Retro Aerobics Online

La Grange Park Library

Adults

Retro Aerobics Online

Jul 22, 2020

Free

Byline

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Retro Aerobics Online is a low-impact exercise program for adults that follows a different vintage workout routine each month, such as Richard Simmons’s “Sweatin’ to the Oldies.”

This was originally an in-person program that moved online during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Advanced Planning

When I began Retro Aerobics, I was inspired by the success of a previous library's Zumba program. Looking for something low-cost, I turned to the plethora of workout videos from the golden age of aerobics, the 1980s.

As many of our program attendees are older adults, there were plenty of low-impact options that also offered the appeal of nostalgia. It gave us the opportunity to socialize, exercise and take a trip down memory lane.

In a time of expensive gym memberships and intimidating classes, it was important to me to show that you can get a great workout for free and that what matters is getting your body moving. After COVID-19 forced all of our programs online, I was able to adapt this program to Zoom.

Planning was truly minimal. All I had to do was order some workout DVDs from other libraries or find them on YouTube. I set up the meeting on Zoom and e-mailed the link to patrons who had registered. In case of any drop-ins, I also added the link to the event page on the library's calendar.

Once everyone was ready, I shared my screen of the workout video and we all followed and laughed along.

Marketing

Retro Aerobics has been marketed via our print and online newsletters, as well as our website calendar and social media sites such as our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Depending on the platform, the marketing has gone out between a month before the program and the day of.

While we had greater attendance with the in-person version of the program, we have hopes that the virtual version will be successful, especially as people continue to avoid the gym during the pandemic. The problems we are running into across the board with virtual programming are screen fatigue, lack of technical skills and general distrust or dislike of online platforms.

Budgeting

Perhaps the best part of this program is that it is completely free! When conducted in person, we do provide water and disposable cups, which cost about $1 for a three-month supply.

Day-of-event Activity

For the online version, I simply start the Zoom meeting five minutes before the program was scheduled to begin to make sure everything was working smoothly and to have the workout video ready to go. Once my attendees had joined the meeting, we chatted for a minute and I shared my screen to play the workout. Luckily, I have not experienced any technical difficulties with conducting the program online.

When done in person, I simply set up the video on the projector, set out cups and a pitcher of water, and turned on a fan. It took no more than 10 minutes and one staff member to do so.

Program Execution

The program went great and had a lot of positive feedback, with my attendees telling me how much fun they had. I did only have two attendees for the online version, whereas we typically saw five or six when conducted in person. However, given the aforementioned issues we have been experiencing with online programming, I still consider it a success!

Moving forward, I am interested in contacting the local YMCA and park district to post fliers/advertise. I am also curious about adding a gentle or chair yoga program. Given the amount of screen fatigue prevalent at the moment, I feel it would be best to wait until we are cleared for in-person programming to pursue these plans.

Advice

I would recommend choosing a low-intensity, low-impact workout for at least the first meeting to ensure that it is safe for all involved. If you notice that it is too easy, you can move to a more difficult one the next time.

Also, keep an eye on your patrons and take breaks to make sure they are staying hydrated. I give a little safety disclaimer in the beginning and remind everyone to drink periodically.

Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.

Supporting Materials

Document
retro_aerobics_flyer.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

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