Creating a Personal Fitness Training Business

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)
By
Tara Gerber

Professor William C. Moser, Advisor
Department of Marketing

(Advisor Signature)

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana

Month of Graduation: May 2002
Abstract

My purpose
This thesis is a guide to small business that has everything I need to start my own business. It is written in a casual, “how-to” format. It is a guide to success in entrepreneurship based on my research and advice gained from professors and my experiences at Ball State. The thesis project is meant to be a guide for entrepreneurs – specifically, independent contractors of fitness services.

My research
This thesis combines everything I have learned in the last four years about marketing and selling, especially in my senior-level capstone courses: Strategy Management, Marketing Management, Channel Management and the Business Strategy Game. I have also incorporated my two areas of interest: entrepreneurship and personal fitness training. I completed an Independent Study in marketing this semester in which I made a business plan. The sample company I created is Fitness For Life. Examples from the business plan for Fitness for Life are included in this thesis. I also included sample forms from entrepreneur.com, the best resource for small-business owners, in my opinion.

Inspiration for Each Section of the Report
I.A.: My emphasis on image here is a concept I learned in Dr. Lowry’s retail management course. We specifically discussed the importance of communicating a consistent message to customers. The part about Dr. Stephen Covey and missions is based on what I learned in Dr. Cox’s Honors colloquium “The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.” Dr. Cox showed us the importance of having and following a well-defined mission for our lives. We also discussed personal responsibility in planning our lives and reaching our goals.
I.B.: Many of my classes discussed goal setting. The most memorable are Dr. Naffziger’s management course and my EdHi Leadership course.
I.C.: My channel management course with Dr. Stautamoyer showed me that companies need to establish sustainable advantages to be successful. Usually, low price is not sustainable, but having unique services and quality people are sustainable.
I.C.i. and ii.: I never understood the grueling schedule of trainers until I attended the three-day workshop required to get my Aerobics and Fitness Association of America certification for personal trainers. The instructors made it clear that we were the servants to our clients and that, to be successful, we would have to work on our clients’ time, and to their expectations.
I.D.: I completed my first SWOT analysis in Dr. Bartlett’s business communications course and continued to practice SWOT analysis in my marketing and management classes.
I.F.: Dr. John Goodale in my operations management course, as well as many of my other professors, taught us to benchmark. The system of comparison was reinforced when I worked at JC Penney and was asked to fill out a competitor analysis sheet much like the one from entrepreneur.com that I put in this report.
I.G.: Dr. Baird’s lectures in my advertising course have shown me the money-and time-saving benefits of focusing on a specific audience. A business cannot effectively serve everyone; it must choose which types of people will make the best customers.
II. Professor Moser introduced me to the fundamentals of marketing – the “Four P’s” – in my introduction to marketing course.

II.C.: Professor Alfredo A. Marin-Carle is an artist who showed his journalism graphics class how to turn ordinary brochures, magazine spreads, and Web sites into works of art. He forced us to learn complex graphics programs like Quark, Photoshop and Dreamweaver, and I still use those programs in other classes. I designed the Web site for this thesis in Quark. The site, if published, would be easy to navigate. The pictures I chose are from magazines, but an actual published site would ideally have pictures of me training people. The article “Top 5 Weight Room Mistakes” in the Web site was an assignment for a media writing class, Journalism 211. The article was published in the fall 2001 issue of Expo, Ball State’s student magazine, of which I am the assistant editor.

II.F.: Dr. Avila teaches with a “modeling” approach, showing students how to sell and then letting them try the methods. We were videotaped in his professional selling class so that we could watch ourselves and correct our mistakes.

III.: The finance section was inspired by Professor Sundarum, Department of Finance.

IV.: The audit section is from Dr. Lowry’s retail management class.

V.: The legal issues section is thanks to Dr. Hammer and his business law class and the AFAA training sessions.
Acknowledgements

My professors have provided invaluable advice to me over the last four years. I would like to thank the following:

Mr. Alfredo A. Marin-Carle, my graphics design professor, Department of Journalism, for showing me the importance of simplicity in design. His specific advice on Web design: avoid clutter, create continuity between all pages, achieve balance and use lots of white space. (Please see my Web site sample design).

Mrs. Sheryl Swingley, my journalism writing instructor, Department of Journalism, for praising and criticizing my writing. She instilled in me curiosity for people and showed me how to cure it by asking “probing questions.” Her emphasis on thoroughness and accuracy fed my desire for perfectionism. (Please see the article in my Web site, “Top 5 Weight Room Mistakes,” written for a journalism class and published in Expo, Ball State’s student magazine.)

Dr. Howard Hammer, my business law professor, Department of Finance, for instilling in me an intense fear of the possible legal repercussions of almost any action in business. My legal details in this thesis are due to his admonitions.

Dr. Srinivasan Sundarum, my finance professor, Department of Finance, for telling us during the first week of class that “we can all retire millionaires,” and then for telling us we have to follow our dreams, even if that means teaching instead of earning six figures. I hung on his words, I believed them, and I am convinced I will retire a millionaire.

Mr. William C. Moser, my marketing management professor and fellow Beta Gamma Sigma member, Department of Marketing, for telling me the importance of “marketing myself” and for his constant awareness of business trends. His passion for marketing and his personal library were helpful and inspiring.

Dr. Ed Cox, my professor in the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People Honors Colloquium, Department of Educational Leadership, for his wisdom in relationships and self-management.

Dr. Joseph Brown, my market research professor, Department of Marketing Chairperson, for approving my independent study proposal and for his direct, no-nonsense style.

Dr. Ramon Avila, my professional selling professor, Department of Marketing, for believing in me and encouraging me to do what I enjoy. He traveled with three students to Texas over spring break to compete in the National Collegiate Sales Competition, in which I placed sixth out of 46 students. It was an opportunity that opened my eyes to the world of selling. Dr. Avila showed me the importance of attitude and character in the way he lives his life.

