



Kevin Hoffman/The Mercury The soon-to-open group cross training room at the Limerick Rascals Fitness is pictured.

By Michelle Karas, mkaras@pottsmmerc.com

LIMERICK — Do you find the prospect of going to the gym intimidating? Does the thought of encountering grunting muscleheads in undersized tank tops in the weight room make you want to stay home on the sofa?

Those are precisely the notions that Rascals Fitness owner Marc Polignano wants to challenge.

Polignano, a fitness enthusiast who previously owned Body Transit in Collegetown, opened the original Rascals location in North Coventry's Suburbia Shopping Center in January 2008. Earlier this month Polignano debuted a second Rascals at Ridge Pike and Lewis Road in Limerick.

The regional chain — well, chain of two — is built on the premise that exercise is for people of all ages, shapes and sizes.

“Eighty-two percent of Americans don't exercise. The philosophy of Rascals is to find out why and get them working out,” Polignano said. “Studies show the number one reason people don't workout is intimidation.”

he brightly-colored design and open floor format at Rascals, which is filled with Cybex strength training machines, cardio equipment, and free weights, is designed to make workouts accessible to everyone.

“If you don’t want to see the meathead type at the gym, you won’t find that element here,” Polignano said. “We don’t even allow guys to wear tank tops. You see real people in here with all different body types.”

Primary colors of Red, yellow, blue and green brighten the 10,800-square-foot space, where cheery motivational sayings are painted on the walls. Some read: “Participation in motion”; “Participation in movement”; and “Participation in life.”

Participation, Polignano will tell you, is the key word. And that doesn’t mean working out all the time. A “Rascal,” according to Polignano, sometimes needs to mow the lawn or walk the dog instead of complete a gym workout.

“It’s all to say ‘Look, you can be a Rascal, too,’” Polignano said. “Our target demographic is everyone.”

With that in mind, the gym’s price point is affordable to most anyone. Rascals is currently offering a \$5.99 fee to join with your first month of membership dues free. After that the monthly price is \$19.99 and includes unlimited tanning, full access to both the North Coventry and Limerick clubs and the option to bring a guest with you each time. The membership cost also includes a discount to the on-site Rascals juice bar.

Also included is a custom workout plan that can be printed out at the gym each time you visit, or you can log onto it at home, Polignano said.

“It was important for me not to be a ‘bait & switch’ facility. I didn’t want people to think ‘Oh no, no one will show me how to use these machines,’” he said. “Our Activtrax system creates a workout based on each person’s goal. There’s even a nutritional part you can follow. No one else offers this for what we charge. It shows the value of the Rascals membership.”

Machines can accommodate up to a 400-pound man, and every machine is made in the U.S.A., Polignano said.

Polignano said there are few differences between the North Coventry and Limerick clubs.

“We tried to be fair to the North Coventry members. There’s nothing here they don’t have there,” he said. “They two clubs are almost identical in square footage, but are laid out a little differently.”

Both clubs each employ 12 staff members and are equipped with spacious locker rooms. Polignano’s landlord for both locations is Gambone Development.

The North Coventry site has about 2,000 members — which is Polignano’s goal for the Limerick gym as well. So far, in less than two weeks since the Limerick Rascals soft opening, 500 people have signed up to be members

there.

One thing, however, that the Limerick site will soon have that's a change from the North Coventry club is a room dedicated to group cross training classes. The GXT (group cross training) room includes mirrored walls and forgiving "easy on the knees" flooring. Group training sessions will be offered at \$12 per session for a group of at least five people.

"It's an affordable way for someone to get involved in cross training," Polignano said. "We may even do zumba or yoga classes here" depending on demand.

Polignano said the growing population in Limerick made the township desirable for a second location. He had hoped to expand sooner, but said the economic downturn put a damper on expansion the last few years.

"When we first opened in North Coventry, we thought we'd have three or four more locations by now," said Polignano. "Everything changed with the economy. Until we had this opportunity to come here" to Limerick.

To learn more, call the Limerick Rascals at 610-495-0600 or visit rascalsfitness.com. Hours at both Rascals locations are Monday through Friday, 5 a.m. to 11 p.m., Saturday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Sunday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Source: [The Mercury](#)

Article from Rascals Fitness.

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