

# Virtual Fitness: Work Out Apart but Together

BY DAYNA STODDART



Every cloud has a silver lining - - -



Stepping out of my comfort zone into the virtual medium and learning how to manoeuvre this technology turned out to be a pleasantly positive experience during these uncertain times.

The virtual medium is very different from teaching group fitness in person as I would normally depend on the participants' body language, facial expressions, etc. to offer cues and feedback during a fitness class. I can honestly admit that initially I was quite nervous to instruct fitness classes in this "unknown" territory. But hearing that other colleagues felt exactly the same way reinforced the fact that I was not alone.

We have been "live" on Zoom Mondays through Thursdays since Monday April 3 and have been running weekly ever since.

Dayna, I just wanted to let you know again how valuable both of us are finding your classes—both for physical and mental health! It's one part of our COVID experience that we'll be sad to see end. My husband participates in all of them—and he doesn't sign up for them at the Recreation Centre. It's not the money but being able to participate anonymously that appeals to him.

I was very surprised and pleased to see the numbers of residents participating. During the months of April and May we had 60+ devices logged into the classes. Many devices had two people participating. In general, the virtual

numbers continue to exceed the in-person numbers we would see at the Recreation Centre. We could not have the same outreach without this new Zoom medium.

Dayna, my wife and I have been following your exercise seminars every day (except Friday) from the beginning. We have enjoyed them and you are doing an excellent job. Will these online sessions continue after the Recreation Centre is open and the virus is gone? We hope so. With 900 households in Ballantrae, online is a better way to serve the community. Thanks.

The Zoom sessions have allowed many residents to continue to exercise remotely as they have relocated north to their cottages for the summer. We even had some residents participating who were in lockdown in other countries.

We have received much positive feedback from the community about how they can get/stay fit from the comfort of their own homes and how their spouses, who would never attend a group exercise class at the Recreation, have now started fitness regimens and are enjoying the classes. Just having the flexibility to join from wherever you are, in the city, north, or at home is appreciated.

Dayna, since we are not in Ballantrae all the time, the Zoom sessions mean that I don't have to miss any, when we are in our condo downtown.

The complimentary classes are consistently scheduled from 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. to keep it simple from day to day. However, on Tuesdays, we offer two classes as we have done in the past.

The variety of classes specifically offer different components of fitness.

Monday's Arthritis Fitness Fusion caters to range of motion exercises for reduced joint stiffness and improved activities of daily living.

Tuesday's Balance and Core Stability (10:15 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.) provides fitness movements and exercises for improved balance, core stability and improved quality of life.

Tuesday's Bfit Class (11 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.) offers

gentle movement that integrates light cardio, strengthening, balance, core work, breathing, stretching and progressive relaxation.

Wednesday's Cardio Mix is geared to heart and brain health by improving your aerobic capacity and endurance during this fun and energizing cardio class.

Thursday's Stretching and Relaxation Class provides full body stretching and guided progressive relaxation for stress relief.

Will virtual classes continue even after this pandemic is over? Probably, but an official decision will be made by the 1202 Board.

