

Jacquie's Outdoor Gym Taster Session Experience



I arrived at Barnes House feeling somewhat groggy – not the best way to start a gym session. Everyone in the little group I encountered was all very friendly, which dissipated my low energy. We took a relaxing walk up to Canteloves Park and we arrived at the outdoor gym, which I must say was impressive looking; it had a ‘just installed’ gleam. Tim the trainer did a risk assessment which involved asking us in a friendly yet considered way about any medical issues that we may have. Maybe due to age, only one of us didn't have a diagnosed medical challenge. It was very useful being aware of my capabilities.

Tim assured us we could all participate, telling us to take care and not push through pain. He then took us through a clear and concise warm up. First, we did walking on the spot: he made sure we swung our arms correctly. He explained that we could cause damage to our shoulder if we swung from the elbow, which I was doing. After that, we did a few arm curls which even I couldn't do wrong! Then we did squats. Again he explained how vital it was to keep our toes in line with our knees, and push your backside out. He told us to imagine we were trying to touch a wall. That explanation helped me tremendously! We did a few other exercises, followed by Tim giving us a coherent demonstration of each machine. He told us to do twelve reps on each machine, according to our condition. What fun that was!

The machines I particularly liked were the tai chi machine and the leg press machine. The tai chi machine was like two really big dinner plates. I had to spin them with my hands in both directions. I liked it as I found it was somewhat gentler than the other machines. The leg press machine was very easy to use; we sat with our back against the back rest, placed our feet on the foot rests and lifted our legs outwards, away from our body. We could go at our own speed and capability, plus we could control the amount of weight we lifted, as we could with all the machines, by turning a conveniently placed knob which was located at the back of the machine. When we finished, one of the other volunteers facilitated a cool down. This consisted of going for a walk with some gentle stretches to finish off. It was fun as we felt comfortable with each other, and had a bit of a laugh! When it was time to leave, one of the participants said with a big smile on her glowing face “I feel much better. I really enjoyed it and will definitely be coming again next week!”

Jacquie Hamel, Healthy Minds Sports Buddy