

# Member Spotlight-Retiree



## A Career Built on Exploration and Leadership

**Ben Winkelman** spent eight impactful years at BP from 2000 to 2008, working in Business Development with the Deepwater Commercial Team. His career spanned deep gas exploration in the Gulf of Mexico and leadership roles in exploration and offshore operations. What stands out most to Ben, however, is not just the work, but the talented people he collaborated with along the way. All connections that shaped every stage of his career.

## A Fitness Journey That Started Early

Ben's involvement with the BP Fitness Center dates back even further, to his time with Vastar in the mid-1990s. Through a unique benefits exchange, Ben became one of the lucky employees to gain access to the Fitness Center. That opportunity turned into a long-term commitment to health. He began training with Sheila Sharemet for several years and later transitioned to working with Josh, a partnership that continues to this day.

## Fitness for a Life Well Lived

Staying active after retirement is about much more than workouts for Ben and his wife, Jean. Their goal is simple but powerful: to stay healthy enough to fully enjoy travel, adventure, and life together. **Ben describes it as maximizing the “go-go years,” delaying the “slow-go years,” and avoiding the “no-go years” altogether.** Fitness has given them the freedom to hike national parks like Big Bend, Yosemite, and Haleakalā, explore Europe and Canada, and embrace every opportunity to “get up and go.”

## **Movement, Variety, and Balance**

Ben enjoys a wide mix of activities including boxing, strength training, stretching, yoga, meditation, and walking. He values variety over any single piece of equipment, appreciating how the Fitness Center continues to evolve with new programs, challenges, equipment upgrades, newsletters, and expanded hours. His daily routine reflects intention and balance, beginning early in the morning and weaving movement, mindfulness, and connection throughout the day.

## **Lessons Learned and Wisdom Shared**

Ben's biggest fitness accomplishment in retirement is improving his and Jean's health and staying active, upright, and engaged in life. **His advice to current BP employees is heartfelt and clear: start early, participate often, and take full advantage of the Fitness Center and its staff.** He wishes he had prioritized mental and physical health during the workday earlier in his career, a reminder that it's never too soon or too late to invest in yourself.

## **Living with Gratitude**

When asked about supporters, Ben is quick to credit Jean as his biggest champion and Josh as a true fitness superhero. **His outlook on life is grounded in gratitude and perspective. “It’s not ‘I have to,’” he says. “It’s ‘I get to.’”** He encourages everyone to smile, enjoy the moment, and keep moving forward focused on what's ahead, not what's behind.

## **Thank You, Ben**

Thank you, Ben, for sharing your journey and for being such a positive example of what lifelong fitness can look like. Your commitment to health, adventure, and gratitude inspires our entire BP Fitness community.

