



TELLING STORY

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Achieving Fitness Goals for the Warmer Weather: JCC Style

As we approach spring and set new goals, one of the most common promises we make to ourselves is to eat better, lose weight, and embrace a healthier lifestyle. It's a great plan, but to achieve success, we can all use some extra help and motivation – like finding the right gym, the right trainers, and maybe even adding a nutritionist into the equation. Identifying the right mix is key and that is why so many people looking for results find the Health and Wellness Center at the JCC their perfect fit. As a wellness focused center, it offers every option imaginable and allows people to have fun, stay fit and attain a healthier lifestyle all at the same time and all in one place.

Just ask Shelley Cohen, who came to the JCC looking for a gym and found a whole new world, which has reshaped her life and the way she thinks about health and wellness.

“My husband, Leiber, and I moved here from Long Island three years ago to live by my daughter,” says Shelley.

“Working out has always been important to both of us and I was eager to find a gym and a personal trainer. I began to ask around and the buzz I heard was all about the JCC. Everybody I spoke to said that it was so much more than a gym – that the trainers were extremely knowledgeable and committed to their clients, and that I could get free fitness evaluations and nutritional guidance and all the help I needed to find a fitness routine that would be right for me. So I came for a tour, signed up, and everything just fell into place.”

Shelley, who has always relied on a personal trainer for drive and inspiration, started working out twice a week with Sherin Thankachan, a certified personal trainer with a doctorate in Physical Therapy, who is the JCC's Assistant Fitness Director. Shelley began seeing immediate results and found the energy and atmosphere of the JCC facility everything she hoped for. She and Sherin formed a close bond and once their fitness regimen was clearly established, Shelley set a new goal. She wanted to shed around 25 pounds to return to her personal best and asked Sherin for advice. Sherin referred her to Nina Spiegel, the JCC Holistic Nutrition & Wellness Coach, who works at the JCC in partnership with The Graf Center for Integrative Medicine at Englewood Health.

"We all know when we are overeating or making bad food choices," Shelley explains, "but Nina taught me how to really listen to my body and how to properly fuel and hydrate throughout the day so I could avoid those drops in blood sugar level that our bodies interpret as hunger. It really helped. Nina's approach was so positive, I felt confident and invigorated from our first conversation. Between Nina and another nutritional program I adopted, I found myself losing the weight more easily than I imagined."

When Shelley lost her first 10 pounds, she and Sherin went to the mall together and Sherin bought them matching workout clothes.

“How many personal trainers would celebrate your achievements by offering to take you out and treat you to new leggings in your smaller size? Not many, I bet! But that’s the kind of person Sherin is. She, and everyone in the JCC health center, is behind you every step of the way, rooting for your success!”

Shelley has now lost the full 25 pounds she set as her goal and feels more fit than ever. And, Leeber, who has been practicing martial arts for years, works out at the J as often as Shelley. He takes Yoga classes two days a week and a Power Hour class with Hagit Tal, the JCC Group Exercise Director, which he never misses.

"Leeber is an ophthalmologist, based in NYC, and I work as his practice manager, so we both have hectic schedules, commuting back and forth to the city," says Shelley.



“I’m committed to my JCC routine and train with Sherin every Tuesday morning, driving in from Teaneck and then taking a bus to the city. It’s worth every ounce of effort and Sherin, amazing person that she is, accommodates me. And now, after 38 years of marriage, Leeber and I decided to stop working on Fridays. So what do we do with our newfound time? We come to the JCC together, and while he takes his Power Hour class, I train with Sherin, who never fails to inspire me to new heights. I look forward to this little ritual every week, and afterwards, Leeber and I stop at the JCC Café together and enjoy each other over a nice light bite.”

Believing fitness and healthy lifestyles are something we all need to teach by example, Shelley has also decided to be an encouraging role model for her 10-year-old granddaughter, Sophia. “I moved to Teaneck to be close to her and my daughter and I so enjoy sharing in her life. And one of the ways we share these days is the trips we make to the JCC. She fell in love with spinning, so whenever we can, we jump in the car, drive to the JCC, and while she’s spinning up a storm in her youth spin class, I go work out in the gym. And afterwards, we go to the JCC Café, order some great food, and spend quality time together. It’s the best!”

“Leaving Long Island and moving to the Jersey suburbs was a big transition, but it has turned out to be a wonderful new chapter for Leeber and me. We are close to our family, and while our days are often still long and hectic, we carve out time for important things - like living a fit and healthy lifestyle. But to succeed, you really need the right support and a place where you feel welcome and encouraged. And the JCC is just that place and more. I feel a rush of adrenaline when I walk through the doors and I am happy to share the buzz that was shared with me when I first moved here - that the JCC is truly the go-to place for everything health and wellness. Anyone looking to set fitness goals or redefine the way they think about what well-being is all about should definitely check it out.”

Are you looking to find your fitness groove? The JCC is here to help. We offer top notch personal training and over 90 incredible group ex classes, as you can see from Shelley and Leeber’s story, small group specialized classes like performance lab and pilates apparatus, nutritional guidance, and so much more. We have the tools to help you meet your goals, whatever they are. For more info on training or finding the classes or wellness programs that are right for you, call Sherin at 201.569.7900 ext 603.



Sherin & Shelley celebrating success in matching leggings!



Leeber finishing Power Hour with Group Ex Director Hagit Tal