

Curves

Number one for women's fitness

A health and fitness franchise built on passion and compassion, Curves has cornered the US market. Rachel Spaul reports on the brand's rapid expansion across the UK

Understanding women's needs when it comes to regular exercise is key to the success of Curves, which was ranked the number one Fitness Franchise by *Entrepreneur* magazine this year. Also recognised by the publication as the Fastest Growing Franchise, Curves has expanded rapidly in every market it has entered with 9,300 clubs established in 36 countries.

The UK has proven to be a viable market with 147 franchisees coming on board within three years. Jim Johnson, Curves Sales Director for the UK and Ireland, credits this growth to the fact that the business is rewarding for franchisees and delivers real results for members.

"The system is designed specifically for women and offers a 30-minute fitness and common sense weight loss programme with the support of a community of women," he explains.

"The Curves workout allows members of all ages and fitness levels to combine strength and cardio training through hydraulic resistance.

"Whether they're in Japan, Mexico, Spain or the UK, women are looking for the same thing - an affordable and effective way of losing weight and feeling better. The business is fun with camaraderie between members and staff. Clubs become part of the community, working alongside local charities and organisations."

Based on its founding principles of passion and compassion, Curves takes a different approach to franchisee recruitment. Candidates must be passionate about women's health and fitness and value giving back to the community over money. The company is therefore looking for hands-on managers who will take an active role in the business.

Curves may be a women only fitness club, but it's not just women who are suited to owning a franchise.

Working as a massage therapist, Daryl Chapman discovered that women had a number of problems he believed could be solved through fitness. "I offered my services to a local Curves club and was bowled over by the concept," he recalls. "It was exactly what I was looking for. I now own two clubs and am aiming to open another three."

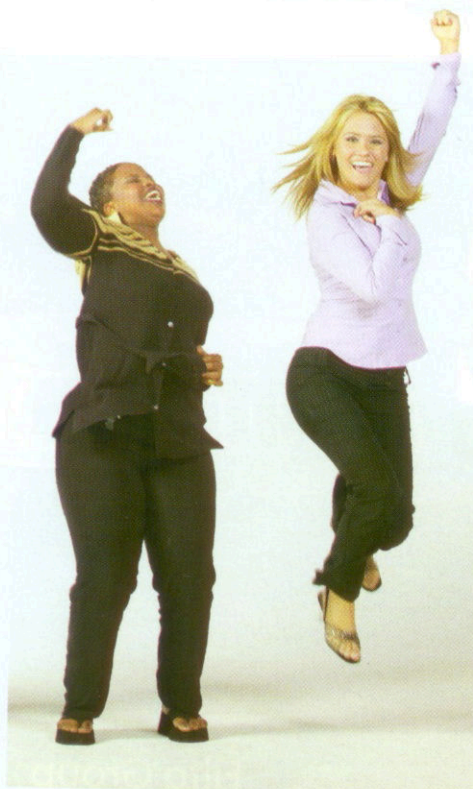
As a man working in a women only club, Daryl admits feeling worried about being accepted by members. "As it turns out, they quickly accepted me," he reassures. "Thanks to my experience as a masseur I am able to relate to women and am empathic. I really love the business. The feedback from members who have reached their goals is almost as good as getting paid. I get real satisfaction from doing something worthwhile supported by a large organisation."

Curves assumes that all franchisees



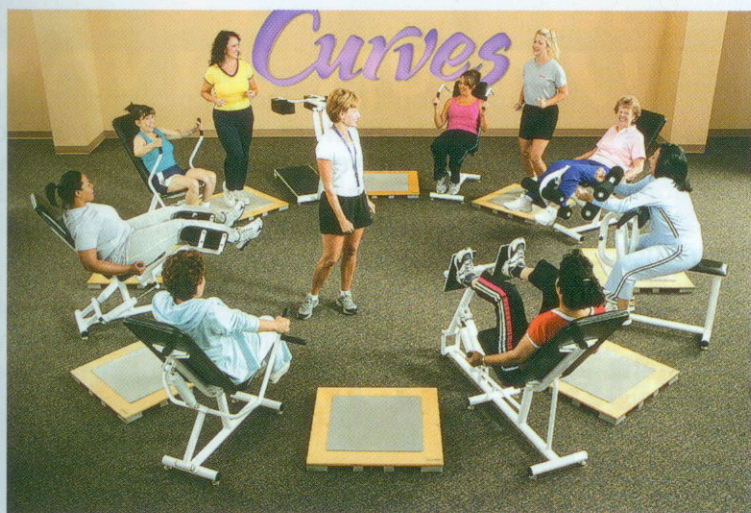
'I was bowled over by Curves'

Daryl Chapman



Curves

The power to amaze yourself.®



have no experience or knowledge of running a fitness club and consequently supply all materials, text books and system manuals needed and provide instruction in nutritional guidance, exercise physiology, sales, marketing and business management.

Training takes place in Waco, Texas alongside other new and experienced franchisees from around the world. "It doesn't take long to learn the business because it's such a simple but effective framework," adds Daryl. Following the training, franchisees will be certified Curves Workout Personal Trainers and will be confident with the tools to safely and effectively operate a Curves franchise.

Newspaper advertisements, internal and external promotions to generate business are available via a secured website and franchisees have access to mentor support for the club launch, regional training meetings and an annual convention.

Franchisees in the UK can also contact Joanna Dase, Area Director and Bournemouth franchisee, for further support. Having run her own club in Canada before moving to the UK and opening two clubs, she is able to provide support and guidance to franchisees based on her own experiences. "There is the potential to do extremely well with Curves," says Joanna, who moved to the UK as a single mum to be closer to her family.

"This is an opportunity to provide for your family and to have a very satisfying and rewarding career."

For Rachel Kenny from Redhill, Curves was the opportunity she'd been searching for to realise her dream of owning a business. "Curves was a great opportunity and good value for money," she confirms. "I felt that franchising was the safest way of starting a business and Curves really interested me."

Thanks to a 7,000 leaflet drop in her area and local press advertising, Rachel's business quickly took off and she has enrolled 150 members in her first three months. She furthers: "The business has met and exceeded my expectations and I was particularly impressed by Gary Heavin, Curves CEO and Founder, who paid me a visit at my club when he came to the UK, despite being really busy."

Break-even point for clubs is around 200 members, and if you consider that some franchisees have over one thousand members, there is the potential to make a healthy living. "We've already awarded all franchises in Ireland and have a few remaining in Scotland and Wales," Jim concludes. "We're particularly keen to hear from people in England interested in joining Curves and helping themselves and others attain a better quality of life." **TFM**

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OVERVIEW

- A rewarding business that produces results
- Become a qualified Curves Personal Trainer
- Training in the US with other franchisees from around the world
- Support from the US & a UK Area Director
- Mentored support
- Regional training meetings
- Annual convention

SUMMARY

No. of franchisees: 147

Franchise fee: £25,000

Franchisee profile: Candidates must be hands-on managers passionate about women's health & fitness & giving back to the community.

Year established: 1992

Year franchised: 2002 in UK

Priority recruitment territories: England & limited territories in Scotland & Wales

Further information contact
Jim Johnson

0800 587 2204

jjohnson@curves.com

www.curves.com

205 Park Wood Place
Waco, TX, 76712, USA