

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Hello again and welcome to another edition of Let's Talk Ed With Professor Chris.

Shouldn't come as a surprise, I got my baseball cap on, so that means I'm ready for fitness.

Today, we're actually talking about health and fitness.

If you haven't subscribed, please do so as I provide all this information to you.

Help me in welcoming Chris. I'll just leave it as Chris. It's a pleasure...

CHRIS KACYON: Perfect thanks.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Chris, how are you doing?

KACYON: I appreciate being here.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Great.

KACYON: I appreciate you having me.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: So, we definitely gonna do the pull-ups. Looking around here, we'll see when we get to that.

KACYON: Right.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Thanks for coming on the show here, let's start with some of my surprise questions.

Not too surprise, basically tell us how your journey started and you always thought one day you become the department head for health and fitness.

KACYON: Absolutely not. I was not particularly fond of school growing up and I luckily had a love for baseball and sports. So, it's constantly involved in them and I had unfortunately like three surgeries on my shoulder. Took me out of baseball, but what it did is it put me into physical therapy a lot and I was doing it more and more.

And I was like, I could see myself doing this... it was the first time something clicked. I was like, I guess I'll go into construction. I guess I'll do something with my hands. Was in physical therapy and I was like, I think I could do something like this.

Uh, so I started exploring things online. Shadowing was a great help for me. I just staying on, just going and visiting people and I found like, OK, it's a little more slow-paced for my interest, but I found this thing called exercise science.

I went to undergrad and grad school at Pennsylvania, and I had been working as a personal trainer for all those years through college, and it was really enjoying it. That went on to like working at Duke Med, doing more physiology work, which is more special populations training.

And I think I got to the point around 2012 where I said like I've done this now for a while, I have a lot of experience in it... I wanna go back to grad school and teach it. So, I went and taught it and then I started as an adjunct professor, full time professor, and now we're here.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Great. So, once again, every time I do this interview, I ask the same question, right? I'm yet to find anyone who said, hey, this is what I wanted to do and I got right into it, right?

I like the way I'll pause this goal and then we ultimately find out exactly what we want to do.

KACYON: It helps you grow. It gets you well rounded and like it really helps you discern what you're meant to do, I think. And it's great if somebody can find that.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: So, in your program it says health and fitness. Why is it that every time I see health, I see fitness? Why are those two always in the same sentence?

KACYON: I think of them as the pillars, like fitness as a pillar of health and wellness, we'll say... like whereas you have like mental health in there you can have nutrition in there, you know taking care of your body in the fitness world is a really big part of it.

I always say so... fitness is extremely important, but what you eat in your diet is like even more important.

So, but do you have to have kind of both components, so, I think that's why they're always tied together and our program focuses less on the nutrition side and more on the fitness side, 'cause do have nutrition classes.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Great. Great. Alright, so this is great. Thanks again for clarifying those those two points.

Like I said, every time I hear fitness or health and more so now we're talking about it more, more and more.

When we started, when I actually reach out to you know, to do this, one of the things that was going through my mind was OK, you know, we're gonna be doing a program on health and fitness.

And I also didn't mention that you have a unique program, right? Because not only are you

gonna have students that are interested in health and fitness, this is also great for everybody else, right?

So, how do you differentiate between ohh you're a student studying for this or like me, what advice do you give to somebody like me outside of your program?

KACYON: Great question. And I think the main difference is our students are in the program to become the people helping people that are interested in getting more healthy or interested in getting stronger, faster, on a sports team, whatever. Our students are learning the skills to be that helper in the industry.

Whereas then I go and have conversations with friends and family who are looking for advice, like I need to lose five more pounds. If I had a nickel for every time I answer that question, I should just have cards that I pull out.

So, yeah, it's more just informing and being the informer.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Yeah. All right, so we're going to get into your program specifically, like you know, how long does it take, you know, and all that.

But before that, for an adult who just needs to know about health and fitness, right, let's start with just very briefly, what are some suggestions you have for that? I just want to get that out of the way that we could focus on students.

KACYON: It's a popular one. And I think I have been asked it also many, many times and I probably answered it in a bunch of different ways and the best thing I've kinda come to now is consistency.

I can tell you you can do this program and you're gonna lose this much weight or gain this much weight or strength, but if you don't do it, it's not gonna work.

So, it's not always the magic diet or the magic written program, but it's like what are you gonna do that fits with the rest of your life schedule? And what's gonna keep you consistently going back to the gym or to wherever your equipment is, or just even putting a video on YouTube?

There's so much out there that... access is not the problem anymore. It's just finding something you enjoy that you're willing to repeat multiple times a week and that goes with a diet just as well.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: OK, that's great.

