**How to Bring Fitness Classes to Your Company: Q&A with Crysta Chalupa**

One of the most common excuses for skipping the gym is, “I don’t have the time.” We know how crazy busy most full-time employees are. And we’ll admit, [finding time to exercise](https://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/bid/355089/5-simple-hacks-to-make-time-for-exercise-in-your-schedule-0) during the workday can be difficult! One of the ways we help our employees here at TotalWellness find more time for exercise is by offering free, on-site fitness classes.

Our Wellness Specialist, Crysta, started teaching fitness classes to her fellow colleagues this July (2018), and we’ve seen some major improvements since then! We would like to share our experience – along with some tips – about our on-site fitness classes. We hope our interview with Crysta inspires some other employers to try out on-site fitness classes of their own!

**Tell us a bit about your role at TotalWellness.**

I am the Wellness Specialist here at TotalWellness. I manage the TotalWellness on-site wellness program, as well as our online wellness portal, Beata, for both TotalWellness and other companies who use our wellness portal services. I manage the portal content and implementation, and also look for new ways to engage as many employees as possible by finding different avenues of health and wellness.

**When did you first start teaching fitness classes?**

I have been a Certified Group Exercise Instructor since April of 2011. I started teaching fitness classes at TotalWellness in July of 2018.

**How does someone become a fitness instructor?**

In order to become a fitness instructor, you have to take a test to get certified and re-certify every few years to stay current. There are also Continuing Education Units I have to collect to be able to re-certify every two years.

**What inspired you to start fitness classes at TotalWellness?**

I saw an opportunity for fitness education and implementation with our team. I noticed the only of handful of employees were using the gym and exercise equipment each day, and I wanted to increase that number. I felt that by teaching classes I would get more people comfortable with using weights and gym equipment, as well as just more comfortable with exercise in general – not only at TotalWellness but on their own time or at their own gyms as well.

Here at TotalWellness, we have an excellent wellness perk where we offer full-time employees a paid, 30-minute workout break per eight-hour shift to use our on-site gym. I felt like it was extremely underutilized. It’s a perk that I highly value and I wanted more employees to take advantage of!

**How did you decide which fitness classes to teach at TotalWellness?**

When I first looked into teaching classes at TotalWellness, I emailed the company to see how many employees would be interested. I also asked them to tell me what kind of classes they would be interested in. This program is for the employees, so I wanted them to be able to participate in classes that they enjoy.

From there, I decided what I would be able to teach based on what I was licensed to teach and the space we have available in our office. It’s also important to look at the demographic of participants. We have a variety of ages and fitness levels here, so I offer both low and high impact cardio classes and beginner to advanced strength training options.

**How do you think fitness classes have impacted the employees at TotalWellness?**

I think our fitness classes have had a very positive impact at TotalWellness. More people are using the gym not only during class time, but on their own time as well. It seems like there are more individuals who are comfortable exercising with a group and on their own, which was my ultimate goal. Fitness classes also provide a small break away from our desks to decompress and refresh during the workday – which is extremely important.

**How did you overcome the challenges of setting up fitness classes at a small company?**

Having a small company means smaller class sizes and generally a small turnout. It’s important know not to take it personally when only a few people show up because there’s not that many available to begin with.

It’s also important to be realistic about class size in relation to the space available at a small office. I cap the classes off at a certain number of participants depending on the space available and type of exercises (some workouts need more room than others!). If the classes don’t require a lot of actual equipment and we can use body weight exercises, we have more options outside of the smaller gym space.

For example, we use a small, mostly unused center of our office to host bigger-sized fitness classes. This type of space is perfect for classes centered on body weight exercises. We bring in exercise mats and any light equipment (weights, jump ropes, etc.) needed. It works just as well as a gym!

**How did you start promoting fitness classes around the company?**

I used all avenues I could! I sent out emails, posted physical copies of the fitness calendar around our building, and had face-to-face conversations with colleagues to discuss the classes. I also posted the current and upcoming monthly fitness calendar on our wellness portal and worked with our marketing department to have them insert the current week’s classes into the weekly newsletter.

**How do people sign up for classes?**

We have an online registration system. Having a small space means sometimes only being able to accommodate a handful of employees. The registration link is sent out in the weekly newsletter and is posted on the wellness portal for employees to access at any time. Class registration opens 7 to 10 days ahead of time and displays the class type, length, and intensity level.  Once the class is full, the registration closes and people are able to put themselves on a waiting list in the event of cancellations.

**What’s your favorite part about teaching fitness classes?**

My favorite part of teaching fitness classes is being able to make someone’s day better. I started teaching because I knew how much better I felt after completing a fitness class and wanted to help others feel the same way. Exercising is so important for the body and mind, and I believe it contributes a lot to overall happiness.

**What advice do you have for other companies that want to start on-site fitness classes?**

Talk to your employees and see what type of classes and class times they’d be interested in. Offer classes during the lunch hour or towards the end of the day so that employees feel they can participate without having to spend the rest of the day tired and sweaty.

Find an instructor who is passionate about health and wellness and also able to work with the space you’ve got. Being creative in a smaller fitness environment is important.

It’s also not a bad idea to offer paid workout time like we have here at TotalWellness. A major struggle with working out is finding the time to exercise with a busy work schedule. Being able to leave the office for the day already having my workout completed is something I am very grateful for and wish that more employees at other companies got to experience.

We are incredibly thankful to have [teammates](https://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/the-story-of-one-employee-whos-crushing-the-wellness-game) like Crysta on our team to help make work a happier and healthier place. If you have any other questions about the logistics of our on-site employee fitness classes or want any inspiration, feel free to leave a comment below!