

I have never been a person who was interested in the gym, or in regular exercise in general. Through my mid-twenties I was active - mainly horseback riding and horse/barn care. But it wasn't every day, and it wasn't consistent. Over the course of the next thirty years I "watched my weight" by alternately fasting and then eating whatever I wanted to. Not good.

Then four years ago my dad died of complications related to diabetes. He did not exercise, did not eat well, but wasn't considered obese. He should have lived much longer. And my kids got on my case that I was living the same way. So I came to Orchard Hill for an evaluation, and Denise connected me with Alexia Hamel.

My plan was to do 30 sessions with Alexia, take what I'd learned and move forward (read: forget all about it and go back to living the way I had). But three things happened:

1. I discovered I was in MUCH worse physical condition than I wanted to admit
2. My eating habits were HORRIBLE
3. Alexia could actually make me enjoy working out

Number 3 was no small feat. I had done the gym before - aerobics classes mainly. But Alexia not only explained why the strength training she was having me do was important and how it helped my body, but she also helped me to totally change my eating habits. And with her instruction, I actually see results! I see muscles I never knew I could have; I sleep better; I am more toned; I am MUCH stronger; and wonder of wonders I actually look forward to going to the gym!

My biggest struggle tends to be doing focused exercise when I'm not in the gym. I spend the summers in Maine, and all my good intentions of doing exercise go right out the window. But I stick with my eating plan (again thanks to Alexia - it is doable and takes my likes/dislikes into account in a way that I can stay true), and I make sure to do something active every day.

I have to say the best thing about my workouts are how I feel afterwards. I always feel SO much better after a session, especially when I really don't want to go but go anyway. Alexia is so fun to talk to, and she motivates without making me feel guilty or stupid, which I have experienced the very few other times I've tried the gym. One of the most important things Alexia taught me is to stick with it - my idea of sticking with a program was 30 days. I have now been her client for 3 ½ years! She got me to up my visits from two to three times a week, her training helped me recover significantly faster from my rotator cuff surgery two years ago, and I am finally starting to like what I see in the mirror. At the ripe old age of 59, I am in the best shape in 30 years. I cannot recommend Alexia Hamel or Orchard Hills highly enough and am a member for life.

- Linda Weatherbee

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I joined OHAC early this year and started training straightaway with Alexia. Although, I had never previously been a gym member or a regular with workouts, after four years of a low activity job in software engineering I felt weak and full of aches and cramps. I joined OHAC to feel better and have more energy for my young family and various activities. My goal at first was simply to not ache in the morning and to not pant after a flight of stairs.

Under Alexia's expert guidance, not only did I achieve all my initial goals (in roughly three months of training), but I now enjoy workouts, the challenge of learning a new exercise, and the reward of pushing your body hard. The biggest hurdle to me was actually admitting that I needed to work out and also realizing that I needed the help of a trainer to ensure I was working out correctly. I'm confident that if I just "hit the machines" on my own, I would neither have achieved my initial goal nor still been here to write this testimonial.

I can't recommend OHAC enough. It is a perfect fit for my busy working schedule. I would definitely advise any new members to at least do a consulting session with the training staff. Even a little time with them can make your workouts more efficient and enjoyable. OK, well enough for now, I'm off to work on my next fitness goal (build some muscle tone).

- Dan Marlett

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"About three months ago I became aware of my declining physical fitness, weight gain and general health. I had just turned 54 and I wanted to enjoy the next 30 years of my life with an active lifestyle. I needed to lose weight and increase my cardio fitness so I can enjoy my upcoming retirement with my daughters and my wife. I choose to work with a trainer (Alexia Hamel) because having someone work with you and plan your fitness program takes some of the stress away from having to push myself to do it.

Working with Alexia these past three months has been a very rewarding experience. I have lost 16 pounds, put on muscle, and have returned to being able to run. My blood pressure even dropped ten points and my doctor was very impressed with my progress. Alexia carefully plans my daily workouts and encourages me to continue to strive and push myself. The workouts are challenging but Alexia carefully monitors my performance during the exercises ensuring that I am doing them correctly and safely. I look forward my workouts with Alexia knowing that each day will bring new challenge for me and I take satisfaction in seeing how I am improving while meeting those challenges.

The best advice I would give to someone considering starting a fitness program and working with a trainer at Orchard Hill:

- Get started! It's never too late and the trainers will tailor a program just for you
- Once you start, don't quite. The hard part is the first few weeks. It will take a couple of weeks for your body to adjust to a new routine and you will not see results overnight. But stick with it and you will find the light at the end of the tunnel
- Trust your trainer and listen to their coaching. They will make sure that you are performing the exercises so that you benefit from them and reduce the risk to injury.
- It's a team effort with your trainer. You make the journey together to a better you."

- Joe Bolton