



OPERATION VETSTRONG

Program Overview

Operation VetStrong at the Y is a prescription for health. The Y is inviting local providers of veterans' services to provide Operation VetStrong at the Y for those veterans who could benefit from increased activity. With a prescription, the veteran (and their household) will receive a discounted 30-day membership to the Y. YMCA Wellness Coaches will work with veterans to develop personalized fitness plans based on your suggestions as the referring agency.

We believe that this structured program can be extremely beneficial. At the Y, veterans and their families will gain increased self-confidence to initiate and sustain positive health habits. Surrounded by a community of support and meaningful relationships, Operation VetStrong at the Y participants will have the opportunity to create personalized, realistic health goals and make progress in achieving long-term change that will last the rest of their lives.

Benefits to the Veteran (and Family)

- Long-term healthy lifestyle change
- Learn to exercise in a safe way for improved strength, flexibility, balance & range of motion
- Prevention instead of intervention
- \$30 "Y-Card" at the end of the month trial that can be applied to membership or classes, if the veteran has completed an initial assessment, participated in a group exercise class and used the Y at least three times a week
- Financial assistance program for those in need

In addition to utilizing the Y, the Operation VetStrong at the Y program encourages participants to engage in activity using community parks and recreation resources. The Y also provides activities for families to participate in at home. The YMCA Healthy Family Home website is an excellent resource for people of all ages interested in taking steps towards a healthier lifestyle and overall better well-being. When entering this website the user-friendly arrangement provides visitors an organized way to finding exactly what they are looking for. <http://www.ymca.net/healthy-family-home/>

How Does it Work?

If a veteran would benefit from the "Operation VetStrong at the Y" program, a physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, certified health educator or other veteran referral service can write a prescription for the veteran to come try the Y. It will be most beneficial if any specific activities or goals are identified.

Do I just write "go to the Y" on a prescription form? What about HIPPA?

To make the referral process as easy as possible, the Y is providing a single form that combines the clearance for exercise, veteran release of information and referring agency recommendation. The form should be completed and signed by both veteran and referring practitioner and then given to the veteran prior to completing the appointment.

What information is available for the veteran?

The Y is providing a veteran flyer that offers an overview of the program. This can be given to the veteran along with the prescription.



How does the membership work?

The veteran presents to prescription at the Y and Y staff will start the membership process as well as schedule the initial assessment.

The membership is \$20 for the trial month. This will include not only the veteran, but the veteran's household. There is no time limit for the prescription. However, the Y will keep the prescription in exchange for the services we provide under the trial membership. The same prescription cannot be used more than once.

At the end of the month these individuals/families will be able to convert to a Y membership. Financial assistance will be available as needed.

For those who do the three steps above (assessment, visits and class), the Y will provide a \$30 Y card that they can use toward their first month membership, Y wear, or a fee-based class or program (personal training, swim lessons).

What support will the veteran/family receive at the Y?

During the first month, the Y's Wellness Coaches will work to engage the veteran (and family) in the following ways:

- Start with initial assessment for BMI, strength and flexibility, then development of a workout plan. Participants will be strongly encouraged to go through the Wellness Works program which includes an initial assessment, coaching sessions, workout routines and basic nutrition counseling.
- Participation in at least one group exercise class
- Use of the Y a minimum of 3 times a week

How do I get additional materials?

The prescription/release form, veteran flyer and office Q&A sheet are all available by emailing lirwin@bluewaterymca.com or for download on the Y website at <http://www.bluewaterymca.com/operation-vetstrong.html>

Why is a \$30 gift card being offered?

The elements to earn the \$30 card are all directly tied by research into the key things that new members – especially Health Seekers – need to do in order to create a sustainable lifestyle change and long-term involvement at the Y. People like to “earn” something – the gift card was identified because it is easy to use as a reward or incentive.

What is a Health Seeker?

The Y defines health seekers as all children, youth, teens, adults, and families whose successful pursuit of health and well-being requires continuously supportive relationships and environments. Based on data from more than 100,000 new members at YMCAs around the country, we know that two-thirds of the people coming to the Y identify themselves as health seekers. They acknowledge that they attempt to make every day healthy choices and live well, but struggle to do so.

Programs like Operation VetStrong at the Y are designed to offer the support that health seekers need to create long-term lifestyle changes.