Dr. Woodrow Richardson, my strategy management professor, Department of Business, for showing me what makes a business strong. He is a consultant, which is my ultimate career goal. He listens to endless questions and is always willing to share.

Lynne Richardson, College of Business Dean, for offering her support and advice during my job search and my sales competition practice. She is a model for women in business.

These people have encouraged me to believe that I will succeed. I am forever grateful.
Table of Contents

I. Creating a Strategic Focus and Plan for Your Business
   A. What is your Mission? 8
   B. Setting Goals 11
   C. Customer Service Positioning Strategy 11
      i. Hours of service 12
      ii. Treatment of clients before, during, after session 12
   D. Performing a SWOT Analysis 14
   E. Industry Analysis: Knowing Trends in Fitness 15
   F. Knowing Your Competitors 16
   G. Know Your Target Market 18

II. Specific Marketing Plans: The Four P’s
   A. Price: 18
   B. Promotion 18
   C. How to Manage a Web site 19
   D. Placement 21
   E. Product 21
   F. Sales Management 23
      i. Why do we sell? 23
      ii. Relationship selling 24
      iii. Prospecting 24
      iv. Presenting your service 25
      v. Handling resistance 27
vi. Convincing clients to stay 30

vii. Maintaining relationships 30

viii. Information management 31

III. Managing Financial Data and Projections 35

IV. How to Audit Your Business Horizontally and Vertically 37

V. Legal Issues in Personal Training 41
I. Strategic Focus and Plan

A. What is Your Mission?

Just as a retailer has a company image, you need an image as a trainer. For example, Best Buy is seen as a price leader that carries a wide and deep selection of electronics. Gap, Inc. is seen as a fashion-forward company for preppie hipsters. What is your image? Are you a no-nonsense dictator who plans your sessions and sticks to your plan? Or are you a more peaceful listener who's flexible according to what each client wants?

Developing your strategic vision is the very first thing you should do. Your vision is a narrow statement that defines your focus and where you fit in the industry. How are you different from the other trainers? What are your goals? What kind of service do you offer? These are questions that the vision answers.

Your vision can be revised, but keep in mind that it should act as a roadmap as to where your company is going. Here is an example:

Fit For Life Strategic Vision: To remain an independent fitness consultant known for giving professional long-term dedication, personal weekly attention, measurable results, a focus on fitness trends, and complete satisfaction to adult and geriatric clients in their place of choice and their method of choice while walking the talk.

Here is what Dr. Stephen Covey, author of The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, has to say about missions:

Creating a Personal Mission Statement will be, without question, one of the most powerful and significant things you will ever do to take leadership of your life. In it you will identify the first, most important roles, relationships, and things in your life--who you want to be, what you want to do, to whom and what you want to give your life, the principles you want to anchor your life to, the legacy you want to leave. All the goals
You can build your own life or business mission statement on the Franklin Covey Web site by going to www.franklincovey.com/missionbuilder, or you can use the entrepreneur.com self-test on the next page to determine the vision for your business.\textsuperscript{ii}
To develop an effective mission statement, ask yourself these questions:

- Why does my company exist? Who do we serve? What is our purpose?

- What are our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats?

- Considering the above, along with our expertise and resources, what business should we be in?

- What is important to us? What do we stand for?

Now that you've answered those questions, you are ready to write your own mission statement. Use the area below.
B. Goals

Goals you set for your business need to be broad, quantitative and objectives, with dates so that you can measure your progress. Think realistically and make sure that with each goal, you know how you will gauge your success later. Some sample goals:

1. Gain recertification every two years as per AFAA guidelines.
2. Gain a Weight Training Certification, a Pilates Certification, and an Aerobics Certification in the next six years.
3. Provide e-mail consultations for free during the first year.
4. After the first year, consultations will require a 6-month relationship with at least one meeting a week, but all e-mail consultations will be free for current clients.
5. Establish relationships with dieticians, physical therapists, medical doctors, nutritionists, psychological counselors and other experts.
6. Maintain customer relations for long-term relationships without compromising quality of service.

C. Core Competency and Sustainable Competitive Advantage

A sustainable competitive advantage goes beyond the five P’s. To have a long-term advantage over competitors that cannot be easily copied, each company must establish a unique strategy that offers value to the consumer. What is your unique feature? What can you give your clients that no other personal trainer or gym or home system or video can give?

See the answers Tara Gerber came up with below:
Fit For Life seeks to maintain a reputation as described in the strategic vision by keeping honest, value-added relationships with all channel members, including AFAA, any suppliers of equipment or physical space, and any professionals that I partner with.

My core competency is and will remain to keep persistent contact with all clients to inspire and encourage them. No gym does that. Finally, I will offer my clients the convenience of helping them in their homes or wherever they want to meet.

i. Hours of service

As a trainer, you’ll be working all hours of the day because your clients will want you to work with their schedules. Therefore, you may have to train someone who wants to run before work in the morning, who works at 8 a.m. You may train someone who does not have any free time until 9 or 10 p.m. Be sure to make your working hours clear to your potential clients.

Tara Gerber’s hours are listed here as an example:

I will work from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to noon by appointment (clients) only. I will work from Monday through Saturday. I will establish weekly dates and times for each individual client and I will reserve the right to vacation at any time.

ii. Treatment of Clients before, during, after session

AFAA suggests specific guidelines for client relationships that will support behavior change. They are as follows:

- Emphasize benefits. Tell clients about the many benefits of exercise and remind them of their continued progress.
- Set appropriate, achievable goals. Goals should be specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic and timed.
• Avoid assigning too much too soon. If you give clients too many days of exercise or too many things to remember, especially when they are beginners, they will want to give up too quickly.

