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THE LANGLEY FITNESS CENTER

NASA Langley Research Center

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P. 5

NASA Langley recognizes the importance of healthy employees by committing itself to offering a complete Fitness Program. The scope of the program focuses on promoting overall health and wellness in an effort to reduce the risks of illness and disease and to increase productivity. This is accomplished through a comprehensive Health and Fitness Program offered to all NASA employees.

The Langley Fitness Center is a 4,000-square foot facility that houses a full line of Cybex Eagle strength equipment, Hydrfitness training equipment, Stairmasters, Schwinn Airdynes, rowing machines, treadmills, and free weights. The facility is open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, and is staffed by an Exercise Physiologist, a full-time assistant, and a part-time assistant.

Entry into the program is required prior to participation in the facility. Each member must fill out an application and be medically cleared by our staff physician. Requirements include a physical examination within the past year and a treadmill test within the past three years. These are all conducted at the Clinic. A health and wellness assessment is then completed which evaluates the individual's body fat, strength and flexibility, blood lipid levels, aerobic fitness level, and nutritional status, if desired. A personalized exercise prescription is written for each employee incorporating their individual needs and goals.

Two equipment instructions are also completed as part of the introduction to the Center. This includes the proper use and form used on the apparatus and recommended stretching and abdominal exercises. The prescription is reviewed and the log-in computer is also explained. The Fitness Center utilizes a log-in/log-out computer software program which aids in the daily data collecting for management purposes. Each member must log in upon entering the facility. When an individual has completed his/her workout they must log out and input what activities they completed while in the facility. Monthly progress reports are printed for each member which provides them with feedback on their time spent exercising, the activities they performed, and the calories they expended. Various other management reports are also generated for facility usage and active/non-active members. Since the inception of the Langley Fitness Center,

an estimated 1,400 members have been processed with an average monthly active rate of 480 participants. This count represents only the number of members who entered the facility in a one-month period.

Follow-up evaluations are also conducted after six months and one year from entering the program to give the members feedback and encourage adherence. Other motivating tools are incorporated into the program to help make exercise more challenging and fun. These tools range from the simple logging sheets for both aerobic exercise and strength training to incentive games and wellness programs.

The promotional programs can be grouped into three areas: (1) incentive games for exercise adherence; (2) ongoing promotional programs for the overall health and fitness program; and (3) yearly sponsored programs for the Langley Fitness Center. The following list describes the main program:

Exercise Incentive Games

Superbowl FITball: This game is run every January to coincide with the Superbowl. Each participant must perform aerobic exercise for a specified amount of time to achieve a block on the football pool or grid. Due to its popularity, there is a five square limit per person. The two teams in the Superbowl are represented on the horizontal and vertical axis and the winners are determined by the actual score of the Superbowl. Winners for the first half, second half, and final game score receive a Superbowl team t-shirt.

Climb the Flights of Liberty: This game was held during the month of May for National Fitness Month. The flights of stairs in the Statue of Liberty represented different exercise tasks. Participants moved up the statue with individual flags. The goal was to reach the top and receive an award.

Trip to Key West: A travel game using a map from NASA Langley to Key West. Miles were converted to a logical and manageable goal. Participants had to climb, walk, run, or jog and row their way to Key West, depending on the terrain. Everyone who reached the Keys won, and a party was held at the end of the game to announce the three top winners.

LFC Olympics: The Langley Fitness Center had a mini-Olympics while the Summer Olympics were taking place. Participants could enter one or all ten categories. Five were strength-related and five were aerobic-related. Categories like the broad jump, pull-ups, and dips were the most fun for the participants to challenge each other. Prizes and ribbons were given to the first, second, and third place winners.

TRYathlon: For a six-week period, members were able to challenge themselves in a tryathlon equivalent to a half Ironman. The swimming section was represented by rowing, and the biking and running were conducted either inside or outside.

12 Days of Fitness: This holiday game is held in December for 12 days prior to Christmas. Participants must complete at least 10 days of the specified activities to receive a prize. The past year, prizes were five sets of movie passes.

Promotional Programs

Employee of the Month: New members are evaluated upon entering the program and then re-evaluated in six months and again in one year. Employees who have shown improvement are recognized along with the individual who shows the most improvement in various health and fitness parameters.

Cardiac Education: This is a promotional and educational class related to an existing cardiac rehab class which runs three times a week before work. The last Friday of each month there is a seminar on either a nutrition or exercise topic, and refreshments are served. Some of the previous topics have been Eating Out, the Effects of Exercise on the Heart, Medications and Your Body's Reactions, the 1990's Nutrition Quiz, Laughing Your Way to Health, and Emergency Precautions for Cardiac Care.

Brown Bag Seminars: These seminars are held once a month in the cafeteria and are open to all employees. The topics relate to all wellness issues such as Toxins of Summer; Safe and Sane Exercise; Sunburn, Tanning and the Elements; Aging Facts and Fancy; Preventing and Controlling Diabetes; Low Fat Diets for Painless Weight Loss; Hearing Impairment; etc.

Free-Weight Spotlights: These are 15- to 20-minute seminars that take place on the Fitness Center floor covering free weight exercises. Proper spotting, form, and new exercises are highlighted. These are run periodically throughout the year.

Health for Life: This is a 12-week intense weight loss program specifically designed for the obese individual. This program entails twice-a-week exercise classes and once-a-week seminars covering issues of nutrition, health, and exercise. The class strives for individualization, so the classes are limited to 20 people. Pre- and post-data are taken for analysis and measurement. The program incorporates its own incentive games and programs to keep the participants reaching for their goals.

Weight Loss: The weight loss program was designed for anyone wanting to lose weight. Emphasis is on a health lifestyle versus a diet which may or may not work. Seminars on nutrition and exercise are held once a week for 8 weeks, and the participants are encouraged to participate in our existing exercise programs. A limited amount of pre- and post-tests are taken in comparison to the Health for Life Program. The number of participants per class is limited only by the size of the meeting room (50).

Yearly LFC Programs

Cardiovascular Rehabilitation: This class is specialized for post-cardiac patients and high-risk patients who are referred to us by the Clinic physician. Special clearance must also be made by the patient's cardiologist as to specific medications and recommended exercise intensity. This class is held three days a week from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.

Aerobics Classes: Aerobics classes are held free of charge to all employees at Langley. The classes are held at 6:15 to 7:15 a.m. and 11:00 to 11:45 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. An "Absolutely ABS" class is held at 5:00 to 5:30 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays as well. This class highlights the midsection and stretching.

PSA: This is our Presidential Sports Award Program which is open to all employees and runs from March through August.

National Fitness Month: Every year the Fitness Center promotes health and fitness throughout the month of May. Special incentives and games are run within the Center and special events take place on Federal Fitness Day. Some of these include aerobics classes and a Center-wide fun run or walk.

Turkey Trot: This is a two-mile, predict your time, run, walk, or trot held a week before Thanksgiving. Winners receive ribbons or a t-shirt, and turkeys are raffled off after the race at a party held within the Fitness Center.

