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## RE-TWISTING YOUR YOGA PROGRAMMING INTO PROFIT

Yoga can be even more of a profit center for your club. Even if you already offer yoga, it may be time to reassess to see how you can twist yoga into a

greater profit center.

Mind/Body fitness is the trend of the new millennium. You can't pick up a magazine without reading about yoga, meditation, Tai-Chi Chi-Gong. A whole host of other Eastern exercises are slowly creeping their way into mainstream American culture. Everyone is touting the health benefits of these exercises.

**Demographics:** Aging baby boomers that are beginning to feel the effects of running, step aerobics, and one too many repetitions on their joints are turning to a softer, gentler approach to fitness. Yoga gives the opportunity to release stress, work the muscles and clear the minds. A good yoga class is like going to the chiropractor, massage therapist and counselor all in one session.

**Physical benefits for fitness and flexibility:** Yoga gives participants a total body workout, creating length and strength and balance. A good yoga program gives us the ability to develop self-mastery of the body, physical control and greater body awareness which can be an asset in many areas of life.

**Mental benefits for stress management:** A good yoga program gives people the tools to work on stress levels. Stress management means learning how to handle stress by acknowledging that it exists and then letting go of it through movement, breathing and mindfulness. Without this process, members become candidates for a host of stress related conditions: heart attacks, ulcers and migraines.

Attract new guests and members by surveying and advertising. A successful program depends on the number of participants. While you may attract some with posters,

try sending a questionnaire along with their invoices asking:

1. Are you familiar with "body/mind fitness"?
2. Do you know the positive health benefits of yoga, meditation and deep relaxation techniques?
3. Are you satisfied with your current state of body/mind health?
4. Would you like to increase your flexibility, build more strength and learn to manage your stress levels?
5. Would you be interested in attending a special one-day yoga based body/mind workshop/class?
6. What day/time would work best for you, weekend, weekday?

**Spotlight yoga by combining with sport-specific workshops:** Show members how a good stretching program and yoga class can improve golf and tennis games. They'll be hooked. Design creative clinics that address the various muscles used in specific sports. Frequently, people forget or don't make the time to warm up before and stretch after the game. Yoga can be combined with any existing activity in your club. *Yoga for weight training* has been a popular program in many California Clubs

**KIDS Yoga:** Many of us are already aware of the staggering statistics about obesity and inactivity among children. Yoga can counter this by offering physical movement/postures, breathing exercises, and relaxation techniques to help children develop better body awareness, strength, flexibility and coordination.

**SENIOR Yoga:** Over 10,000 people reach the age of 55 each day! Seniors are the fastest growing new members in health and fitness facilities. We must provide programs suitable for those who have been active throughout their lives as well as those finding fitness for the first time. Yoga is a wonderful form of exercise as it honors our aging bodies.

**YOGA FOR CYCLISTS:** While bicycling and indoor stationary cycling are among the best forms of cardiovascular conditioning they often leave the participant with tightness, aches and even pain. A consistent sport related yoga program could alleviate many of these symptoms; including lower back pain, trapezius stress and tight hamstrings and quadriceps.

**Tools to make it work:** Without a good instructor, the program will not get very far. Look for a certified instructor who has some experience. An instructor that has both yoga and fitness knowledge is great. Check credentials carefully. You can find quality instructors through local studios or health clubs.

**Space:** A quiet space is recommended. Important factors include the ability to dim the lights and have adequate heating. A bright cold room is not conducive to deep relaxation and quieting the mind. You may want to light safety candles and burn some incense for the full on body/mind experience.

**Materials:** Yoga mats, fitness mats will do if absolutely necessary. Once the program is under way, the right mats will make a huge difference. Proper yoga mats provide a slight cushion for the body yet enough traction to get a good stretch.

Starting a yoga program is good business. From youth, to seniors, to sports, yoga classes are becoming more popular than aerobic classes. Keep up with the trends and give your members something that's good for the body, mind and your bottom line.

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