

Why Mind/Body: Balance Levels Group Classes?

I have chosen to level my entire group classes (2 people to 25 people) for several reasons and I will attempt to explain why in this handout.

- Safety, Safety, Safety is the first reason and the most important reason. I have seen too many people choose a group class because the time was convenient to their schedule and when they went into the class it was beyond their current skill level or fitness level. These people either stopped exercising or tried to push through the class. The instructor doesn't have time, in a group class, to stop and say "You are about to hurt yourself and this is why."
- Leveling Classes Builds confidence, because you are setting yourself up for success. If you've just recently been on a hiatuses or revived from activity apathy and have recently decided to return to movement, you are more apt to continue if you land in the appropriate level class vs. going to a class that was above your skill level and feeling defeated; just confirming the fact that: "This is why you don't exercise."
- Classes can be built around similar body awareness. Classes can be modeled for the appropriate fitness levels (beginner, intermediate, advanced). This allows the beginner to have a slower, gentler class while they build strength, flexibility and body awareness. This allows the advanced client to have a fast-pace class that doesn't cheat their body and continues taking their challenges to a higher level.
- The word "Beginner" allows a potential client who may be de-conditioned, or has never been in shape, to feel confident in trying a class without judgment, as the rest of the people in a "beginner" class would be at a similar fitness level.
- Leveling classes, so that all participates can be successful motivates and inspires us to movement (rather than discouraging us from movement because we got hurt or it was too hard for us to keep up).
- Our body changes and can improve. If we are in the same class all the time, we begin to de-condition the body (or a plateau is hit) because the instructor needs to teach to the majority, or doesn't know how to advance a class. Levels allow a client to advance as they are mentally and physically ready. If the client has an old injury that pops up, or is feeling stressed out, they could return to a lower level class that they are familiar with until they recover. It also allows out of town guests to pick an appropriate workout during their visit.

- I hear a lot from doctors saying that their clients were injured during exercise and, therefore, are afraid to recommend it. This could be for several different reasons. One, it could be that they attended a class with an instructor that was poorly educated or just wanted the workout to be about “their needs” and not the groups needs. Two, the client could have picked too high a level of class for their fitness level at that given time and maybe there wasn’t an appropriate level class offered. Three, the client could have not had the education or body awareness of how to perform the exercise and needs to either seek private lessons or talk with the group instructor for additional feedback. We are seeing a lot of injuries coming out of group exercise classes. It is time that the instructor, client and facilities build responsible programs that inspire all.
- It is a manageable amount of information to learn given the skill/ fitness level at that time. The levels are set up in logical chunks of information that are easier to remember, adapt into your life and progress with safely.
- If you are new to exercise, yoga, Pilates or whatever and you start out as a beginner and move on, you will learn safe operation of equipment, choreography of exercises and get reviews of exercise execution. You will learn the elements of a standard class that are repetitions, variations and how to modify exercises to best fit your needs. Building confidence, skill and strength.
- How do you know when you are ready to advance? You are familiar with orders, exercise execution, exercise names, you can adequately perform the exercises. Ask your instructor if they think it is time for you to move on and, if not, what do you need to work on?
- As you advance levels in exercise, the exercises get to be more complex, challenging the body more, the pace is faster so more strength and stamina is needed to maintain safety.

It is my wish and passion to inspire everyone to movement. I want every client to feel successful. I don’t want to participate in programs that leave someone sitting in the middle of the exercise room with no idea how to make the exercise work. I don’t want to participate in programs that leave someone thinking they have come as far as they can go or that their body can’t get healthier (even if they spend 2+ hours in the gym) because they don’t understand that they are de-conditioning themselves. I have seen many people hung up in equipment, limping out of classes, and feeling defeated or that their valuable time was wasted.

I am passionate and care about my clients. I build programs for you that will meet you every step of the way, no matter where you begin. Won’t you join me in building responsible programs that make you successful?

I applaud you for making your health important and for taking self-responsibility for your body.