• Give feedback. Point out when a client is able to run farther or lift more weight.

• Prevent Boredom. Design new routines that make exercise fun. You can also encourage reading, watching television, listening to music or other distractions to help clients stick with the program—and with you.

• Be a good role model. Walk the talk when it comes to diet and positive body image. The best and first incentive your clients will have is your own appearance and lifestyle.

You’ll also want to decide exactly what you and your client will do in each training session. For example, you might want to say that you’ll provide a free hour consultation, during which you will ask the client to fill out a health history form. You may also ask the potential client questions about goals and lifestyle to see if the two of you would work well together. At the second meeting, you might have the client sign a contract and liability form, then discuss method of payment, cancellation policies, and reimbursements. You may then discuss the fitness routine you created and decide on times to meet each other. At the third meeting, you may conduct fitness tests or start the training.

Here is a sample of Tara Gerber’s client service objectives:

All clients will be treated with respect. Each potential client has the right to a free half-hour consultation. Every meeting thereafter
must be paid for in advance. Before actual training begins, each client will receive his or her initial one-hour consultation, which will involve legal paperwork, completing fitness questionnaires, discussing doctor release forms, and discussing health problems and fitness goals.

The body fat, flexibility, and cardiovascular health assessment will be administered at the next meeting.

Clients will meet with the trainer at a place agreed upon by both parties. After each session, the trainer will record all relevant information in the client information system. Clients will be contacted for encouragement by phone or mail and will meet with the trainer as often as needed. I meet with clients for as long as they need to complete their workout (usually 1-2 hours), plus an additional half hour for consultation and review.

D. Perform a SWOT Analysis

Strengths are things you can do well. Weaknesses are areas you can improve. Opportunities are things happening outside your business that you might want to pursue. Threats are outside negative forces you can’t control. See the next page for a sample SWOT from another personal trainer:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Factors</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Certification through AFAA</td>
<td>New to industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Friendly, persistent</td>
<td>Shy from solicitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholastic</td>
<td>Love to learn</td>
<td>No health-related degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Management skills Selling skills Consultant skills Experience as a trainer</td>
<td>Need to learn management software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Access to loans</td>
<td>I have no capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Development</td>
<td>Ask questions for TQM</td>
<td>Little funds for mkt resrch.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External Factors</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>People more health-conscious</td>
<td>One-on-one service more expensive than gym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>Contacts through church, school</td>
<td>Gyms gaining popularity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological</td>
<td>Contact Management software, Online link to AFAA, the fitness certification organization, provides for better customer service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td></td>
<td>Still emerging from recession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal/Regulatory</td>
<td>Some people prefer certified trainer (me) over non-certified for safety reasons</td>
<td>Many malpractice suits to be careful of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fitness industry unregulated, so people wary of “unprofessional” trainers. iv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**E. Industry Analysis: Trends in Fitness**

To keep track of trends, subscribe to professional journals through your accrediting organization (AFAA, ACSM, etc.). These publications will help you know about your potential clients and what they expect and what you should know about legal
and health issues. You can also find numerical data at www.census.gov and through the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

F. Know Your Competitors

Look in the phone book and visit or call any gyms or independent contractors you find. Ask around about them. Discover their unique offerings and consider how you compare. You might want to write down prices, numbers of clients, services offered, hours of operation, cleanliness and appearance of facility, and any other facts you think are relevant. Compare yourself and make sure that you are competing effectively. Use the entrepreneur.com chart on the next page to evaluate your competitors.
This work sheet will help you define your competitors. Competitors are companies that make products or perform services similar to yours (e.g., you deliver complete dinners, and so do they), make products or perform services that can be substituted for yours (e.g., delivery of pizza or Chinese food), and make products or perform services that are analogous to yours (e.g., ready-made deli carryout from supermarkets). Fill in the following table about your competitors. You may need to create additional tables to have enough room for all your major competitors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Competitor A</th>
<th>Competitor B</th>
<th>Competitor C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where is your competitor located?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your competitor's annual sales?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who are the major managers and members of the board?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the company owned or in partnership with any other corporations?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the competitor's strengths?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are their weaknesses?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the company's product line?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do the products compare to yours, in terms of functionality, appearance and any other criteria?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is their price structure?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the company's marketing activities?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the company's supply sources for products?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the strengths and weaknesses of their sales literature?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the company expanding or cutting back?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
G. **Know Your Target Market**

What types of clients do you want? Consider ages, locations, gender, yearly earnings, and goals of potential clients. If you focus on one group, such as young women, older people, adolescents, rehabilitation patients or sports enthusiasts, as opposed to focusing on any and all groups, you are more likely to be a better trainer in that one area and you will become known for that area of expertise.

II. **Specific Marketing Plans: The Four P’s**

A. **Price**

Analyze your price based on your strengths and weaknesses as compared to others in the industry. When you begin, you may want to offer an introductory low price, especially if your name is not well known. Establish specific prices for each service you offer, and charge everyone the same price to avoid misunderstandings.

B. **Promotion**

Promotions allow you as a trainer to communicate with all potential customers. Promotions are a way of generating new business, reinforcing your name in people’s minds, and creating goodwill for your business. More suggestions from AFAA:

- When approaching physicians, be organized and concise. Describe your credentials, explain what you can do for their patients and ask if you may leave your cards, brochures, or flyers in the office waiting room.
- Network with these professionals also: dieticians massage therapists, nutritionists, psychotherapists, social workers, registered nurses, and chiropractors.
• Network with equipment stores. They may be able to send you referrals or let you leave your brochures there.

• Volunteer to speak at the Rotary Club, church groups, schools, and other community associations. Look in the telephone book. You can talk about how to incorporate exercise into daily life, or how to get started in a fitness program.

