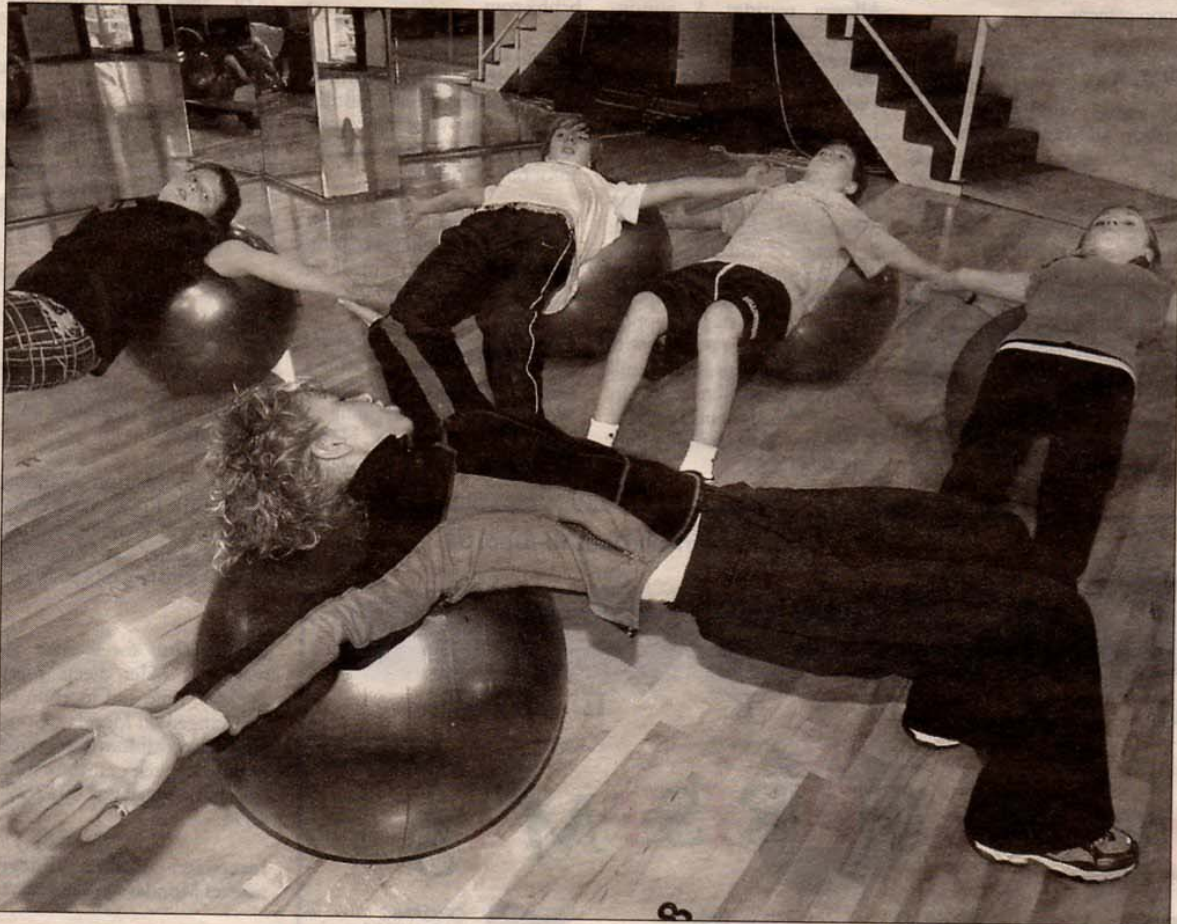


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NORTH SHORE GUIDE TO ACTIVE LIVING



NEWS photo Paul McGrath

PAM Pedlow (second from left) leads a group of four youths through a session of her newly launched Youth Conditioning program offered Thursday afternoons after school at Fitness World in North Vancouver.

Be on the ball with health

A North Shore fitness guru is getting local youth in shape

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PAM Pedlow's goal in the lead up to the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games is to help youth on the North Shore lead by "fit example," she says.

Pedlow, a North Shore resident and the founder of Fitness, Function and Performance Conditioning has been in the fitness industry in a number of different capacities from personal training to group exercise for the last 28 years. In partnership with the Fitness World located at 1989 Marine Drive in North Vancouver, Ped-

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New session starting

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low, who is a strength and conditioning coach, has just launched a youth conditioning program that offers after school fitness classes to children ages 13 to 18.

"I want to make a difference," says Pedlow. "I want to impact somebody's life positively and I think this can make a difference with kids. They'll feel better about themselves, they'll start to look better, they'll move better."

Pedlow has a bachelor's degree in exercise science and six years ago she received a master's degree in sports medicine from the University of British Columbia. During her master's work, she focused on post-rehab conditioning and developed a program to bridge the gap between physiotherapy and people getting back into fitness clubs. While she was dealing mostly with adults, often conversations would turn to discussions about their children and their respective fitness issues.

"I thought 'gee you know, it's not just adults, I never thought of the kids,'" she says.

Pedlow said this realization influenced a change in her perspective regarding where she wanted to take her fitness career. Since her daughter is a dancer, she first started working in a dance school and developed a core conditioning program for its students.

"I realized that I absolutely love training kids," she said. "They're so much fun."

What Pedlow loves about working with teenagers is the enjoyment both she and they take away from the sessions, as well as how receptive they are to learning, she says.

From there Pedlow began working in various high schools doing sport conditioning. Now, approximately 75 per cent of Pedlow's clientele are developing teens, she says.

"My whole goal is to teach kids to move properly to instill that it's a life long thing so when they learn how to do a squat they do it properly so they're not going to be injured," she said.

Another goal of Pedlow's is to get local kids fit now, so that when the world turns its eyes on the Lower Mainland for the Vancouver 2010 Olym-

pic and Paralympic Games, the North Shore can ideally lead by example.

To work toward her goal and take her newfound passion to the next level, this fall Pedlow started working with Fitness World to begin offering her youth conditioning program. Launched in November, the 10-week program is designed for children of all levels of ability from those that are athletic to those with fitness phobias. Classes are held every Thursday at 4:30 p.m. for an hour.

During the sessions Pedlow works with youth on balance, strength, flexibility, agility, core and cardio conditioning. "It's different all the time because kids need different (activities)," says Pedlow. "If it's the same old then they get too familiar with it, they don't put concentration into it."

Pedlow says she's finding more and more that youth are "starving" for programs like this.

"They don't want to go home, they want to find out more all the time," she says.

Pedlow says she especially enjoys working with youth that display signs of low self-esteem due to their current fitness levels and watching their attitudes transform as their training continues and they develop new skills. A big payoff for her is watching someone smile when they're working out after she has worked to instill a positive outlook toward fitness in them.

"To see their eyes light up when they get something, or they just have fun and it's fitness, it's the best feeling in the world," says Pedlow.

Pedlow hopes that later in life the kids she trains will look back on their decision to get fit as a positive decision and realize what a difference it has made in their lives.

While the next youth conditioning program session begins Jan. 11, interested participants can join at any point as fees are prorated. A Fitness World membership is not required. Pedlow plans to continue offering the program, with a new session starting immediately after one ends. She hopes to be able to expand her program to other Fitness World locations, she says.

For more information visit www.ffpc.ca. To register for Pedlow's youth conditioning program, contact Fitness World at 604-986-3487.