



Photo by Kevin Hoffman/The Mercury

Rascals Fitness in North Coventry offers new customers a cookie on their initial visit.

Work it out RASCALS FITNESS, 'A DIFFERENT KIND OF GYM' OPENS UP IN NORTH COVENTRY

By Michelle Karas, mkaras@pottsmmerc.com

NORTH COVENTRY — The first time you walk into Rascals Fitness, you can see that it's not your typical gym.

Rather, you can taste it.

Every tour of the facility starts with a question: Chocolate Chip or Oatmeal Raisin?

Cookie, that is.

Part of Rascals' philosophy, according to owner Marc Polignano, is that it's OK to have a cookie.

"We understand that we might not all have the perfect bodies. We might all like to eat cookies or birthday cake sometimes," Polignano said.

To enjoy the occasional indulgence and still be healthy, it's important to find a way to incorporate exercise into your daily life, he said.

"Rascals was designed around the premise that 82 percent of people don't exercise," Polignano said. "Here, participation is the key. But we understand that there's more to life than fitness."

Polignano opened Rascals Fitness on Jan. 18 in the Suburbia Shopping Center, offering gym memberships with no long-term commitment.

According to Polignano, 44, who previously owned Body Transit in Collegetown, people usually have three excuses for not joining a gym: “It’s too crowded, costs too much money, or is too dirty,” he said.

Polignano said he designed Rascals Fitness to overcome those objections.

The 10,000-square-foot facility has plenty of room for Cybex strength and cardio machines — which include 20 treadmills and 15 elliptical trainers — and a large freeweight area. Four individual rooms with tanning beds are available daily on a first-come, first-served basis.

As for the cleanliness aspect, every surface in the gym is designed to be cleaned easily — from the cement floors to the locker rooms complete with individual showers, Polignano said. A sink for handwashing is located in the main gym, along with spray disinfectant and paper towel stations and touchless trashcans.

Cost is the biggest selling point: You can join Rascals for as little as \$10.99 per month plus a one-time \$20 startup fee. At that price, you can quit at any time — it’s a month-to-month contract.

Other membership plans include a \$19.99 per month, no money down plan (with a 12-month contract) that includes unlimited tanning and allows the member to bring a guest for every visit.

Personal training with one of Rascals’ four trainers on the 15-member staff is available at an additional charge.

“At other gyms, that cost \$50 a month, if you don’t go you’re going to quit,” Polignano said. “Here, we’re trying to build an environment that’s not intimidating, and one where everybody can participate. The price will remain low if the community continues to participate.”

As long as participation remains high, the price remains low, he said.

Polignano, a Mont Clare native and graduate of Spring-Ford High School, opened Body Transit in 1990 and sold the business in 2004. In the interim, the Schwenksville resident worked as a consultant and “put this model together” for Rascals. Polignano said he built Rascals to be a comfortable place for people to work out.

“To make people not be intimidated, we call people ‘rascals,’” he said. “Because a ‘rascal’ does whatever he or she can to stay active.”

Rascals is also decorated by the business’s bright signature colors, “sun (yellow), water (blue), earth (green) and passion (red).”

Polignano is hoping to duplicate these elements in future locations.

“I’ve been doing this for 20 years, so Rascals is a combination of everything I’ve learned — the dos and the don’ts,” said Polignano, who earned a physical education degree from West Chester University and his teacher’s certification, though he never worked in the classroom.

He selected North Coventry for his primary location because it’s a growing area, and chose Suburbia Shopping Center because it’s along the busy Route 100 corridor and suitable space was available.

So far, the Rascals philosophy seems to be catching on, according to Polignano.

“We’re very pleased with North Coventry residents’ participation to date,” he said. “I’m excited about the future.”

Rascals Fitness is located at 58 Glocker Way in the Suburbia Shopping Center and may be reached at 610-718-1750 or online at www.rascalsfitness.com. Rascals is open Monday through 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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