

Club Aurora adapts to virtual fitness programs

You don't need a fancy gym to stay fit if you're more comfortable staying at home. Sure, it might help, but if you're looking for the basics from a local instructor, all you really need is an internet connection ? and maybe a chair.

Since the early days of the global pandemic, Club Aurora's Brandie Yorg has been leading the community, with a special emphasis on Aurora seniors, in a series of simple and easy training exercises through the Town's YouTube channel and Aurora's Rec at Home program.

The videos started off as just snippets between 20 and 30 seconds, but based on positive feedback from viewers, operations have only expanded.

?Going online was a way we could still interact with the fitness community because Club Aurora has quite a big fitness community,? says Ms. Yorg. ?It was received really, really well. Then I was approached about doing some longer videos so people could actually do a class and not have to do it through Zoom. Not everyone, especially at first, was comfortable doing Zoom, so this way you could just do it.?

Videos for general Club Aurora patrons are of higher intensity, but videos tailor-made for members of the Aurora Seniors' Centre, and older Aurorans at large, are simpler and often incorporate common household items ? like a kitchen chair.

?Stretch and Relax are the most popular fitness classes at the Centre,? she says. ?I tried to do something that would appeal to everyone. If you wanted to move, you had the ability to do something.?

But, creating videos that were both interactive and engaging was something she describes as a ?whole new ballgame.?

?As instructors, we're used to being able to see people and you know what's working, you know what they are understanding. I really had to play around with it and use my expertise from the past, the classes I had been previously teaching (prior to COVID-19) and just went from there. I did the things that were most popular and easy to understand, things that didn't need a lot of cueing and things that anyone can do. I tried to do things you could do the first time out.?

Ms. Yorg began working at Club Aurora, the Town's fitness centre located at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex, six years ago. She began as a fitness instructor there and has since moved over to the Aurora Seniors' Centre.

Going online presented its own challenges, but Ms. Yorg says she knew that the ultimate goal was connecting with people and that is what drives her ? in person and in a virtual realm.

?I miss connecting with people so I tried to use a lot of the same wording that I would use in class as I was doing the videos,? she explains. ?I felt people would be watching them and I was going to end up in someone's living room connecting with them ? and I missed that.

?I think these videos will [continue]. People can come back to them on their own schedule, do them on their own time, and there will be a need for them,? she says.

The latest installment, Feet Fitness for Older Adults (www.youtube.com/watch?v=tWijn9YEp3o) launched Thursday and has already had hundreds of hits. If you haven't gone over to try them out, there is no time like the present, says Ms. Yorg.

?Just check out some of the videos and just start moving!?

CLUB AURORA RE-OPENS FOR WORKOUTS AND FITNESS

Club Aurora's fitness centre is now back in business.

The gym, based at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex (AFLC) re-opened Monday for scheduled workouts and fitness classes.

Participants are required to pre-register for a time slot for individual workouts and classes. Individual workouts will be booked for 75-minute time slots with a capacity of 15 participants per block and up to 15 participants for group classes. Fitness participants can register now online at aurora.ca/eplay.

New procedures will be in place to provide safe fitness programs and services to the community in accordance with provincial and regional health department regulations. These include controlled access, limited capacity and scheduled time blocks. As per provincial and regional health department regulations, fitness participants are required to wear face mask or face covering when entering, exiting and travelling throughout the facility. A face mask will not be required during physical activity.

At this time, all regular fitness memberships will remain on hold until full-service levels can resume. When reinstated, all fitness memberships on hold will receive an extension date based on when the facility closed due to COVID-19. All returning members will have the option of purchasing a one-month or three-month fitness membership at a reduced rate of 25 per cent off current fees, or pay-as-you-go at \$5 per activity. Drop-in services are not available at this time.

The change room amenities, lockers and showers will not be available. Participants are asked to come dressed in workout clothes. Fitness change rooms will be available for washroom use only. Water fountains will not be available for use and Club Aurora encourages participants to bring their own water bottles and refill them at the automated water filling station inside the AFLC. The walking track, squash courts and cycle fit studio classes are still closed at this time.

By Brock Weir