



Equinox: Incorporating FMS at a Large Fitness Corporation

Geralyn Coopersmith, former Director of the Equinox Fitness Training Institute and now current Director of Nike SPARQ Performance Training sits down with Lee Burton to discuss how the FMS has become part of the standard operating procedure at Equinox.

Hi, I'm Lee Burton here with Geralyn Coopersmith at Equinox up in New York. We just finished Day One of a FMS Level II.

We've been fortunate to work with Equinox and Geralyn for going on seven or eight years now. We've really learned a lot working with her organization and seeing how the FMS fits into something like Equinox, which is a large fitness corporation that has places all over the world at this point.



Geralyn, tell me a little bit about yourself and how we started working together.

Geralyn: I'm in charge of education. We have something at Equinox called the Equinox Fitness Training Institute and I'm the Director of that. We're always looking for ways to elevate what we do.

I was introduced through a mutual friend of ours to the idea of FMS and after being exposed to it, I thought, 'This is a real huge point of differentiation for us. This will allow us to address something that's not been addressed at all, to my mind, and that's movement pathology'. We get people in here. We start pushing them and working them really hard and they break down.

This is a way to take a look and say, 'Hmmm, what's going on there?' before we start assigning exercises that may or may not be appropriate for that person. For us, it was a way just to make sure that we were doing the right thing for everyone.

Lee: When you initially started using the FMS, how has it evolved now? I mean, it has been six or seven years since you guys actually implemented it. How has it evolved and what changes have you seen?



Geralyn: We've seen that the level of training overall has gone up exponentially. We used to have some better trainers than others but having FMS in place has really elevated across the board all of our trainers to a higher level. They're training more intelligently from the early stages of their career to the later stages because they have this knowledge that not every exercise is appropriate for every individual and they are empowered to know which is the right one and which is the less appropriate choice.

Lee: As personal training has evolved in general and the FMS initially was part of athletics, how have you seen it be a positive impact just with the general population?

Geralyn: Well, people don't want to be in pain and people are living longer.

A lot of our clients are very active - middle aged and somewhere in there - where they want to be vital. They want to be living the rest of their lives feeling great and looking great. This has really given them a tool so they can get a hard workout and they can get a program that's really challenging them. However, it's challenging them in a way that's not breaking them down so it has developed a bit of a culture.



At first, you have to get a buy-in it from the members. They're thinking, 'This is a little weird', 'I've never seen this before' or maybe 'I don't understand why you're doing this to me'. 'It's maybe embarrassing or uncomfortable for me' but once they get bought in and they start to feel better, move better and then they can do more, then they're with us. Then, they're bought into not only personal training but also this concept of fixing things that are broken rather than trying to roll over them.

Lee: Now the FMS, I know you said it's a part of Equifit, can you tell us a little more about what Equifit is?

Geralyn: Equifit is a power fitness assessment that we do. Every person that comes into our gym who is a member is given a complimentary fitness assessment (the Equifit) and also complimentary PT. We spend an hour with that person talking to them and running through the basic things you would think of - heart rate, blood pressure, body composition and those kinds of



things – but we didn't have a real movement assessment or movement standard.

That is a huge thing because what are we doing? Obviously, we want to make sure there are no hypertensive individuals working out. We want to check those things but we also want to make sure they're moving well. That was a huge miss up until we put this in so it has really elevated the product overall and the whole culture (trainers and members) I think to a higher level, which is really great.

Lee: Yeah, one of the things that we've learned working with you over the past few years is just how the FMS can be implemented in a place like this and how you really need something that's consistent when you have as many trainers as you guys have. Having something consistent when you say that standard, that's something that we've really been trying to promote – just standard operating procedure. The FMS is not the only thing but it's certainly a big piece.

What else have you seen as far as the trainers? What's been their buy in?



Geralyn: Well, it was kind of the same general journey of initially sort of crossed arms and 'what is this weird thing we're doing and why are we doing it'. Then as people started to implement it, we taught them. Then, they had to try it out on themselves and with their colleagues.

Eventually, it was part of the Equifit. They started to see that this stuff works. 'This stuff is enabling me to get so much information in 10 or 15 minutes, use that in program design and then my program design is great. My clients may not fully appreciate why it's great but all of a sudden, they're moving better. They're feeling better. They are not getting hurt from their training'.

It's a very, very powerful shift although initially the trainers were sort of like 'Why?' but the proof is in the pudding. The more they did it, the more it worked.

Lee: Okay. Well, Geralyn, I really appreciate it. Thank you so much!

Geralyn: My pleasure!

