

## CHEER's Fitness Program Helps You Meet Goals By Jesse Lanier (CHEER Marketing)

John Clancy is CHEER's resident personal trainer. He spreads his time between CHEER centers: teaching members how to use equipment, meet fitness goals, and work around conditions like arthritis. Clancy says every CHEER member can learn something by stopping in.



During Clancy's hours at CHEER fitness centers, his door is open to listen to clients' fitness goals and help them develop a plan.

Want to lose weight? Clancy can help you figure out the best, safest way to do so. Want to increase your endurance? Clancy can help you understand what exercises to do. Do you need to learn the proper way to use the new equipment at CHEER activity centers? Clancy can teach how to safely and effectively use CHEER fitness equipment.

"I can help with four areas of training," Clancy says. "Endurance, strength, flexibility and balance. Our population can really use help in each of those. The main thing is to come up with a program that accomplishes those goals that is safe, simple and effective." At CHEER fitness centers, he says, lofty goals are within reach and, he emphasizes, it is never too late to start taking better care of yourself.

Among Americans 50 and older, Clancy says the most difficult task is changing long-held nutritional and exercise habits.

"There are different people coming through the door with different backgrounds. A personal training consultation and program really lets people make workouts their own and get over any fears or hang ups they have. It's great to have high goals, but you also need to be realistic about your goals."

Clancy encourages clients, especially new ones, to keep a food journal. In keeping a food journal, he says, a client has a tool to take a hard look at what and how much he or she is eating. A food journal becomes, in effect, a tool for experimenting: a client can make small changes to his or her diet and see if there are results. "That way, an exerciser can say, 'Yes! I'm getting more in control.'"

"It's never too late to start," Clancy says. "But you want to start wisely."

Another fitness-related challenge facing many seniors is stress management. Many retirees, says Clancy, say that they are busier in their retired life than they ever were in their professional life. "Many of them have volunteer obligations or time-consuming hobbies that they've taken up in their retirement." Sometimes, he says, the newly retired bite off more than they can chew. Exercise can help.

"Burning off stress during exercise is a huge component of why exercise is useful. If you can do that safely, it's a very effective tool," says Clancy.

A CHEER program of which he is particularly proud is the Arthritis Exercise Program offered at each CHEER Center where Clancy checks in. Clancy, a certified personal trainer specializing in senior fitness, says that certain smooth, controlled motions alleviate the symptoms of arthritis and even have some preventative effects. Clancy's program comes straight from the National Arthritis Foundation. He hopes that patrons will take the exercises they learn at CHEER and continue to do them at home.

“Little things help a lot, slow head nodding, pivoting your head from side to side, pumping your ankles while you’re sitting down. Each of these motions keeps the blood flowing,” Clancy says.

“We hope that programs like this and the general fitness program raise awareness of how to get healthy and stay healthy. CHEER offers a lot of programs that do just that.”

If you’re interested in seeing what John Clancy has to say about your own fitness plans, stop by and see him.

- Monday: Community Center 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., Greenwood 1 – 4 p.m.
- Tuesday: Long Neck 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.
- Wednesday: Community Center 1 – 6 p.m.
- Thursday: Roxana and Coastal Leisure 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.
- Friday: Slaughter Neck 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., Greenwood 1 – 4 p.m.

Also in fitness news: CHEER’s Community Center needs a new yoga instructor. If you are interested, call the Community Center, 302-854-9500.