



# What You Need to Know to Work in **Corporate Fitness**

By **Abena Edugyan**

**W**e all know that people who are physically active tend to live longer, healthier lives. As fitness professionals, our goal is to encourage people to become more physically active, and that work tends to be concentrated within commercial gyms and recreation centres. However, in 2015, only 5.61 million Canadians – or 15.7% of the

population – were members of a health and fitness club<sup>1</sup>. If we want to help people live healthier lives, but cannot engage with them in the settings within which we traditionally work, why not focus our efforts where people spend most of their time?

## **Corporate Fitness and Wellness**

Working in corporate fitness and wellness can take many forms. A company may hire you directly to provide services and

programs exclusively to their employees. Or you may be hired on by a fitness consulting company and be tasked with engaging the employees of many companies from within one facility.

The nature of the work also varies. Some corporate fitness and wellness programs focus solely on bringing physical activity into the workplace in the form of personal training and group fitness classes, while other programs may be broader and cover an



health is also a huge plus. The key determinants of health include social support networks, working conditions, culture, personal health practices, and coping skills – all of which are known to influence health and health behaviours<sup>2</sup>.

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### Opportunities

One of the easiest ways to enter the field is as a contracted group exercise instructor or Fitness Instructor Specialist (FIS). Many corporate sites offer paid or free fitness classes to their members, and fun, educated fitness instructors can easily build up a dedicated following within a corporate facility. Salaried positions (either full-time or part-time) may be slightly more challenging to find and are typically reserved for managers, certified personal trainers or exercise physiologists.

Some facilities are like commercial gyms in that fitness professionals in these salaried positions are responsible for selling services and programs, such as personal training. Other companies may pay for or subsidize program costs for their employees, allowing managers and trainers to focus solely on marketing, delivering, and evaluating effective programming.

Working in corporate fitness or wellness is a unique alternative to commercial gyms and recreation centres. Though finding a position can be challenging, it is well worth taking the effort to break into this rewarding field.

Abena Edugyan, M.Sc., is the general manager of a corporate wellness facility in Calgary, Alberta. She has worked in the industry for nine years, dedicating the last five years to fitness and wellness in the corporate environment.

#### References

<sup>1</sup>Statista: The statistics portal. (2015.) Top 10 countries number of members in health & fitness club in 2015 (in millions). Accessed from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/252933/leading-markets-of-the-health-club-industry-worldwide-by-number-of-members/>

<sup>2</sup>Public Health Agency of Canada. (2011.) What determines health? Accessed from <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/determinants/index-eng.php>

entire spectrum of wellness. In these cases, you may also educate employees on topics such as nutrition and mental and social health, in addition to providing physical activity programming.

### Desired Education and Skills

At a minimum, you need to hold a fitness certification, like the Personal Training Specialist (PTS), to be considered for a position in corporate fitness and wellness. A diploma or degree in kinesiology or a related field is also desirable. However, it takes more than knowing about physiology and anatomy to thrive in this environment. A successful corporate fitness professional must be a creative problem-solver, an effective educator and be articulate and comfortable speaking in front of groups of people.

Having a basic understanding of population health and the key determinants of



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