• Write fitness articles for a newspaper or magazine and have a fitness message on the radio as part of the regular programming.

• Offer gift certificates to existing clients that they can give to friends.

C. How to manage a Web site

Being a great trainer won’t earn you a living unless people know you’re available to work for them. A Web site is a great way to communicate a large amount of information without having to personally share it to each individual. A Web site is the perfect place to display a lot of the things this book has covered: your image, your availability, your mission, and your product and services. After its initial setup, a Web site can perform many functions for your business.

Don’t forget:

• Always respond quickly to inquiries. If you’ve established a place for visitors to ask questions, be sure to be prompt with responses, or else the visitors won’t be back.
• Update the site regularly. Nothing is more frustrating – or damaging to your professional image – than outdated or irrelevant information. Keep current so visitors know you’re on top of the business.

• Keep your design simple. People who view your site want answers quickly and effortlessly, and if they can’t find answers, they won’t pay attention. Keep your design clean and uncluttered and leave lots of blank space.

• Consistency is key. If you provide pages and pages of information, keep at least one element the same on each page so that people know they are still at your site. Also, provide ways for them to go “back” or “home” so they don’t hit dead ends.

See the sample Web site for Fitness For Life at the end of this report.
D. Placement

It is unlikely that you will fly or drive long distances to reach your clients. You will most likely work in one area and visit clients within that area. Of course, you’ll need to decide if you will train clients in their homes, in your home, or in another specified place, like a recreation room, a gym, or a park. In addition, you’ll want to decide whether you will perform phone consultations and training via the Internet.

E. Product

You can’t be a trainer and make money unless you have a service that people pay for. That’s easy, you say. My service is helping people get fit. But it’s not that simple! You will need to make many decisions on the services you offer and the products you sell based on your own qualifications, the client needs in your area, and legal issues.

Will you also sell protein bars? Will you refer clients to other health professionals for a commission? Will you partner with a gym to provide clients a place to work out? Will you offer to sell equipment for a certain manufacturer? Will you offer only one-on-one training, or group classes? If you work in people’s homes, what types of things will you take with you? Tape measures? Music? A step? A resistance band? Medicine balls? Mats? Will you teach Pilates and Yoga and Spinning, or just traditional weight lifting? Once you answer these questions, you will have a better idea of the total service that you offer and you will be better able to recruit and keep clients. You can use the entrepreneur.com chart on the next page to help you decide which products and services to offer.
This work sheet will help you determine how successful you will be if you enter a given business and sell a given product. Assign each business opportunity and product a column number. Answer each question along the left-hand side of the form assigning a rating of 1-3, with 3 being the strongest. Total each column after you’ve finished. The opportunity and product with the highest total points are your strongest candidates for success.

### Business Opportunity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Opportunity</th>
<th>Business 1</th>
<th>Business 2</th>
<th>Business 3</th>
<th>Business 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance of your previous experience to opportunity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity with the daily operations of this type of business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compatibility of business with your investment goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compatibility of business with your income goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely profitability of business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood of business to meet your desire for personal fulfillment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected growth for the industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptability of risk level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptability of hours you will need to work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Column Totals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Product Marketability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Marketability</th>
<th>Product 1</th>
<th>Product 2</th>
<th>Product 3</th>
<th>Product 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Probability of use by target market</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compatibility with image desired</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitiveness of price</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number and strength of marketable features</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probability that product will enhance sales of current line</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected stability of demand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to overcome seasonal or cyclical resistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniqueness of product</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility of business to obtain needed equipment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
F. Sales Management

i. Why do we Sell?

Trainers must sell to maintain relationships with clients and to make money. All trainers are in the business, at least in part, to make money, and all personal trainers are familiar with sales, otherwise they wouldn’t have any customers. Sales is simply finding the right people for your services, getting to know those people, selling them the service, and maintaining the relationship.

If you work for a gym, you probably sell the intangible idea of fitness to your clients. They’ve already entered the building; it’s your job to get them to appreciate your facility and your services. If you’re an independent contractor, on the other hand, sales are more difficult. You must generate a client base and convince people that you are better for them than any other trainer, in addition to convincing them that they need fitness.

This section on sales management outlines the four areas of sales: prospecting (finding the right people), information gathering (staying current on what your clients need and new fitness information), presenting your service (convincing prospects that you are the trainer for them), and relationship maintenance (keeping clients happy).
ii. Relationship selling

Before we begin, you need to know that, in the fitness industry, you must know relationship selling. Traditional selling, the opposite of relationship selling, employs aggressiveness, competitiveness, and selfishness to make each sale. Relationship selling focuses on communication, sensitivity and cooperation so that the trainer and the client both win. Think about it: if your clients can’t trust you to listen and treat them well, they won’t come back. Long-term relationships will make the most revenue, and it’s easier to maintain a relationship than to forge a new one. Remember: your current clients are your best advertisers, so treat them well. Your business can grow by word of mouth.

iii. Prospecting

Prospecting is the method of finding new clients. Prospecting, or generating business, is at the base of your livelihood. As a trainer, you probably want to tell everyone you meet about fitness and how important it is. Therefore, you’re likely to consider everyone as a prospect. That’s where you’re wrong. You may not be qualified to teach aerobics or work with geriatric populations. Therefore, you would not look for people who need those services. Here’s how to find what you do want:

- Become the center of activity. Join country clubs, civic groups, the Chamber of Commerce – any organization that will help you meet and mingle with people who could use a personal trainer, or who knows someone who can. If nothing else, these people can serve as references in
the future. Always seek to expand your professional relationships, and keep networking.

- Work by referral. If one prospect doesn’t work out, ask if that person knows someone you could call.

- Take initiative. If a client brings a friend to the gym one day, start a conversation. If you notice a business that could use a program for its employees, write a proposal.

