

Studio Spotlight: Fitness Formula Clubs, Chicago, IL

Chicagoland's Finest: How One Gym Chain Used Pilates to Expand Their Business



Every month *The Teaser blog* searches the Peak Pilates® community for a [studio or fitness club](#) that stands out from the crowd to highlight the unique characteristics that have led to their success. It's a thank you – a show of appreciation for the facilities that exemplify excellence through the fundamental teachings of Peak Pilates. It's also a way for us to tease a series of proven practices and fresh ideas for other aspiring Pilates professionals to consider.

This month we reached out to Kristin Strom, Regional Pilates Manager of one of Chicago's finest fitness facilities – Fitness Formula Clubs (FFC). This club's ever-evolving Pilates program emphasizes creative class-structures, continuing education for staff members and, as Kristin puts it, "Kind and compassionate human interaction."

Read on to learn more about how FFC and Kristen created and continue to sustain an outstanding Pilates program:

Q: How did you get involved with Pilates, and specifically Peak Pilates®?

A: I was introduced to Pilates when my health club was hosting a weekend [Mat Pilates training course](#). I looked at it as a way to expand my group fitness teaching repertoire. A few years later I branched into full studio work.

The owner of Fitness Formula Clubs practices Pilates and decided to invest in it for his clubs. He purchased a Pilates reformer for one of the clubs I was managing, and I took it as a sign that I needed to get fully trained! I went through a comprehensive training program and have since trained with many trainers of many different teaching philosophies. Not only does FFC now have full Pilates studios in each of our clubs, but we also have recently just [incorporated] the Classical Pilates Formula [into] the FFC training program!

Q: How did you get involved with FFC and how long have you been with the Club?

A: I joined the FFC team in 2001 and have never looked back. It's truly a remarkable company [that] believes in treating all employees as valuable team players.

Q: Tell us about FFC's roots and what the future holds for the company.

A: FFC was founded in 1984 by Gale Landers, who is still the owner and CEO. He often talks about the mission of FFC – "To build, own, and operate great clubs and deliver outstanding results."

Comprehensive wellness is important to us, and we feel that there is more to health than just treadmills and weights. We incorporate Pilates, massage therapy, Muscle Activation

Technique, nutritional services and all types of group fitness classes into our locations. We just opened our 10th Chicago-based club location in Park Ridge and look forward to expanding to other areas across Chicagoland*.

Q: What is FFC's "secret sauce" that keeps your customers coming back?

A: We value relationships. We seek and nurture the relationships amongst our members, between our members and employees and even between our employees [themselves]. When friends [are] abound, a club really feels and functions as a club. Our purpose is to "Enhance the lives of our members and guests by improving their overall health and well-being," and we truly believe that kind and compassionate human interaction is key to the longevity of our members – and employees!



Q: Why did you choose Peak Pilates® equipment for your clubs?

A: We incorporate [Peak Pilates® equipment](#) at all of our clubs. I chose Peak Pilates equipment because the quality of

the construction is top notch. It is important to me that my studios are accessible for all types of instructors – classical and contemporary – as well as for clients with diverse needs.

Q: In your opinion, what makes Peak Pilates® equipment so remarkable?

A: Peak equipment is perfect – simple and comfortable. The designs are accommodating to all instructors and clients without needing extra accessories or additions. Our clients get a challenging, yet supportive workout with comfort. The cushioning is stellar, and our clients never ask for extra cushions while kneeling!

Q: Why did you choose the Afina™ line of reformers?

A: The [Afina™ Reformers](#) are well-made, versatile and simply beautiful. I love the clean design that makes maintenance a breeze (no more cleaning the edges with a toothbrush!)

Q: When did the 10th club open?

A: FFC Park Ridge opened officially at the end of December 2016!

Q: What's special about this club that sets it apart from other facilities that offer Pilates?

A: FFC Park Ridge is unique in its design in that it is the first club that has been built from the ground up. Its design is truly FFC.

Q: What positions are you currently hiring for?

A: We are always looking for Pilates talent at all of our FFC locations. We are welcoming to instructors of all backgrounds and all Pilates philosophies and schools of thought and movement. We love to hire instructors with a desire to connect with the members and work as part of a comprehensive wellness team.

This article was contributed by James Gardikas, Digital Content Manager – Mad Dogg Athletics.

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