

# REAL ESTATE WEEKLY

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## Fitness programs are helping agents bring their A-game

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By [Dan Orlando](#)

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Oddly enough, moving residential property in the city that never sleeps requires a full eight hours.

“I want to be the best president possible to my agents and I want to be fully functioning,” Stefani Markowitz, president of Rutenberg Realty New York said. “I can’t do that if I don’t get a good night’s sleep.”

Markowitz spoke with *Brokers Weekly* about how important it is for brokers to make time for their physical well-being.

She stressed that real estate professionals working in a high-pressure environment like New York City are likely not maximizing their potential if they aren’t a finely tuned machine, both mentally and physically.

“Physical fitness is incredibly important to me for a whole host of reasons,” she said. “I think in order to survive in this business and have the stamina that you need, it’s important to be physically fit.”

“An hour of exercise a day, if you can do that, helps your entire body,” Markowitz continued. “It helps keep you alert, it helps calm your mind.”



Stefani Markowitz

Markowitz has spent the past three years participating in the 6 a.m. class at Tracy Anderson's fitness studio in Tribeca.

While she prefers dedicating an hour each day to vigorous physical activity, she knows that each broker has individual needs when it comes to maintaining their own well being.

"I try to lead by example, and my agents know that I'm generally working out every morning," Markowitz said. "I encourage it, but I'm not going to force anyone to do anything."

Markowitz suggests that brokers walk to appointments if full-fledged workout sessions are not a good fit. In some cases, she suggests yoga and meditation to team members that prefer calming relaxation instead of exertion.

"I want them to have as long a career as possible, but I want them to be able to do that in a happy, balanced way," Markowitz said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: "In general, healthier employees are more productive," it stated on its website.

The organization points out that "healthier employees are less likely to call in sick or use vacation time due to illness," and that "companies that support workplace health have a greater percentage of employees at work everyday."

"Workplace health programs can reduce 'presenteeism' — the measurable extent to which health symptoms, conditions, and diseases adversely affect the work productivity of individuals who choose to remain at work," writes the CDC.

During a collaborative study with Workforce magazine, Virgin Pulse also produced findings that suggested that investing in health and wellness programs helps employers boost the productivity of their workers.

According to the findings, more than 87 percent of the 3,822 employees surveyed felt that overall wellness and health impacted the greater work culture of an office and more than 72 percent of workers wanted physical activity programs to be offered by their employer.

"The surest route to driving engagement? Investing in employees," writes Virgin Pulse.

Health incentive plans and offerings are so popular, that their availability was described as an "important factor" by 88 percent of the employees surveyed when it came to finding a job.

More and more, real estate companies are now working to inspire their workers to live better every day and are helping them make long-lasting healthy behavior changes so they can be not only fit and healthy, but focused on their work.

Halstead Property holds Wellness Wednesdays where the brokerage brings in outside speakers once a month to speak to agents in person and via teleconference about well issues.

City Connections Realty runs all-agent spin class, BOND New York does regular yoga classes.

Platinum Properties now runs fitness events in collaboration with local businesses that help their agents and their clients.



**Dezireh Eyn**

“We are very much about keeping our agents fit,” said [Dezireh Eyn](#), COO of [Platinum Properties](#).

“Fit people are usually healthier and hence happier. It’s an industry that’s really high stress.”

Platinum recently hosted a cycling event at a SoulCycle location in the Financial District. The class was free to Platinum clients and representatives in the area.

Eyn said that the event was a success and that they are already in talks with the spinning gym about hosting a follow-up event.

Platinum also recently hosted events for its brokers at Tone House in Flatiron, which helped to introduce the reps to the gym’s boot camp offerings.

“We’ve done two events there with our own company,” said Eyn. “It’s really all about teambuilding.”

“I think one of the biggest things, not only do you produce endorphins, it’s a big stress reliever,” Eyn continued. “In our industry there’s a lot of ups and downs. You can have a great day and the worst day all in the same week.”

Steve Evans, a broker who has been with Platinum for seven years, cares very much about physical fitness and he echoed Eyn's thoughts.

"I think everything is correlated to where, if you're lacking at one side of things, it kind of effects your equilibrium more or less," he said.

Evans, who attended the company's events at both SoulCycle and Tone House, feels that his physical fitness regiment helps keep him sharp and efficient even when the work week is not going his way. "It pays dividends," he said.

"All any human being can be at work is the best version of themselves," said Wendy Maitland, TOWN Residential's president of sales.

"One can't be the best version of oneself unless there is balance in their life and they're relatively happy and as healthy as they can be."

Maitland said that TOWN offers multiple incentives to its brokers that encourage them to pursue a healthy lifestyle.



Wendy Maitland

"We contribute on a monthly basis to either their physical fitness via a gym subscription or a yoga class etc," said Maitland. "Or they can use that contribution towards health insurance. We also provide classes and seminars."

TOWN recently expanded its professional development program dubbed "The Astor Room "

Lina M. Viviano directs the program with Maitland and leasing leader Itzy Garay. The Astor Room covers 50 topics ranging from brand building and the art of closing to teaching techniques for reducing stress and staying healthy.

Classes include Success Without Stress: How Meditation Can Help You Become Happier and More Productive, and Inspirational Fitness and the Mind/Body Connection.

Maitland said that encouraging wellness-related activities provides inspiration and motivation to the TOWN team of brokers, while allowing them to maintain both their physical and mental health.

“We believe all of these components contribute to maximizing each individual’s potential in work and in life,” she said.