

## **Making Your Health & Fitness Center a Welcoming Facility**

- Assess how environmental barriers can be removed and accessible features can be incorporated into all areas of your facility, including doors and entryways, restrooms and locker rooms, signage and equipment.
- Go beyond the minimum requirements of the law to incorporate principles of universal design to make your facility accessible to more people.
- Provide adaptive and assistive equipment that enables users of varying degrees of ability to use new and already existing equipment both safely and effectively.
- Interact with people with disabilities as you would any other member, taking into account individual needs and utilizing the many exercise options that may be available.

## **Good Information to Know**

- A disability may or may not be observable to the average person. It can affect mobility, vision, speech, hearing or cognition and is not necessarily an indicator of poor health.
- Approximately 50 million Americans, or nearly 20 percent of the population, have a disability. This is a growing niche market for the fitness industry.
- 100 – 125 million Americans have a health condition such as diabetes, heart disease or obesity that can be improved with a fitness program.
- A fitness center that accommodates people with disabilities is more likely to benefit from physician and health care providers referring their patients. In addition, an accessible center will win member loyalty and new member referrals.
- Any effort to address the needs of people with disabilities is an opportunity to market and expand your membership to a growing population.
- In addition to adaptive exercise equipment, some mainstream equipment can accommodate a wide range of ability levels. Ask your vendor(s) for information or contact NCPAD at [ncpad.org](http://ncpad.org) or (800) 900-8086 for additional resources.
- When building or modifying an existing facility, visit [www.access-board.gov](http://www.access-board.gov) or call (800) USA-ABLE (800-872-2253) to receive valuable information on fitness center design specifications that accommodate individuals with disabilities.
- There are many tax incentives available to facilities that make accommodations for people with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act; visit [www.adata.org](http://www.adata.org) or call (800) 949-4232.