



MIND YOUR PROFIT

Expanding opportunities for mind-body profit centers **By Sandy Gardner**

The mindful movement revolution has dawned upon the world of fitness. Mind-body exercise has proven itself to be a recession-proof, multi-billion dollar industry with Pilates and yoga alone accounting for \$7 billion annually, according to a 2013 study from IBISWorld. Over the span of a decade, the number of people practicing Pilates has more than tripled and the number of yogis has quintupled across North America. Newer forms of mind-body exercise are continually entering the market and gaining rapid adoption.

Newer practices such as fascial fitness, bio-mechanics of movement, functional fitness and core-integrated bodyweight training are incorporating the mind-body connection. Even popular fitness trends like barre workouts are adding a mindful element to their programming.

With explosive, yet steady growth, is your fitness facility prepared to capitalize on this segment of exercise enthusiasts? Adding mind-body programming to an existing gym or studio is an inexpensive way to increase revenue, strengthen member retention, attract new clients and provide new training opportunities for your staff.

MIND-BODY EXERCISE AS AN ADDED REVENUE STREAM

Club managers and owners who haven't considered adding or expanding mind-body program offerings are missing out on this lucrative trend. The continued growth of boutique fitness facilities across North America provides exercisers with greater options on where to invest their fitness dollars. Keep your clients in your facility instead of sending them to specialized studios to get the programming they're looking for.

As the number of mind-body exercisers increases, so does the demand for private, semi-private and group training. For example, a Pilates studio offering private and small group Reformer training can generate additional revenue ranging from \$70,000 to \$215,000 annually, depending on the class capacity and frequency of training offered. Adding 10 group sessions with just four participants to your weekly class schedule can net an additional \$6,000 per month.

MINDFUL MOVEMENT FOR EVERY EXERCISER

Mind-body exercise used to be perceived as reserved for the more 'zen' set of exercisers.

However, as the range of mindful movement programming continues to grow so does its client base. From school-level athletes looking to improve their performance to older clients who want to regain lost mobility, people are seeking this type of modality to lead healthier, more active and mindful lives.

Growing populations that look toward mind-body exercise to achieve their health and fitness goals include:

- ▶ **Elite exercisers** – From NFL and NHL athletes to mud runners to recreation league players, exercisers everywhere are taking note that mindful movement has the ability to significantly improve their game, on and off of the playing field.
- ▶ **New gym-goers** – Those who are just being introduced or reintroduced to fitness should begin with mild to moderate workouts. Mind-body exercise is challenging, though gentle, and can often be far less intimidating than classes that use heavy weights or utilize a lot of choreography.
- ▶ **Injured/post-rehabilitation** – Injured or post-rehab clients typically want to restore function and return to normal, daily activities and previous levels of functionality.
- ▶ **Pre/post-natal** – Many pre-natal clients engage in an active pregnancy to limit maternal weight gain, aid in prevention of gestational diabetes and improve psychological well-being whereas post-natal clients often want to redevelop the strength of the pelvic floor.
- ▶ **Overweight/obese** – This category tends to experience compromised joints as a result of additional stress in addition to a limited range of motion. As this demographic continues to grow so will the demand for suitable exercise options.
- ▶ **Active aging** – With a tendency to have higher levels of disposable income, members of this demographic often seek out low-impact, functional, private one-on-one training that makes day-to-day activities easier.

By simply integrating mindful movement into your studio, prospective clients who may have otherwise overlooked your facility now have a new reason to consider becoming a member or taking classes. The principles of Pilates and other mind-body programs have found their way into mainstream fitness with the overarching ideology of an intelligent and mindful approach to all forms of exercise.

INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXISTING STAFF

Positive client experiences begin with a happy front-line staff of personal trainers and group fitness instructors. Consider equipping your existing, quality personnel with mind-body training. For those not yet ready to complete a full certification, other options are also available. Many informative and effective workshops take one to two days to complete, increasing their skill set and getting programs up-and-running, sooner rather than later. Quality training can bring your instructors a whole new level of excellence while strengthening retention since they know that their employer sees value in investing in them.

