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IDEA Health & Fitness Association Announces Results of 2004 Program & Equipment Survey, Latest Exercise and Equipment Trends Identified

Ninth Annual Survey Reveals Strong Growth in Pilates and Yoga Fusion, Outdoor Boot Camps, Small-Group Training, Core Conditioning, Resistance and Balance Equipment

San Diego – October 4, 2004 – IDEA Health & Fitness Association, the leading membership organization of health and fitness professionals worldwide with nearly 20,000 members in more than 80 countries, has released the results of its 2004 IDEA Fitness Programs & Equipment Survey, revealing increased adoption of diversified personal training programs while reinforcing increased use of small equipment, such as resistance tubing, stability balls and balance boards.

The ninth annual survey polled IDEA business and program directors across North America, representing a cross-section of large and small health clubs, personal training gyms, specialty studios, college campuses, corporate and hospital fitness centers as well as park and recreation programs. This year's survey data disclosed an increase in the number of facilities in small towns and suburban locations that provide a variety of equipment and programs tailored for beginner, intermediate and advanced clientele. Regardless of location, IDEA members report 71 percent retention of their clients/members for one year or more.

According to Kathie Davis, executive director and co-founder of IDEA Health & Fitness Association, this annual survey provides a valuable barometer of the most effective programs and equipment used nationwide. "The annual IDEA Fitness Programs & Equipment Survey pinpoints rising trends and creative ideas employed by fitness professionals nationwide to help people incorporate regular exercise into their daily lives," she said. "As part of IDEA's ongoing mission to 'Inspire the World to Fitness,' it's critical that we take a leadership role in collecting important data on programs and equipment so we can offer useful insight and hands-on perspective on the driving forces in the ever-changing fitness industry."

Among the most noteworthy programming trends uncovered during this year's survey are:

- Enhanced mind-body programs that combine yoga and Pilates with one another or with strength training. According to those surveyed, personal training is the ideal complement to these mind-body activities;
- Partner training involving two clients is also on the rise for 65 percent of those polled. Small group activities that may include 3-5 people with a personal trainer or small classes of 8 or fewer are more common to improve social interaction, reduce customer costs and boost training efficiency;

- Nutrition assessment and coaching is now offered by more than half of the survey's respondents in contrast to about a third who offer formal weight management classes. Overall, formal weight management training has been on a downward trend, dropping 32 percentage points since 1998;
- Boot camps and outdoor exercise is an expanding trend, even though the number of classes is limited;
- Shorter class duration is also becoming more popular with 35% of respondents offering 45-minute classes; and
- Basic aerobics classes remain stable overall, despite a continuing focus on varied programs tailored for special populations and individuals with specific requirements. This includes kids, seniors and those with post-rehabilitation as well as pre- and post-natal training needs.

On the equipment side, a variety of noteworthy trends also emerged, including:

- Strength and cardio equipment remain the underlying exercise machines of choice for most fitness professionals;
- Elliptical trainers have surpassed stair climbers in popularity and are now offered by 70 percent of respondents;
- The use of balance equipment, which was surveyed for the first time, is growing at a fast pace with BOSU® Balance Trainer, discs, wobble boards and balance boards employed by over half of the participants; and
- Small equipment, including stability and balance equipment, continues to gain popularity, most likely powered by the ongoing emphasis on core conditioning and balance training.

"By tracking the trends in exercise, community programs and equipment, IDEA enables business managers and personal trainers to compare their offerings with others objectively while discovering new areas they should enter," said Patricia Ryan, IDEA vice president of education development. "Our annual survey also gives manufacturers the opportunity to see how well their products are meeting the needs of the industry."

IDEA members can request the full 2004 IDEA Fitness Programs & Equipment Survey for a nominal fee by calling 1.800.999.4332, ext 7.

About IDEA Health & Fitness Association

IDEA Health & Fitness Association is the world's leading membership organization of health and fitness professionals, with nearly 20,000 members in more than 80 countries. Since 1982, IDEA has provided health and fitness professionals with 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 www.idealife.com.

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