



A Perfect Fit

Holly Kouvo helps her client get a jump start on fitness.

Client: Thom

Personal Trainer: Holly Kouvo, owner of Fitting Fitness In™

Location: Stow, Massachusetts

Walking It Off. At age 63, Thom was overweight and at risk for developing weight-related health complications. Although he led a reasonably active life, his regular practice of biking, walking, yard work and competitive soccer didn't seem to offer an effective solution for reducing his cholesterol. Recognizing the need for professional guidance, Thom turned to Fitting Fitness In—a business that specializes in helping others find “innovative ways to fit exercise into their daily lives.”

Thom expressed his weight and cholesterol concerns, but was not yet ready to make the leap and commit to regular exercise sessions. Owner and personal trainer Holly Kouvo suggested he purchase a pedometer and attempt to take 10,000 steps a day. Thom complied, lost some weight and returned to Fitting Fitness In 12 months later.

Jump Start. One of the specialties available at Fitting Fitness In is the “Jump

Start to Fitness” program, which is designed to acclimate clients to health and fitness. “In the ‘Jump Start to Fitness’ class, we start off with measurements of the chest, waist, hips, upper arm, thigh and calf,” says Kouvo. Weight, body mass index and body fat percentage are also documented at the beginning and end of the program. She keeps the 4-week program small, with a maximum of eight participants, to encourage a more personal connection. “I find that is the best class size for people to work with each other and form some common bonds.”

Each client receives a portion control dish, a meal planner calendar and guidance on healthy food choices. “In each class clients show their exercise and food logs to me, and we discuss any changes they should make in their diet and how they can fit the exercise in,” states Kouvo. “Then we exercise for 45 minutes. The exercise program usually consists of interval training, with an additional 200 abdominal exercises before 5 minutes of cool-down stretching.”

Appealing to the Individual. Kouvo concedes that a major struggle in her work involves deriving creative methods to inspire client adherence. Although participants work in a group setting, she delves into their day-to-day lives to determine what makes them tick. “Work schedule and the type of work the client does need to be taken into account,” she advises. “Thom is a certified public accountant and works at his desk all day long. To use the pedometer, he had to get up and walk each day to reach his goal of 10,000 steps. He is also a numbers per-

son, so the pedometer was a great motivating tool for him.” Kouvo appealed to Thom's goal-oriented nature and watched with great pride as he continued to make strides toward his goals.

Many clients are not as steadfast as Thom, Kouvo warns, which is why she consistently rearranges her approach on a case-by-case basis. “You have to find out about clients' lifestyles to see what will get them motivated. It may be that they want to be able to play with their children and grandchildren. You have to take the time to talk to them and find out the best way to motivate them.”

Star Student. “One of the positive surprises along the way was that Thom actually followed everything I said and got the results I said he would get,” she recalls. “Thom more than accomplished his goal and knows how to eat for a lifetime, as well as how to exercise to stay fit.” During the 4-week program, Thom dopped 10 pounds and 7 inches. “Since then, he has lost a total of 30 pounds.”

“Working with a trainer was new territory for me,” Thom says. “I was a bit apprehensive at the start because I had no idea what to expect and how rigorous the work might be.” Thom found Kouvo's approach “workable” and untimidating, which helped pave the way for his successes. “I have gone past my goal and continue to be focused on eating right and getting the right exercise.” ■

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Calling All Trainers

Do you have a client who has overcome the odds to achieve new heights in health and fitness? Send your story to rhalvorson@ideafit.com and you and your client may be featured in an upcoming issue of *IDEA Fitness Journal*.