

Trainer Spotlight: Toccara Daniel

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Toccara Daniel is a personal trainer, exercise physiologist, and group fitness instructor who currently works at Loyola University Medical Center/Trinity Health located in Chicago. Toccara instructs clients on the proper use of exercise equipment and conducts tutorials as well. When it comes to group training, Toccara teaches Zumba classes, Aqua Aerobics classes, and Cycling classes. After speaking with Toccara, here is what I learned:

When did you begin your fitness career?

5 years ago

Why did you decide to pursue a career in fitness?

Toccara originally went to school to become a lawyer. She received her degree in Psychology from the University of Illinois, with the hopes of going to law school. However, she found great interest in the relationship between Psychological tendencies and physical activity. Toccara explained that illnesses such as depression, can be improved upon by engaging in physical activity. Therefore, she switched gears and decided to pursue a career in the fitness industry.

Who/what was your biggest influence when you were starting on your career path?

Toccara's biggest influence were previous fitness instructors she's worked with. They encouraged her to obtain her certification and begin her career in fitness.

What is your favorite aspect of your career?

Toccara's favorite part of her job is when clients come in after a bad day and are in a horrible mood, but when they finish their work out, their mood instantly changes. They leave energized and feeling more positive about life than they were when they walked in the door. In addition to this, seeing her clients obtain the results they were aiming for is another one of Toccara's favorite aspects of her job.

What is the most challenging aspect of your career?

The most challenging aspect of Toccara's career is working around the schedules of others. She stated that it can be tough maintaining consistency with her clients because of cancellation tendencies. She understands that life happens and clients run into unexpected events throughout their days, but that it can be tough generating proper schedules when this occurs. In addition, clients can get injured, decide to end training, etc., so there's a lot to take into consideration when scheduling.

What advice would you give to emerging fitness professionals?

The biggest piece of advice Toccara would give emerging fitness professionals is to network and make yourself available to others. She encourages attending fitness centers or community services/events in order to demonstrate what it is that you do and build connections with others.

What sets you apart from other fitness professionals in your field?

Toccara stands out from other fitness professionals because she always meets her clients where they are. For example, if a client were to have a fast food addiction, she wouldn't act as a drill sergeant and demand they cut fast food out entirely. Rather, she would have them take baby steps to slowly remove it from their diet. She doesn't focus on what her clients can't do, but rather focuses on the small steps they can take to get them to where they want to be.

