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EXPRESS WORKOUTS SUCCEED IN GETTING PEOPLE TO EXERCISE

San Diego – Many people say they don't exercise because they don't have time but many fitness facilities are taking away this time excuse by offering effective workouts in a condensed time block. And by all accounts, clubs that specialize in 30-minute, no-frills circuit training are flourishing.

"Our publications and educational events have been promoting express workouts for over five years as an uncomplicated exercise format that not only appeal to consumers who are pressed for time but also to people who traditionally shun health clubs because they feel intimidated or out of place in a fitness setting. And these shorter workouts are just as effective in helping people achieve their health and fitness goals because 30 minutes is the amount of daily physical activity that is recommended by the U.S. Surgeon General," says Kathie Davis, executive director of *IDEA Health & Fitness Association*.

According to Donna Meyer, Corporate Director of Group Exercise for 24 Hour Fitness and the 2000 *IDEA* Program Director of the Year, their express workout is receiving an "incredible response" from their members. "This resistance circuit program allows members to participate on their own time and at their own pace. The machines are grouped together with easy to follow suggestions on the number of sets and repetitions. The popularity is *huge* because it takes only a short amount of time to complete, is conveniently located and non-intimidating. Not all people come with a history of working out so we believe it is ideal for not only the person on a "time crunch" but also the new to exercise novice. Express Zone is the closest thing to a personal trainer without the cost or having to schedule an appointment."

Another leader in promoting the concept of express workouts is Curves International of Waco, Texas with over 5,000 locations worldwide. The Curves workout includes a number of components: a warm-up, three sets of strength training on all major muscle groups, a cool-down and stretching. An audiotape or staff person cues participants to move at 30-second intervals. "It is a user-friendly design that women enjoy," says Gary Heavin, Curves founder and CEO. "It allows for small-group social interaction which appeals to many women."

"From my days working at coed clubs," Heavin adds, "I recognized that strength training was being overlooked as a way to lose weight. The deconditioned market – women in particular – was neglected. Circuit training seemed like a perfect program to introduce."

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Julia Lerch learned how important time is to clients during her fitness classes in Lemoore, California where people would show up late or left early. “It was frustrating to see people come and go without the full benefit of the session. In talking to a few participants I discovered they had one thing in common: Time was a big issue for them, especially the women. Most of them only had 30 minutes at most to dedicate to exercise.”

Understanding the benefits of circuit training and the need to cater to those who complained about time, Lerch researched her options and became a Slender Lady franchisee. Based in San Antonio, Texas, Slender Lady is just one of many companies that specialize in 30-minute circuit training exclusively for ladies. And wanting to work with women at all fitness levels, Lerch says she “became excited about offering a safe, welcoming program that provided results.”

According to James Ryan, vice president of operations for Expressfit for Women in Fort Eire, Ontario, the secret to attracting women to exercise when they have never been active in their lives boils down to one key goal – outstanding customer service. “Everything we do revolves around our members. Once we have the deconditioned market’s trust, we don’t want to jeopardize it.”

Expressfit has opened 23 clubs in two years and Ryan says, “We want to make sure everyone who owns an Expressfit prioritizes the needs of every woman who walks through the door. We have no intention of just letting anyone open a club if their goal is not in line with our philosophy. We want to portray an image that is very real and hands-on with a tremendous amount of support.” Curves has a similar approach and Gary Heavin says, “We are 100 percent dedicated to offering a product that motivates and helps women attain a healthier lifestyle.”

“I think the hour class as a concept is on its way out. Thirty minutes just seems so much easier to swallow,” say *IDEA* spokesperson Jay Blahnik,.

IDEA Health & Fitness Association is the world’s leading membership organization of health and fitness professionals, with more than 19,000 members in more than 80 countries. Since 1982, *IDEA* has provided health and fitness professionals pertinent information, educational opportunities, career development programs and industry leadership while helping them enhance the quality of life worldwide through safe, effective fitness and lifestyle programs. For more information on *IDEA* events, publications, educational products, member services or other activities, visit the *IDEA* Web site at www.IDEAfit.com.

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