- Advertise. Enough said.

- Go to seminars that are not related to fitness, but to business or sports.

iv. Presenting Your Service

You need to dominate the first conversation with your prospect by asking meaningful questions. This way, you avoid wasting time on your prospect’s rambling, and you get all the information you need to assess the prospect. The initial meeting with a prospect should be solely to gather information on the prospect’s needs. You should ask at least 10 questions about the prospect’s lifestyle and fitness knowledge and goals to determine what type of program the prospect needs. You may want to use a checklist like the one on the next page to remember the information.

The initial meeting should be under 15 minutes and should be free to the prospective client. It’s like an interview – you are deciding if the two of you are a good match.

If indeed the prospect and you are interested in pursuing a professional relationship, arrange another meeting to ask more probing questions and create a
tentative fitness plan. In the meantime, you should have considered other resources for the client so that you can present them at the second meeting. Samples of how to present other resources:

- You told me there is a history of heart disease in your family. I suggest you talk with your doctor about that. I'll also need your doctor's permission to begin training you.

- You mentioned you're worried about diet. I want you to know I'm not certified to counsel you on diet, but here is the phone number of a dietician I know and trust.

- You said you really enjoyed swimming. I called the YMCA – here is a list of pool times.

These phrases do two things: First, they help you legally. Second, they tell the client that you're really taking care of him or her. During your second meeting, you can then present your fitness plan and begin it that day. This session may or may not be free.

The following “don’ts” should be obvious, but it's surprising how many people still do them. Keep tabs on yourself and avoid these irritating habits:

Talking too much
Interrupting
Not making eye contact
Fidgeting
Tapping pencil, fingers
Constantly looking at the time
Smoking
Knocking competition
Poor personal hygiene
v. **Handling Resistance**

Much of the time you will find prospects who seem uninterested. It’s your job to find out why by asking questions. Remember, during the first meeting, your job is to ask at least 10 questions about the prospect’s needs and knowledge. See the suggestions on the next page for answering client concerns about a training relationship.
Answers to Typical Concerns

When handling resistance, always Listen, Acknowledge, Assess, Respond and Confirm (LAARC).

Always listen to the clients instead of thinking you already know what they’ll say, or thinking of the next move you’re going to introduce. Focus on the client so you can give an intelligent response. Acknowledge the resistance with a nod and pause. Thank your prospect for the resistance – it shows the prospect is really thinking about the decision and is trying to buy. Never make a prospect feel bad for showing resistance. Instead, assess the reasons behind the resistance and respond to them. Give your answer to the resistance, then confirm with the prospect that you have adequately answered the concern. Responding may involve balancing the prospect’s perceived negatives with positives, or directly denying things the prospect thought were true.

Resistance may be psychological (based on feelings, prejudices, negativity), or logical (patient with health problems, no time, price too high). Remember: the best way to meet resistance is to ask questions. See the following examples and notice that the first answer to all of them is a question.

**Prospect Says**

*Your price is too high.*

You say:

Who are you comparing me to?

Does that include gym membership? Does that include free body fat assessments with our automatic machine? How do you know that company is a better match for you? Can I give you two free sessions so you can compare value?

**Prospect Says**

*I don’t need a trainer.*

You say:

Tell me why you believe that. Has anyone in your family suffered a heart attack? Does high blood pressure run in your family? What is your current routine like? Do any women in your family have breast cancer? (You can see how you could develop any number of questions to answer this common type of resistance).

Did you know that exercise can reduce depression and anxiety / make you more fit / help with weight management / make you less likely to get sick / help prevent heart disease and cancer?

Did you know that trainers can motivate you to exercise when you don’t feel like it? Meet you when you want, where you want? Give you a routine that’s better than the one you have now? Help you reach new goals?

Have you ever had your body fat percentage/flexibility test/endurance test taken? Would you like me to do that for you during a free consultation?
Prospect Says  
No, I’m really sure that I don’t want a trainer.

You say:
Well, I’m glad I got to talk with you about what your goals are. If things ever change and you decide you’d like extra motivation or a new fitness approach, please call me.

Then leave literature and your contact information with him or her.

Prospect Says  
I had a bad experience with trainers.

You say:
I’m sorry that happened – it must have been a terrible experience. I want you to know I’m a different person. I’ll offer you the service that you want, but I’m a professional, and I have some really happy clients that would love to talk with you. If you let me work with you, I’ll make sure something like that never happens again.

Prospect Says  
I don’t have the money for a trainer.

You say:
Are you spending money on doctor bills or medications now? Those things are fine, but a trainer can help you be even healthier. Having a trainer is like having insurance. It’s insuring your good health. By taking care of your body, you’re avoiding complications in the future. It’s a method of prevention that will actually save you money in the long run.

Prospect Says  
I don’t think my husband/wife/grandma/father/mom will let me.

You say:
Why do you say that? What do you think that person would say if you talked with them and told them what I’ve told you? Could I give you my business card so that they can call me or meet me with questions? If that person did support you working with a trainer, would there be any other concerns you’d have with starting a program with me?

Prospect Says  
I don’t have time to work out.

You say:
We can work together to make a program at a convenient time of day for you, for as little as twenty minutes, three days a week.

Prospect Says  
I really like the trainer I have now.

You say:
Tell the prospect what you have to offer that’s different than everyone else. Ask the prospect why he or she likes his current trainer, and take notes. Offer to help in the future – don’t burn bridges!
Prospect Says  I really need more information.

You say:
What do you need? I can give it to you. I can also give you a free body fat assessment/flexibility test/cardiovascular test so you know more about what you need. Here is the Web address for AFAA’s site.

Prospect Says  I don’t have the physical capability of starting a program.