LIMITED SPACE, UNLIMITED INCOME POTENTIAL

You're not alone if you think your club doesn't have enough space. Many fitness facilities feel that space issues are one of the biggest obstacles when determining whether to incorporate mind-body programming. Even with just 200 square feet, a new mindful movement studio can be established right in your club.

- ▶ **200 square feet:** With just 200 square feet, accommodate one-on-one or semi-private training taking advantage of mat-based programming that

incorporates space-saving equipment and accessories.

- ▶ **400 square feet:** More space equals more revenue. Introduce small group Pilates Reformer training by comfortably fitting four or five Reformers in this compact zone. Alternatively, there are smaller yet still effective pieces of equipment available as well.
- ▶ **600 square feet:** Build a complete and in-demand studio without having to share the space with other programs.

Starting off with a smaller space and building it as revenues increase is a practical solution for many facilities. Eventually expanding to group training will appeal to a wider audience as it's an economical way to participate in mindful movement. Even adding mat-based programming to your club's schedule in an already-existing space has the opportunity to drive additional profits.

Once you find the perfect space to implement your in-house mind-body exercise studio, remain realistic about the amount of equipment that you can fit in the area. Choose equipment that is versatile and offers maximum programming to keep your mind-body program fresh, challenging, and adaptable to your changing members' requests. Smaller spaces will flourish with class programming based around mat work or small pieces of

equipment. Larger spaces can accommodate larger pieces of equipment such as Reformers and Cadillac Trapeze Tables and, of course, a higher number of class participants.

EXPLORE WORKING WITH A SOLUTIONS-BASED PROVIDER

Working with the right supplier to help you plan your mind-body programming is key to your success. Whether you have a permanent or a multi-purpose space, the right consultants will help ensure you make the best decisions for your facility to increase profits and maintain a consistent clientele for years to come.

With a solid selection of equipment and accessories, qualified instructors and even a limited amount of space, any fitness facility has the potential to attract and retain members and capitalize on the \$7 billion mindful movement industry as it continues to grow and become a part of everyone's fitness regimen. ■



Sandy Gardner, vice president of sales and customer service at Merrithew Health & Fitness, works with clubs and studio owners to launch in-club mind-body exercise programs. Design your own studio at www.merrithew.com

using the interactive Studio Planner.

MIND/BODY CERTIFICATION AND PRODUCT RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

Become a Mind Body Specialist

Earning an ACE Mind Body Specialty Certification will help you deliver holistic wellness programs based on movements that improve posture, build strength and reduce stress. With the number of yoga and Pilates participants soaring to 22.9 million in the past decade, specializing in mind body exercise can help you cater to the growing number of people searching for a more balanced approach to health and wellness. Become an expert in yoga and Pilates to improve posture, reduce stress, strengthen the core, build muscle and fuel an internal connection with one's self. To learn more about becoming an ACE Mind Body Specialist, contact:

American Council on Exercise
888.825.3636
www.ACEfitness.org



Introducing Beth Shaw's YOGALEAN

Finally there is a fitness plan that lets you forget about diets and all of that guilt! In her new book, *YOGALEAN: Poses and Recipes to Promote Weight Loss and Vitality-for Life*, international yoga and fitness expert Beth Shaw shows readers how to get in shape by developing what she calls *Lean Consciousness*. The ultimate path to weight loss, weight management and whole-life wellness, *Lean Consciousness* is designed to take into account every reader's size and shape, creating a program that fits with their personal goals. *YOGALEAN* goes on sale September 2. Visit www.yogafit.com/yogalean and preorder a copy today, and receive 25% off upcoming YogaFit Mind Body Fitness Conferences!

YogaFit Training Systems Worldwide
310.205.0430
www.yogafit.com/yogalean

