

# Fitness for the Ages

FIFTY PLUS PERSONAL TRAINING TEACHES CLIENTS TO MANAGE THEIR HEALTH

WHEN ANGELA GAGAUF decided to pursue a certification in personal training at 41, she noticed a lack of ... well, personalization. All of the trainers she saw were in their 20s, and programs were much more one-size-fits-all back then. Gagauf knew that trainers in their 20s couldn't understand the challenges of a body in its 40s or 50s, so in 1998, she started 40 Plus Fitness—an in-home personal training business for the over-40 set.

Last April, Gagauf moved her business to Florida and changed the name to Fifty Plus Personal Training, since both she and her clientele are older. Currently, her clients range in age from 66 to 83, but most are in their 70s.

## THE IDEA

With Fifty Plus Personal Training, Gagauf changed her business model slightly so that she could teach a wider array of people how to manage their own health



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and fitness, instead of training the same clients indefinitely. Since most people in the area are retired and the weather is nice, there's no excuse for avoiding exercise once people know what to do.

"The reason I work with baby boomers is because I am one. I understand them," Gagauf says, noting that her clients feel more comfortable working with someone who understands how the body ages first-hand. She believes not only that exercise is the fountain of youth, but also that fitness contributes to one's quality of life in later years.

"To me, exercise truly is medicine," she says, citing clients who have been able to get off high blood pressure and pain medications after working on their strength training and nutrition. People can build muscle well into their 80s (and occasionally 90s), so it's never too late for a lifestyle change.

## THE LAUNCH

Fifty Plus Personal Training became an instant hit, gaining new clients through a combination of word of mouth, community newsletter ads and personal branding. Gagauf is her business' best advertisement—at 61, she looks much younger and fitter than people expect, often prompting strangers to ask her what her secret is.

Her new client base has inspired her to focus on teaching people the healing benefits of exercise and proper nutrition.

"It is never, ever too late. My new client is 83 and he said, 'If I knew I was going to live this long, I would've taken better care of myself.'"

## WHAT'S NEXT

Gagauf believes in incorporating health and fitness into everyday life in as many ways as possible, and she has plenty of plans for the future.

Soon, Fifty Plus Personal Training will branch out to assisted living facilities to help people build muscle memory to get them used to doing specific movements for everyday tasks that become challenging with age, like getting up from chairs and putting things away overhead.

Gagauf is interested in becoming a certified medical exercise specialist at some point, so that she can work with physicians to develop tailored diet and exercise programs for patients newly diagnosed with conditions like diabetes and high cholesterol.

Prior to becoming a personal trainer, Gagauf earned a culinary degree. She hopes to teach occasional healthy cooking classes that will inspire people to eat better—at any age.

—Hillary Richard