

Fitness facilities are all the same aren't they? They all have what you'd expect in a gym - treadmills, weights, bikes ...

So what makes Partners In Health different? We like to believe it's the people and it all started with Lisa Robinson. This is her story:

Hi, I'm Lisa, owner of Partners In Health, mum to three grown daughters and exercise buddy to two canine companions. I have lived in Canberra since moving from Sydney in 1980. I graduated from the ANU in 1981 with an Arts degree majoring in psychology and then went on to complete a fourth year in physiology. With three young children to run around after, I became interested in health and fitness as a career change and completed the required courses to start my new profession. Since then I have done countless courses in health and fitness, massage and rehabilitation and have been a Level 4 Master personal trainer since 1992.

In early 1992 I became involved with rehabilitation when my therapy techniques caught the attention of a few local doctors and surgeons. Since then I am regularly referred patients who have had back, knee, shoulder and trauma surgery as well as illness management. I also became involved with eating disorder management after treating a number of young women presenting with anorexia. While working for one of Canberra's biggest commercial gyms, I treated numerous women for anorexia and body issues. I was actively involved in setting up Throsby Place, a centre for the management of eating disorders and continued there as a consultant for 6 years. Over the years I have successfully treated knee replacements, numerous post-surgery back, shoulder, ankle and feet rehab. I also do a large amount of postural re-alignment as the foundation to a healthy back and body.

Partners In Health is the realisation of my vision of a fitness facility that can actually make a difference to people's quality of life. This meant designing a centre that provides functional fitness rather than gym fitness. Commercial gyms rely on off the shelf choreographed large group fitness regimes so they can service large groups of people at one time. I believe this can be a safety issue, evidenced by the growing number of people I was treating for injuries from incorrect technique. I wanted:

- to set up a non-intimidating fitness centre
- to welcome all sections of the community, inclusive of older adults
- we practice what we preach and embrace the philosophy that we are never too old to start exercising, even if we have never done it before
- a relaxed friendly atmosphere with a low noise level, no queues for equipment and no lycra clad body builders
- gym equipment can benefit everyone as long as they are educated about safe techniques, safe programs and given beneficial and functional exercises

*Lisa Robinson*