

Is it Time for Your Church to Join the 'Muscular Christianity' Movement?

Theodore Roosevelt was the 26th president of the United States, and he's known for many famous quotes that are still referenced today, including ones relating to "muscular Christianity."

Prior to becoming president, Roosevelt served as the second in command with a group in the 1st United States Volunteer Cavalry known as the Rough Riders. The Rough Riders were called into action in the Spanish-American War, and it was during this war that Roosevelt said, "Do what you can where you are with what you have."

Roosevelt's quote serves as an excellent strategy for churches looking to add fitness ministry. Churches from around the world contact us every year inquiring about adding fitness as an outreach ministry for their congregation and community.

Church fitness ministry is extremely rewarding and fulfilling, and it's an outreach that any church can launch to promote wellness, regardless of its size. It's fantastic if your church has the budget and space to launch a full-blown fitness center with the latest strength-training equipment and cardiovascular exercise machines.

However, this is not the reality for most churches. Most churches looking to begin a fitness ministry need to start off on a much smaller scale, but the key here is starting! Famous evangelist Dawson Trotman once said, "The greatest time wasted is the time getting started."

A few ways your church can start fitness ministry on a small scale, with little to no budget, includes hosting some group

exercise classes two to three days per week. Fitness and fellowship go hand in hand, and group exercise classes are a great way to keep each other encouraged and motivated. Classes can be held in a multipurpose room, meeting room or gymnasium at your church.

Hosting group exercise classes, fitness boot camps, obstacle courses, TRX, indoor cycling classes and small group personal training are great ways to make use of extra space in your church. Have a certified instructor* (perhaps one or more of your church members meets this criteria) lead the classes, and make sure all participants obtain medical clearance from a physician prior to beginning any church-sponsored exercise program.

If your church lacks any extra space to hold group exercise classes on the church grounds, seek out an alternative location. Schools, cafeterias, meeting rooms, hotels, outdoor parks and playgrounds, or even a warehouse space can all be suitable to host small group exercise classes.

Members in your church could have a relationship with a facility or business that may be able to allow your church group to utilize some space to exercise each week. You can also seek out a local fitness center or YMCA to host your church group or provide a special church group discount rate for weekly and monthly exercise classes. Most of these workouts can be held indoors or outdoors, weather permitting.

The key is to foster a fun, energizing and creative way to encourage your church members to exercise every week.

Get your church fitness ministry going, and please contact us with any creative ideas your church has formulated that may help other churches in launching their own fitness ministry!

* *Faith & Fitness Magazine* and always encourage churches to staff their fitness ministry with knowledgeable, well-trained and qualified employees and volunteers. Hiring all-stars

assures the best fit for your team, members and the job.

GET MORE! Go to the original **Faith & Fitness Magazine** article for many useful links to additional resources on this topic.

Rob Killen is the church fitness department editor for Faith & Fitness Magazine and a 20-year veteran in the health and fitness industry. Rob received his bachelor's degree in education from Wayland Baptist University in Texas and his master's degree in public administration and nonprofit management from George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. Rob regularly consults with health clubs and has a passion for helping churches looking to develop fitness ministries. For any assistance in planning or growing your church fitness ministry, Rob can be reached directly through .

Copyright 2014 **Faith & Fitness Magazine** and . Used by permission.