So, I'm trying to find out if this is still the case because when I was a student, PE physical education... That's a requirement? Yes. Is this still a requirement for students?

KACYON: It was when I was in school.

I have a lot of non-exercise... they're health and fitness science program students in our PE classes so that either is a requirement by their program or they're taking it because they have an interest in, you know, taking the weightlifting class, yoga class.

So, we do have a lot of non-program students entering our program, but I'm not really sure if it's the requirement or an interest.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: So, you know I bring this back up because again, in college, when it was a requirement, I think the whole idea was that we need fitness one way or the other, right?

People are not really talking about the health component about fitness, and so I honestly didn't see it as a requirement. But hey... it's great, then you know something to do, and meanwhile, there are students who just couldn't wait to fill those requirements and get out of it.

KACYON: Yeah.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: So, you mentioned sports. So, I wanna go back a little bit to your college days because I think we take it for granted, right?

I did a little bit of sports through college. So, for you it's the same thing.

People always want to know; Well, you know, how do I go work out and then go to school? I am going to be so tired. I need you to help people understand that that's not okay, that's not how it happens. Yeah.

KACYON: Yeah. And again, I go back to the consistency, if working out in the morning fits with your your schedule, you know and some people say it makes you tired. Some people say makes you have more energy.

Now I'd say, maybe originally you might be tired because you're working on this weird schedule instead of getting up at 6 a.m., you're getting up at 4:30 a.m.

You're going to the gym. You know you have to go to the shower afterwards and then you get to work.

So, there is a bit of a process to make something work for your lifestyle, whether it works for one person might not work for somebody else. And yeah, it's absolutely crucial. I would say to your well-being and the well-being of the people you work with, there's gonna be people that are really into it and if they work, it's too stressful.

The first thing they give up is things that take their time and unfortunately you know, when things get stressful, exercising is what you need to do more of. It's good for up here.

So, yeah, time management is going to be pretty much the biggest determinant if you give it up or if you if you start doing it more.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Alright, let's talk about your program a little bit more.

Okay, so, be honest with me, right. If a student is interested in your program, how fit do they have to be?

KACYON: Not fit at all. I have a very... we have a variety of students because like you said in the beginning, a wellness is a passion like for a lot of people, not just people that have degrees in exercise science.

We have people that are like were in the business world for 50 years and they come back just because they're like, I want to be a trainer cause I've learned to love this. I wanna have... let other people feel how good I feel.

We have other people that say, like, I don't know if I want to be a trainer or a group exercise or how I wanna be involved. But like I lost a lot of weight and it was so fulfilling, I wanna help other people and now do this.

Then we have other people who come into the program to get in shape and then know how to, like, get themselves in better shape. You know, it's been interesting because I think in the beginning that would have been my assumption, and then I was very wrong.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Right.

KACYON: Like it is definitely a variety of students, which is really great because I'll get people calling saying like like I don't know if I'm fit for the program. I don't know if I'll look the part.

I, like you, do not have to worry about that. You know, it's it's really great for that.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay. I'm happy you put that out there. So, you're saying when a student comes and is interested in the program, you're not gonna say get down, give me 50 pushups.

KACYON: This is not the military. We do not have a PT test to get into. We we are very welcoming.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Thank you, that's good to know.

For your program, let's go through what some of the different programs are 'cause I wanted students to kind of know how long it takes. Is it a certificate that you get?

So, just walk us through some of...

KACYON: I am happy you asked that, we are growing our options. Because yes, we would say the two-year associates degree is the most robust option because it's two years you're taking everything from anatomy to exercise science to nutrition to like behavioral change because it's a really important part of it.

You know everything about exercise science, but if you can't get somebody to believe it and do it, they won't.

So, it's robust, you get all aspects of changing somebody's behaviors and but we also know that that's not gonna fit everyone's lifestyle.

Especially like a community college population, a lot of students are part time because they have full-time families. Full-time jobs or whatever they're here for the specific reason of their life.

So, we wanted to get other people those options. So, we have a certificate also, HFS certificate.

It's a one-year program where you just get the core curriculum that we have decided that if you take just these courses that you can take it in one year and be done.

You will be a really good trainer or group exercise instructor for a lot of people, and we think that's important to have both and then now recently one of our instructors is teaching an 8-week personal training Con Ed class, which is again we think the two year programs is the best, but that's not everyone out there's availability. So, we need to have an option for them and then so we just started collaborating with Con Ed and it's been really successful.

We're gonna run five classes this year, and then we're gonna start adding more Con Ed classes as we go.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: That's great.

So, what is the minimum requirement for... We got Planet Fitness, LA Fitness, Gold's Gym.

