

FINDING A GROUP FITNESS INSTRUCTOR

Aerobics or fitness classes are a fun and social way to fit physical activity into your schedule. When selecting a class (i.e. STEP aerobics, aquatic fitness classes), keep in mind the following:

Instructor Certification

Is the instructor certified and by what organization?

- The following is a list of well respected organizations:
 - Canadian certifications - CanFitPro Fitness Instructor Specialist, OFC, YMCA/YWCA
 - U.S. certifications - IDEA, ACE, AFAA
 - Aquatic fitness classes - SPEEDO or Canadian Aquatic Leaders Alliance (CALA)

Class Atmosphere

- Is the atmosphere of the class welcoming?
- Is the instructor approachable (i.e. can you ask questions)?
- Do you feel safe?

Instructor Teaching Style

- Does the instructor clearly explain what he/she is doing?
- Does the instructor emphasize the health benefits of being active?
- Does the instructor have fun?

Safety and Intensity

- Does the instructor explain how important it is for everyone to monitor their intensity or how hard they are working (i.e. perceived exertion or measuring heart rate)?
- Does the instructor make sure the area is safe (i.e. floor dry, equipment not in the way)?
- Does the instructor watch the class and provide feedback to people who are having a difficult time?
- Does the instructor include a warm-up and a cool-down?

Class fits your needs

- Does the instructor give activities for all abilities and fitness levels?
- Does the class include at least 20 minutes of aerobic exercises (i.e. exercises that make your heart beat faster) as well as strength (i.e. for muscles) and flexibility (i.e. stretching) exercises?

Resources:

- *American College of Exercise (ACE) - How to Choose the Right Group Fitness Instructor (Fit Fact) - www.acefitness.org*