You say:
Why don’t you feel physically capable? If your doctor approves, I know that we could start small and definitely make improvements in your overall health. We could set goals for you and work toward them.
vi. **Convincing Clients to Stay**

After you’ve had one or two meetings with your prospect, you’re ready to offer your contract and begin a professional relationship. To convince prospects who hesitate, try one of the following sales closing techniques from Dr. Avila:

- **Summarize.** Make a T-Account on paper if you need to, of things the prospect disliked and liked. Conclude by asking for the relationship.

- **Tell a success story.** Without using names, or by talking about a lot of different people, explain what you could realistically accomplish with the client. Then ask for the relationship.

vii. **Maintaining Relationships**

The main reason for maintaining relationships is keeping customers. If the client doesn’t feel satisfied and appreciated, he or she may choose another trainer. Follow-through is important to maintaining good relationships with clients. You’ll need to make sure you keep all of your promises and help your client reach his or her goals, or you may lose trust and lose business.

When you gain a new client, always do three things. First, express thanks during your meeting. Second, make a phone call to the client’s home reinforcing the decision. Finally, send a letter of appreciation/orientation on your personalized letterhead.

If you work in a gym, selling is important not only because you’re selling fitness, but because you’re selling the gym’s image. If a client expresses dissatisfaction, it is your job to ask why and to go about fixing it. Remember, it’s
better to maintain a relationship than to lose it and try to forge a new one. Plus, when you fix a problem for a client, he or she will usually tell friends. You should constantly ask if the client is happy with the service and if there’s anything more you can do. Remember: the client may quit at any time, or choose another trainer. Continue to add value and you’ll decrease the chance of that happening. Always look for ways to add value to your service.

viii. Information Management

Every trainer should have some system in place for managing information, whether they use file folders or an advanced data management system or computer program. For administrative and legal reasons, you should at least keep the following:

- A medical file for each client
- A log of each session (So you’ll know exactly what you said and did each time you met – helpful in case of a lawsuit)
- Goals of the client (So you can begin each session prepared to go further)
- Legal forms

Each client file should have the correct title and spelling of the client’s name, along with pronunciation guidelines. You may also want to write down your client’s family, career and hobbies so you have something to discuss while exercising. Write down birth dates and send them cards. It’s also a good idea to keep a running list of promises you make to your client. Never over promise – always under promise and over
deliver. A system like ACT! 2000 or Outlook will help you organize files on every person you know, along with tons of specific information for each person. Both software packages will help you keep track of contacts and relevant information about not only their workouts, but their families, interests, and recent accomplishments. That information will help you develop rapport and a good relationship with each client that will keep them coming back. Both programs have e-mail, calendar and report generation capabilities.

The form on the next page is an example of what you will want to use during your initial contact with clients. You will want to keep all of the information below in your contact management system. The form is adapted from Yoke, Mary, MA. *A Guide to Personal Fitness Training, Revised Edition*. Aerobics and Fitness Association of America, 15250 Ventura Blvd., Suite #200, Sherman Oaks, California, 91403-3297.1997.
SAMPLE INITIAL CONTACT FORM

Name: 
Date of Birth: 
Address: 
Phone number: 
E-mail: 

Why are you here? (Circle one or more that apply)

Suggestion of friend or relative       Doctor’s suggestion
Want to get fit                        Want to feel good
Need motivation in current routine    Need to develop new routine
Want to lose weight                   Want to get toned
Want to gain weight                   Want to build muscles
Want to gain flexibility              Want to get stronger
Want to gain endurance                Want to gain coordination

*Note to the trainer: Health risk factors can determine whether your client will develop a disease or condition in the future. Make sure you are familiar with risk factors as defined by the American College of Sports Medicine (and found in A Guide to Personal Fitness Training).

Current fitness program (any physical activity):

Trainer you’ve worked with in the past:

Credit check: (complete after initial meeting)

Please put a check next to the following questions you can answer with a “Yes.”
My family has a history of heart problems. 
My mother, sister or daughter died unexpectedly of heart problems before she was 65.
My father, son or brother died unexpectedly of heart problems before he was 55.
I smoke or I quit smoking in the last 6 months.
I do not exercise regularly.
SAMPLE ENTRY FOR CONTACT MANAGEMENT

Jane A. Doe
Date of Birth:
Member of Sigma Kappa
Music major – plays harp


November 3, 2001
First day of working out together. Negative attitude toward fitness, excellent proficiency
Completed:
10-minute run
3 sets, 15 reps bicep curls
3 sets, 15 reps tricep push-downs
3 sets, 15 reps squats
60 crunches

Results of body fat test: 30 %
Mentioned that I drink Gatorade, but told her that I do not endorse it

I promised I’d come up with a set of new exercises for her shoulders
I promised I’d send information about a dietician I know
III. Financial Data

Linux and Microsoft Money Manager are both simple financial planning systems.

Whichever you use, make sure you keep detailed records of your finances. You may want to use the form on the following page from entrepreneur.com as an example.
PERSONAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT

As of __________________________ 19

Complete this form for: (1) each proprietor, or (2) each limited partner who owns 20% or more interest and each general partner, or (3) each stockholder owning 20% or more of voting stock, or (4) any person or entity providing a guaranty on the loan.

Name

Residence Address

City, State, & Zip Code

Business Name of Applicant/Borrower

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>(Omit Cents)</th>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
<th>(Omit Cents)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash on hand &amp; in Banks</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Accounts Payable</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savings Accounts</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Notes Payable to Banks and Others</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRA or Other Retirement Account</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>(Describe in Section 2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts &amp; Notes Receivable</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Installment Account (Auto)</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Insurance-Cash Surrender Value Only</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Mo Payments</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stocks and Bonds</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Installment Account (Other)</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Loan on Life Insurance</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automobile-Present Value</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Mortgages on Real Estate</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Personal Property</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>(Describe in Section 6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Assets</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Other Liabilities</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total Liabilities</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Net Worth</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 1. Source of Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>(Omit Cents)</th>
<th>Contingent Liabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>As Endorser or Co-Maker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Investment Income</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Legal Claims &amp; Judgments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate Income</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Provision for Federal Income Tax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Income (Describe below)*</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Other Special Debt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description of Other Income in Section 1:

*Alimony or child support payments need not be disclosed in "Other income" unless it is desired to have such payments counted toward total income.

