

Rob Traxler



**I'm a
champion!**



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"When I was about 28 years old, I figured that I was in good shape because I was young. Now I realize that is a pretty common misconception of younger people.

I was 'dragged' to my first Y class by my wife – because I work in a high stress occupation and she thought that I needed it. It was way back (like about 30 years ago) when Y classes in Prince George were run out of the old Civic Centre. Tanis Wey was leading the first class I ever went to about 30 years ago. She came up to me (because I had no idea what I was doing!) and said something like: "Look, stand still, don't use any hands. People (read that as *men*) that have as much trouble as you often just quit!" And in my head I went, "Well, OK, then I won't be quitting, that's for sure!"

Tanis became a mentor to me; she drove me really hard to do more and I pretty much lapped it up. The more I lapped it up, the more she pushed; and then she asked me to take the Certification Course for Fitness Instructors, which I did. That was around the time that the Family Y got its first bikes for spin classes. And I started teaching bike classes. That was probably around 15 years ago.

Shortly thereafter, Tanis asked if I would take over Basic Training, which was the fore-runner to Boot Camp. I led that for many years and during that time, we started to go outside to Masich Place for Boot Camp. We had a very committed group of Boot Camp participants that still get together today.

I was not ever a 'jock' until all of this started to develop. One day, Bob Lane, one of the regular Boot Camp participants who also went through huge development as an athlete said to me, "Well, you know it's because of you and Tanis that I went through all of this!" And I remember thinking, "You're kidding! ME? I inspired you?" I was quite surprised. Bob and I have been friends for a long time now but I suppose it was around that time that I realized that anyone of any age can become an athlete and help others to do the same.

Around then, I started training my son's soccer team using a lot of the Boot Camp drills. So I did bike classes and boot camp and some circuit classes for many years.

In the last year or so, I've done more leading of Y classes than ever. Generally, I sit in my office at work and people come to me looking for advice – which I give; they listen and I'm in control. Shannon Johnson, for quite a long time, kept asking me to try and lead Interval Sculpt. She is an amazing person – a very calm manner, always upbeat, always smiling, always encouraging, and a real athlete. I was apprehensive – because that is a very intense class and it's difficult and fast. But she kept asking and did lots of buttering up. So I tried.

I found I just kept developing and developing; it is a real 'high' to go through those intense classes. I was able to come up with more and more different things to do and we started to get more and more and more participants and they were hugely encouraging too. And as you get into these things more, you learn more, you become more confident and it was really easy for me to move into leading a bunch of the more intense classes – so now I do Interval Training, Bike Classes, Boot Camp, Step and Sculpt, and the Circuit. We have a great following by a lot of keen people!

And it is a world away from my lawyer life!

What I like most is that I'm obviously 30 years older than many of the other instructors and many of the participants – but I can still do these classes on a par with many of the younger people. It really is a blast to do it all, keep up or ahead, come up with new material, and show myself and everyone that at any age, you can do ANYTHING!

The Y really does need to know that they have a truly excellent person in Shannon Johnson. She is so placid, so non-political, so encouraging in a calm manner and she never shows any annoyance or aggravation at anything – she maintains that steady, calm, encouraging demeanor which is a real asset to her and the Y."