

Club. They get together at the club as a group to encourage themselves in their lifting.

"We like to lift together to meet our goals of gaining muscle mass," said Chris McDaniel, 26. "I enjoy staying fit at this club."

Almost all health clubs in the area offer group aerobics classes. Those classes are another social opportunity.

There are a few clubs with racquetball courts. Steam rooms and saunas are available. All sorts of weight lifting, abdominal and cardiovascular equipment abound along with free weights.

Anyone who finds the equipment or the thought of a health club intimidating shouldn't, club managers all agreed.

"No one should feel intimidated coming into our club," said Matt Pell, Gold's Gym regional manager. "Everyone is here to get fit. We'll show them whatever they need to reach their goals. You change your body, you change your life."

People in the clubs, whether health club or bicycle club, all said their lives improved with exercise.

"I've been exercising for two years steady," said Fort Myers resident Allysa Shaftman, 20. "It gives me energy. If I don't exercise, I get tired. It takes away my stress."

Cape Coral resident Hood Little, 72, has been exercising since 1992. He doesn't look like he has an ounce of fat on his muscular-looking body.

"This gives me stamina, strength. I feel really fit," Little said. "I watch what I eat, don't want to clog the arteries up."

Like most, Jeff Burcenski, 50, said he wanted to lose weight and get in shape. He also added yoga to his routine.

"Thirty years ago, I was an aerobics instructor. I thought it was time to get back in shape," Burcenski said. "The yoga is really great too." ■

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FLORIDA WEEKLY PHOTO PETE SKIBA

Experts say women and men are vulnerable to osteoporosis, which depletes bone tissue. It pays for both to do aerobic and weight training exercises for their legs and arms.

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