(Use attachments if necessary. Each attachment must be identified as a part of this statement and signed.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and Address of Noteholder(s)</th>
<th>Original Balance</th>
<th>Current Balance</th>
<th>Payment Amount</th>
<th>Frequency (monthly/ etc.)</th>
<th>How Secured or Endorsed</th>
<th>Type of Collateral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

SBA Form 413 (2-94) Use 5-91 Edition until stock is exhausted. Ref: SOP 50-10 and 50-30

This form was electronically produced by Elite Federal Forms, Inc.
IV. Methods of Control

Once your business is up and running, you'll want to evaluate it every now and then, just to make sure you’re meeting your goals and performing effectively. Constant assessment and adjustment will help you gauge your performance and plan for the future. Audits have two steps: the horizontal and the vertical. A horizontal audit looks at all business functions to identify areas that need more inspection. The vertical audit is deeper and investigates a problem or opportunity in depth. Keep in mind that the audit should be done with an open-minded, unbiased approach. You should be willing to uncover weaknesses and to exploit your strengths.

You may choose to audit your business yourself or hire an outside auditor for more objectivity. Using a checklist is a good way to audit your own business yourself. It allows you to evaluate the business the same way each year, objectively and systematically. A sample form is on the next page.
Answer Yes or No to each question. Questions with "No" answers should be given further thought.

Your Ability to Grow
- Do you keep up with changes in your field by subscribing to leading trade publications?
- Do you plan for a profit (your net income) above a reasonable salary for yourself as a manager?
- Are you an active member of a trade association?

Customer Relations
- Do you cater to selected groups of clients rather than to all groups?
- Do you have a clear picture of the image you're trying to give to your clients?
- Do you evaluate your own performance by asking customers about their likes and dislikes and by shopping competitors to compare their prices and promotions with your own?

Budgetary Control and Productivity
- In controlling your operations, do you frequently compare actual results with the budget projections you have made, and do you then adjust your merchandising, promotion, and expense plans as indicated by deviation from these projections?
- Do you study industry data and compare the results of your operation with them?
- Do you think in terms of ratios and percentages, rather than exclusively in dollars and cents?
- Do you use a variety of measures of performance, such as net profit as a percent of your net worth?

Advertising and Sales Promotion
- Do you advertise consistently in at least one appropriate medium: newspapers, direct mail, flyers, local television, or radio?
- Does each of your ads specifically "sell" your firm in addition to the merchandise advertised?
- Do you use cooperative ads with other merchants in your community?
- Do you conduct a continuing effort to obtain free publicity in the local press or broadcast media?

Cash and Finance
- Do you deposit all of each day's cash receipts in the bank without delay?
- Do you calculate your cash flow regularly and take steps to provide enough cash for each period's needs?
- Do you have a line of credit at your bank, not only to meet seasonal requirements but also to permit borrowing at any time for emergency needs?

Credit
- Do you have a credit policy?
- Are your bad-debt losses comparable with those of other similar trainers?
- Periodically, do you review your accounts to determine their status?
Insurance
- Is your company’s insurance handled by a conscientious and knowledgeable agent?
- Have you updated your insurance needs to ensure adequate protection for your assets as well as for public liability?

Accounting Records
- Do you have your books balanced and accounts summarized each month?
- Do you keep data on sales, purchases, inventory, and direct expenses for different types of merchandise?

Taxes and Legal Options
- Do you retain a tax accountant to review your accounting records and prepare your more complicated tax returns?
- Do you retain a good lawyer to confer with on day-to-day problems that have legal implications?

Planning for Growth
- Over the past few years, have you done much long-range planning for growth?
- When you find that change is called for, do you act decisively and creatively?
- Do you make most of your changes after thoughtful analysis rather than as reactions to crises?

Now, rate your business’s effectiveness by answering yes or no to the following questions.
- A long-term organizational mission is clearly articulated
- The current status of the firm is taken into consideration when setting future plans
- The firm’s role in the business system is understood
- Sustainable competitive advantages are actively pursued. Company weaknesses have been identified and minimized
- There is a logical short-run and long-run approach to the firm’s chosen line of business
- There are specific, realistic and measurable short-and long-term goals
- These goals guide strategy development and resource allocation
- The characteristics and needs of the target market are known
- The strategy is tailored to the chosen target market
- There are systematic plans prepared for these strategies: management, product offered, location, and communicating with the client
- Uncontrollable factors are monitored: consumers, competition, technology, economic conditions, seasonality, legal restrictions
- Unbiased feedback is regularly sought for each aspect of the strategic plan
- Information about new opportunities and threats is sough out.
- Company strengths, weaknesses, successes and failures are monitored constantly
- Results are studied in a manner that reduces the chances of overreacting to a situation
- The business avoids strategy flip-flops that could confuse clients

39
The company has a Web site or plans to have one shortly that communicates the company image, is easy to use, provides fast, reliable customer service, and is regularly updated.

V. Legal Issues in Personal Training

You know you’re a good personal trainer – no doubt about it. But are you a good dietician? Probably not. Even if you do know a lot about diet, it is not legal for you to share your information with clients. You can’t possibly gain degrees in kinesiology, medicine, dietetics, and psychological counseling, but sometimes your clients will need information in those areas. That’s why partnerships with other professionals are so important. They allow you to give your clients great service without putting you at risk legally. Develop partnerships with professionals in your area. You may be able to get commissions on your referrals.