Somebody wants to work in there with a certificate. Will that get them in the doorway to work in one of those gyms.

KACYON: It will and luckily Wake Tech has a very good reputation. Our program as it has grown and we got accredited in 2018, and that was huge for us. There's only four in the country, so having that kind of as a stamp of approval of these students are having a quality curriculum and education.

That, and employers know that, and we work with affiliation agreements with all these employers so that our students can intern there.

That's a really big part of our program, but yeah, getting a certification, the certificate you will need to still sit for a personal training certificate. But yeah, then they would be able to interview. Yes.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: So, this is one question that I struggle with personally is what is being in shape and how do you know you are out of shape?

KACYON: That's a very good question and I think it's an overused, undefined term and I'm I've never thought about it. And I'm going to give you the best answer off the top of my head, but I feel like there's been...

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Better yet, let's say right now, if I say run two miles.

You have people... I don't like running. I play soccer. I love to play soccer.

But, I'm happy that mention though that there's not a clear definition right, because if I come in, I say Chris, I really feel like I'm out of shape. You know, say why? I said well, because so and so runs two miles, I cannot run two miles, but that is so and so, right? So, just help us a little bit.

KACYON: A good place to start is to understand that there are body types.

There are people that, put on weight easier. There are people that are just lean and they can't put on weight and I've worked with people that I've helped them lose weight and I've worked with people helping them gain weight. It is very difficult to gain weight if you have a lean frame and then you have mesomorphs which are people that can build muscle very easily.

Bodybuilders and you know the type when you see them, so there's different body types that you're prone to be, you know, moving towards. If I have somebody that's really thin, there's a probably a good chance that they're gonna be better at endurance sports. It's the muscle fiber makeup of the individual.

The bigger like I said, mesomorph individual. They probably have a different type of muscle fiber that is going to make them put on muscle better.

Then you're gonna have people that are just going to struggle to keep the weight off and that's just the type that they were given.

So, by looking at somebody that maybe works out a lot, but they're of that endomorph, the larger size, they could be in great shape, but maybe not what you've pictured as good shape.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay.

KACYON: So, it's a very much, uh, it's up to the individuals interpretation of it.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: OK, what's the minimum then you expect somebody to do?

And if they're not able to, you can say you know what... you're definitely out of shape. Let's say, and we walk in... If you can walk ten steps flights if you can pick up this weight... what is... what do you think the minimum then for somebody to do to say, you know what, you're really out of shape?

KACYON: I'd say first thing is you readjust your diet.

Number one, I always say I have a master's degree and 30% of the solution to health; it's nutrition, nutrition, nutrition and then move. And that movement, like I said, whatever you can do, consistently go for a walk. People have an hour off for lunch, go take a walk around campus, it's super nice out here.

Yeah, so, after you get the nutrition kind of narrowed down to what you can do consistently, that's taking out some of that obvious bad decisions, and that's usually the first place to start.

Like what are you eating that's obviously probably not a good idea? Like, OK well, this this and then like, let's not take them away, but like remove them but replace them with something.

Step one, what are you doing as far as physical activity? I always start physical activity because it's non structured movement. It's less threatening to hear than what's your workout?

Leading with that is like, oh, I don't like the gym. There's too many people. Umm I get nervous, but like so what's your physical activity like for a week? Are you like taking walks in the afternoon? Do you have a dog? Do you do gardening?

Like what is your activity level like and if it's kind of on the lower side, let's let's add a little bit more like would it be fun to go and do this or depending if they're into intermurals like kickball leagues and all of that.

So, kind of introduce movement, non-structured movement and then as they get into a habit and they start getting a little bit healthier than we can introduce something more structured.

Because at that time they say like I wanna do this or I wanna run my first 5K and then they develop these couch-to-5K programs.

So, yeah, I'd say just introduce healthy eating habits and then physical activity.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay. Is there anything like too much exercise?



KACYON: Ohh absolutely. One of the lectures I gave today, one of the signs of overtraining.

It is something that I think a lot of people do that are in the exercise world.

You're healthy and there are some people that are... too healthy is not the word, but they get obsessed with it. They get so excited about it, they're in the gym for two hours every day.

You do that and then you have a stressful job. Okay, now it's two different stressors on your body. And then you have a poor diet because you have a stressful job and then you might have issues with family at home. That's four stressors on your body.

All these things raise your cortisol levels, which you know is gonna make you stress out. You're not gonna be able to sleep. Now you haven't recovered after all these stress, and then you go and train really hard again... crash.

Yeah, that's how injuries happen. That's how, like injuries that you have no idea how they showed up, that's when they're gonna occur.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Right. Let's bring it all back to the student again.

