

Making the Right Choices for Your Body

by Adam Milligan, EQUIVITA

Often when people who are unfamiliar with EQUIVITA ask me about our fitness services, they also give me advice about how we compare against some personal trainer or fitness facility. They offer guidance about how we should not charge for our fitness

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assessment and just make up the lost time and money by increasing the cost of the initial sale. I know that people offer me their ideas because they are trying to be helpful. I have worked in this industry for 13 years and understand that not charging for a fitness assessment is typical, but I see this method as only in the best interest of the business and not in the best interest of the client. There is also a vast difference between what our assessment provides and a typical fitness assessment. I believe that if your fitness

assessment isn't used to design your exercise program, then you have to question its value, regardless of how you pay for it.

The typical fitness model is to perform a fitness assessment that yields a baseline for those values you hope will change - and then use these numbers to encourage you to sign up for lots of sessions. Next, a standard "balanced" fitness program is implemented, that is, one that includes exercises for every major muscle group. If your body is not unique, then this makes perfect sense. If, however, your body has imbalances in strength and has made adaptations, then this type of plan will only increase the imbalances. See, your body has already found an easier way and it will continue to utilize that way until it is no longer easier. An example of this is found when someone tries to follow a balanced exercise program that includes exercises for the upper back. These muscles pull the shoulder blades toward the spine and an exercise for them would be to simply add resistance against that movement- usually some type of rowing movement. However, if these upper back muscles are weak and not used to being used properly, the body will move the arms slightly during the movement to allow the lats, a muscle lower on the back and side, to do the exercise. This slight change seems minimal, but because the lats also pull the arm in a similar direction as the chest the body will be encouraged to become more rounded at the upper back. This same rounding that is common through our society is especially noticeable in our older population and in some avid weight lifters. Proper positioning during exercise is more important than the amount of exercise. It is paramount to function and to appearance. You cannot create a balanced body without specifically exercising to strengthen the weaker areas. Thus, finding the weaker areas becomes critical.

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Given that most fitness professionals are not trained to find these imbalances, what can you do? Of course, my recommendation is to contact EQUIVITA and sign up for a 5Keys Fitness Assessment. The 5Keys Fitness Assessment originally began as the starting point for transitioning physical therapy patients from rehabilitation to fitness training. Early in my business, I soon realized that many of the people who wanted and came for an assessment were not coming from physical therapy nor referred by a physician and,



in fact, had not had any recent injury. Instead, they had heard about the assessment from someone and thought it would be a good way to start a fitness program. So, I created the Transitional Fitness Assessment from the post-rehabilitation assessment to be able to include all individuals regardless of the current level of fitness and background. The Transitional Fitness Assessment is a great tool for determining the strengths and weaknesses of one's body and necessary in finding the right exercises.

Now, we have enhanced this biomechanics model to include the other aspects of fitness. There are five keys that are necessary for a successful fitness program and to achieve the desired goals, you need to focus on each of these keys. Rather than an all-or-nothing approach, the keys enable an easier way to make the process of fitness fit within your life.

That is not to imply it is easy. Quite simply, fitness is hard. Creating a lifestyle of fitness is contrary to nearly everything the body would prefer to do, but that is only because the body is designed from an environment where physical activity was a necessity and not an option. Now that activity is mostly an option the body's methods seem to be working against us. Accepting that your body is not fighting you and that it just has different goals is the first step toward understanding how you can make a real difference in your life.

There is no question that simple statements like "To lose fat you just need more calories out than in" are true. What is not so simple and makes fitness hard is trying to figure the equation. Your body has an amazing ability to manipulate the equation to have it balance in the direction it wants. From increasing the amount of calories it will absorb from food, to changing the angle of an exercise to stress joints more and allow the muscles to rest, your body is working to achieve its goals of burning fewer calories and less work.

For another exercise example think about how your elbows want to come forward during a dumbbell curl. Resistance is decreased on the muscle and stress increased to the elbow.

Fighting the body for each little step is just a long hard road that often leads to frustration. Understanding your body gives you the insight into creating the environment to allow the body to change. From focusing your exercise the right way for you to trigger your body's responses to providing adequate recovery time for your body's recuperation, the 5Keys Fitness model gives you the control of how your body will respond.

The 5Keys Fitness Assessment provides you with the information about your body to make the choices that are right for you. This education will help you achieve long lasting changes in your body and in your life. While there will be many short-term goals and achievements along the way, the 5Keys process is the path to creating your own lifestyle of fitness and dynamic life balance.

If you are interested in learning how to take control of your life and fitness related goals, contact Adam Milligan at amilligan@equivita.com or call 614.298.8781. More information is available at www.equivita.com.

