program as highly successful and reported significant health benefits.

“Their fitness and coordination improved, and they felt great about themselves,” said Take Charge instructor Sue Mackenzie.

Participants initially completed a fitness self-test followed by a blood pressure check and weigh-in. Exercise routines focused on cardio, balance, coordination, core work and resistance training, and lifestyle activities such as dancing and yoga were also incorporated into the program. Most of the “Take Chargers” ranged in age between 40 to 65, and many progressed from working with two-pound weights to handling five and seven-pound exercises by the end of the program. Similarly, many

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participants who began with a five-minute threshold for cardio activities eventually became comfortable with thirty-minute workouts. “They were able to pretty well keep up – they were just amazing,” said Mackenzie.

The sessions were open to all, but only women took advantage of the CDPI-funded program. A nutritionist came in twice to give informational workshops on healthy eating, and other sessions addressed common chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis.

In addition to being a qualified fitness instructor, Mackenzie is a recently retired nurse with plenty of first-hand experience in the consequences of unhealthy lifestyles and inactivity. “The impact of chronic disease was so evident to me through my work in home care,” she said. “I do this because I would like to help people and because I’ve been there myself.”

The “Take Charge” program proved beneficial to the instructor as well. Mackenzie reports having more energy and feeling more coordinated. “I’ve finally got to the point where if I don’t do it, my body says ‘you’re missing something here.’” A number of “Take Charge” participants evidently felt the same way and are determined to carry on exercising on their own. “They felt stronger, had more energy, and wanted to keep going – four of them got together and continued as a group.”

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Take Note

What is Resistance Training?

Resistance training is any exercise that causes the muscles to contract against an external resistance with the expectation of increases in strength, tone, mass, and/or endurance. The external resistance can be dumbbells, rubber exercise tubing, your own body weight, bricks, bottles of water, or any other object that causes the muscles to contract.

http://www.emedicinehealth.com/strength_training/article_em.htm