For a student who's taking four classes Monday through Friday. We're talking about find time to do some exercising, right?

Very quickly, what's the typical program that you will have for student that feels like they're too busy and they kind of fit any... they don't have any time to fit any exercise in.

KACYON: Well, first and foremost, yes, sign up for PED-117. Okay, it is our weight training class.

We have also a number of activity classes that are open to the entire college.

Like I said, it goes back to if it's required or not. Financial aid, but that is very, very easy way to answer that.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: It is every day?

KACYON: Um, Monday through Thursday, Thursday.

I typically during normal business hours... we don't have any evening classes at the time we have in the past, we have a pretty large online curriculum. But yeah, I think that's the easiest way by far.

We are starting to work on the logistics behind student wellness hours. We haven't started it or launched it yet, but it's something that we're hoping to bring out in the future because just as

much as employees need wellness hours, employees need bonus hours, students are just as stressed and they need an outlet for that.

Also explain intramural options and other ways to keep students on campus a little longer.

Outside of that, it's usually link up with someone who has similar interests and exercise and find some activity to do in the evenings. There are plenty of programs out there that offer intramurals in sports because it doesn't always have to be exercising and a weight room.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Right. Great.

Okay, I'm gonna put you on the spot here.

KACYON: Okay.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Are you overtraining, yourself? What do you think you are?

KACYON: Absolutely not. I have to walk past the weight room to get to my car and it's shocking how many times I walk past the weight room to go home after a long day.

I had my bag. Everything was packed. I was ready to do it. The day happens and I just look away as I walk past this weight room.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: What's your... what's your typical week? Exercising schedule.

KACYON: If I'm consistent, I'll do five days a week for about 45 minutes, a little bit of a warm up about 40-minute program, little bit of a cool down.

I have it very easy because I'm in this building in both the buildings and and and I have a weight room.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay.

KACYON: I had no perspective. When I was a trainer, and I think this is really important. When I was a trainer, I'd be working with clients who are like, really, really badly wanting to get to their goal. And I'm like, you know, you see me once a week. I need you to come two other times a week when I'm not with you, and they like wouldn't make it happen.

I was like, well, if you want it enough, you're gonna make it happen. And then I got out of the personal training world and I got into a job. Speaking, a job still has the gym and my building and I struggled to get to the weight room and I was like how naive that I that I thought, you know... why don't you just go to the gym?

Whereas I worked in the gym... once, I stopped working in the gym I realized ohh life happens,

real things are going on so it is tough so I would say if you can be gracious with yourself and not beat yourself up on the days you don't make it but put it in your calendar like a meeting and treat it like one.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay, great.

Chris, I honestly wanna just keep going on this here. That's great information that you're sharing.

Uh, this room, by the way, is very welcoming. I definitely feel like I want to do some pull-ups, but what would be your closing remarks and then we'll get to how student can reach out to you as well.

But let's start with any motivation... any advice you have for anyone, right, but specifically for your students and your program.

KACYON: Yeah, I'm very proud of our program. Our faculty are absolutely amazing. We have grown so much and I think by being student-focused there, it has become a program I'm super proud of.

I'd say just try to eliminate as many barriers as you can to health and fitness, okay?

Like as many barriers that you think are not good for you, just start taking one out at a time.

Don't rehaul your life, because then you're gonna crash and you're gonna fall back to these old habits that are really, really comfortable, but maybe not good for you and your family... and start small. Start really small.

Take out the obvious things that maybe shouldn't be in your life.

Add in some, you know obvious things that probably should like more movement and you know always just keep your mental health and everything in check you know because you know, fitness is great for that.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: That's great. Great.

How can students find you?

KACYON: So, students can find us on our website. Type in the search bar at the top of the waketechnology.edu page. Health and fitness science. You will see our home page on the left.

You'll see a tab called faculty and you'll see all of our instructors there, me included.

And you can reach I'll have a phone number on there. My location as well as my email.

I'd say email works the best because I'm kind of jumping around to different campuses and or there's a tab on the first page of our website that says like contact me now.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: That's great.

Well, that's another edition of Let's Talk Ed With Professor Chris.

Great information which we just got. Again, if you have any questions, reach out to me and let Mr. Chris know.

Please do subscribe and most importantly... exercise, health, fitness.

These days we have a lot of resources, a lot of places that you can do that. Also like that Chris pointed out that there's the minimal right? Walk around. Just basic exercise you can do, but also most importantly, be consistent. Right, be consistent.

I don't do the five days a week, I do three days, but I'm definitely consistent on that and you can do the same.

Chris.

KACYON: Thank you. I had a good time.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: It's my pleasure.

KACYON: Thanks so much.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Alright.