

Fitness Franchise

Contributed by Nichole

Nearly everyone at one time or another has made an effort to "get in shape". This usually involves either home exercise programs, sometimes coupled with walking or swimming, or joining a total fitness program at a spa or health club. In many communities, wellness centers are operated under the auspices of local or regional hospitals. However, a fitness franchise is a wonderful way to get involved in a business of your own.

The example of Curves, a women's fitness center is but one example of the new wave of fitness franchises springing up all over the country. In 2006, Curves was ranked 3rd on Entrepreneur Magazine's "Top 10" Franchise list. Curves began in 1992 when pre-med student Gary Heavin began operating a chain of fitness centers based out of Houston, Texas. The business failed, but Heavin learned from his mistakes and duplicated his strengths and opened Curves for Women. The franchising began in 1995.

For under \$55,000 total investment including the franchise fee, you can be a part of this fast growing chain. This is a business in which owner-operators are common. Over 70% of the units are owner-run. The requirements from the franchisor simply state the owner must be financially stable with business experience recommended.

It seems apparent with the high percentage of owner-operated facilities, that franchisees in this particular fitness franchise are very conscious of their own fitness. This is a franchise which generally doesn't require large staffing, 1-2 employees can run most of the facilities.

Emphasis is placed on Curves fitness franchise being a place where women can feel comfortable exercising. Fitness is still hard work, but by having a place where the machines are those which suit women's abilities and musculature better, Curves has proved to be very successful.

Generally, a fitness franchise will offer a number of workout machines which the customer can use at their own pace and ability level. Fees vary according to the area of the country and the facilities.

One fairly popular concept which is increasingly being used in a fitness franchise is the idea of issuing members a key to the facility so they can exercise at times that are most convenient for them. They are not forced into the 9-5 mold, because they can come at 3 am if that's the time that works best.

A fitness franchise is not a cheap franchise, but is one which perhaps requires less staffing than many, which makes it attractive in an area where the labor force is less than adequate.