

WORKING IN SPORT & FITNESS



Name

Lorraine Andrews

Job Title

Gym manager

Company

Renfrewshire Leisure

Can you briefly describe what your job involves?

I'm gym manager so that involves seeing to the day to day running of the gym, making sure the staff know what they're doing, making sure the gym's maintained. It's my responsibility to make sure everything's right, for members and staff.

I do inductions and programmes with clients and give them health advice. A lot of the time clients just want someone to talk to. So it's almost like a social worker thing as well, you'd be surprised by some of the things people tell us! You would never expect it. I think people build up trust with us which I like.

Can you describe a typical working day?

The early shift starts at seven or eight. I come in and switch on the TV's and air conditioning and make sure the place and machines are clean. Then I get inductions ready and wait for the first clients to arrive. It's important I check the induction list and then I look through my emails. We also have a health and safety check list for the machines that involves checking their cleanliness and maintenance. There may be problems that arise with the machines so we have to check them every day.

It's funny because you get people who come in and get on with their routine and then there's others who like to chat and you'll be there with them the whole time which makes the day go a lot quicker. The morning shifts are good as you get in early, get everything done then the next person's in for their shift. Then you go for your break and before you know it your day's up. But then the back shift later in the day is a lot busier. Especially Monday through to Wednesday which is peak time and there's classes on as well. So we'll have abdominal and circuit classes that pass your time quicker. And we generally have more inductions in the evening as well. There're a couple of hours in the morning when it's busy after people have dropped their kids off at school. Between five and eight in the evening Monday to Wednesday it's busy then it trails off towards the end of the week.

What's the pay like?

I didn't apply for the gym manager job because of the wages but they're not too bad. The fitness consultant wages are very good. I was a fitness consultant for five or six years so it was a natural progression for me. Gym managers have more responsibility and I'm managing

other people so you have to work harder for that bit extra money!

How did you get into the job?

I studied a HND in fitness, health and exercise at college. I've always liked exercise and sports when I was younger. I was planning to join the RAF but decided I was too young so decided to go to college. I got a job through one of my lecturers who knew the gym manager of a club in Paisley so I worked there for five years. My friend works for Renfrewshire Leisure and she put me in touch with the gym manager. I started doing casual shifts with them. I worked as a fitness consultant for six months then got the gym manager position, it was quite quick. I picked up the management and administration side on the job so it was just a natural progression for me.

I started university but had to leave because of family issues. I'd like to go back to that but I'm not sure if I'd like to do sport and fitness or business management. I feel I'm fully competent on the health and fitness side but could complement my managerial role with a business related course. With sport and fitness, I feel I'm already there and as long as I keep up with new training I'll always be clued up with it.

What aspects of your work do you enjoy the most?

I like interacting with people. You never meet the same kind of person twice and there's always somebody different coming in. I also like the results people get and the sense of achievement for me as I designed their programme. I worked with a girl who was very shy and quiet when she first started. She lost loads of weight and ended up doing ten kilometre runs and half marathons. Her confidence went through the roof and it was amazing to see that. So that sense of achievement is amazing.

Are there any aspects of the job you dislike?

I like most of it! Getting up early can be a drag sometimes. But no there's nothing I don't like about it at all. I absolutely love it.

What kind of person is needed to do your job?

You need to be outgoing and understanding. You also need the ability to open up to people because if they're doing that to you then they'll expect the same in return. It won't really suit you if you're closed up and shy because a lot of time is taken up talking to people and this isn't always about specific things, it might just be about what they did at the weekend.

If I wanted your job how would I go about it?

The best thing to do would be to get your foot in the door. Offer to do casual work first of all and keep your eye out for jobs advertised internally. Even if you don't think you'll get the job just apply anyway. Renfrewshire Leisure are very accommodating and offer to help staff through qualifications which I think is a brilliant thing because obviously not everyone's come through college or university, they've come straight from school. I don't think it's always necessary to have a relevant qualification. I think they can be beneficial but they're not essential. I think I've used my experience more than my qualification. Going to college built up my confidence but it's really experience that has sent me on my way

What has been your best career decision?

Going for the gym manager job. I was up against people who'd been gym managers for two or three years. I thought I might as well show an interest and it turned out pretty good because I got the job. Openings and promotions are rare. People tend to stay in their roles for a few years so if something comes up you have to go for it.

What's been your best piece of luck?

I think having a friend who works for Renfrewshire Leisure. I hadn't heard of them until my friend mentioned them.

Have you had any recent training?

I've been on a few training courses recently. I've done the managerial courses that Renfrewshire Leisure run and I'm starting a cardiac rehab course. Renfrewshire Leisure are very helpful. If you see a course you want to do they will look into funding the course which you then pay back in instalments. So obviously it benefits you, your work and the company. I'm working towards my Register of Exercise Professionals level four and I've done their continuous professional development course on line too.

Have you had any careers advice at school or college?

I've been quite lucky in that I've always known what I wanted to do. The only advice I had was to stay on at college which was probably the right decision. Getting my qualification, doing five or six years as a gym instructor then moving onto the gym manager role has been a clear progression route for me.

Any other points or advice for someone who wants your job?

I think you need to stay positive and confident and even if you think you've no chance of getting the job just go for it anyway. Believe in yourself.



SkillsActiveCareers

SkillsActive

skills
FOR BUSINESS

ACTIVE ADVICE
FOR ACTIVE CAREERS

FREEPHONE 08000 933300

www.skillsactive.com/careers

 LearnDirect
ADVICE LINE

Castlewood House
77-91 New Oxford Street
London WC1A 1PX

T 020 7632 2000

F 020 7632 2001

E skills@skillsactive.com

www.skillsactive.com