Keep in mind that, as a trainer, you must communicate thoroughly with your clients about their past medical history and what you as a trainer can and cannot do for them. Remember that no advice here or in a book can replace legal counsel. You should have a lawyer available to you on a continuous basis so that you can develop release forms and ask questions about what you can and cannot do during your training sessions. You need to monitor what you say during sessions also. Discussing common, everyday knowledge, like the Food Pyramid, is legally fine, but suggesting any types of foods or trying to physically make your client do something is not. You are not a dietician or a physical therapist.

The three forms that are essential for legal reasons:

1. Physical examination form from client’s own doctors before working with you to reduce your liability. You should adhere to any suggestions by the physician.
2. Informed consent form that warns clients about the potential risks involved with exercising. You should also advise clients of their responsibility to share information relevant to their health.

3. Agreement and Release of Liability form that serves as a waiver for clients who refuse to obtain medical clearance, or if you want to get added legal protection. Still, you should insist on medical clearance.

Spotting is another one of your paid and legal responsibilities. High-risk exercises are especially important times to spot, like barbell squats, bench presses and incline presses. Failure to spot has been judged in at least one case to be tantamount to willful and wanton conduct. Always follow spotting guidelines in your trainer’s manual.

Other legal advice from AFAA:

- Always carry liability insurance. You can get it from AFAA or other fitness groups for a reasonable price.
- Keep your certifications up-to-date. This establishes your credibility.
- Regularly update your clients’ medical history forms and be aware of changes in their health status.
- Know your limits. You are a fitness trainer, not a dietician, physical therapist, or licensed physician. You are not authorized to give advice in any of these areas. You must refer clients to the appropriate health care providers instead of trying to help them yourself.
- Document everything. Keep clear and confidential records of client health evaluations, fitness assessments, session training logs, complaints, injuries
and successes, as well as a record of what you said. This is why a contact management system like ACT! or Outlook is so important.

- Plan for emergencies. Know where the nearest telephone is and how to use emergency medical systems. Keep clients’ medical information with you for quick referencing during sessions.

- Keep your CPR certification current.

- Follow exercise testing guidelines outlined by the American College of Sports Medicine.

- Be sure your clients’ programs are appropriate for their fitness levels, ages and abilities.

Your best resource for an overview of legal issues in personal training is the book *Legal Aspects of Personal Fitness Training* by Brian E. Koeberle, J.D., 1990, published by PRC Publishing, Inc., Canton, OH.

---


ii All Entrepreneur.com forms are found at http://www.entrepreneur.com/formnet.


vi p. 132.

vii p. 18.
Tara Gerber
Fit For Life

Sessions Available

What you can expect from your trainer

- Flexibility Training
- Strength Training
- Cardiovascular Training
- Pilates for Core: Abs and Back

Fitness Watch

The Top 5 Weight Room Mistakes

It’s never too late to start getting healthy.

Each session is only $10 per hour, and your first hour consultation is free. It’s never too late to be Fit For Life. Call (260) 565-3227 or e-mail tlgerber@hotmail.com today!
Every training partner of mine receives a free hour consultation. We sit down and talk about you and what you expect from a personal trainer. Then we talk about your goals and we make a program that you’re comfortable with. When you work with me, you’ll get personal attention for a fitness program that’s designed specifically for you. That means we do what you want, how you want, where you want. If you want lifelong fitness, this is the partnership you’ve been looking for.

Each session is only $10 per hour, and your first hour consultation is free. It’s never too late to be Fit For Life.

Call (260) 565-3227 or e-mail tl_gerber@hotmail.com today!
Your abdominal and back muscles support almost every activity you do daily. Pilates, a set of exercises developed by Joseph Pilates, strengthens these “core” muscles to help you perform your everyday movements like lifting, bending, and turning. Pilates improves posture, reduces back pain and gives more overall flexibility. Ask me about how a few simple moves can make a huge difference.

Each session is only $10 per hour, and your first hour consultation is free. It’s never too late to be Fit For Life.

Call (260) 565-3227 or e-mail tl gerber@hotmail.com today!
Flexibility training is the most neglected part of fitness routines. It helps prevent loss of joint mobility and prevents muscle and joint injury.

Age, disease, and inactivity can make muscles inflexible, but flexibility training can make muscles more resilient and less prone to injury. It can also decrease lower back pain and improve your posture.

Contact me today for a flexibility assessment.

Each session is only $10 per hour, and your first hour consultation is free. It's never too late to be Fit For Life.

Call (260) 565-3227 or e-mail tl_gerber@hotmail.com today!
Strength training builds bone density, which guards against osteoporosis. Strength training also boosts your metabolism, which means you will be able to burn calories faster. Women sometimes avoid strength training because they think it will make them bulky, but that’s not true. Read the article Top 5 Weight Room Mistakes to learn the truth about resistance training, then contact me about the perfect program for you, whether you’re a beginner or an advanced lifter.

Each session is only $10 per hour, and your first hour consultation is free. It’s never too late to be Fit For Life.
Call (260) 565-3227 or e-mail tl_gerber@hotmail.com today!
Some of the things exercise can do for you:

*helps prevent heart disease, cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis and back problems
*boosts your immune system so you can ward off illnesses like the cold and flu.
*reduces stress and depression
*helps control weight
*makes your bones, muscles and joints stronger for your everyday activities

Are you ready to see how great cardiovascular exercise will make you feel?

Each session is only $10 per hour, and your first hour consultation is free. It’s never too late to be Fit For Life.
Call (260) 565-3227 or e-mail t_lgerber@hotmail.com today!
TOP FIVE WEIGHT ROOM MISTAKES

Ball State senior Aaron Alverson was finishing his final set of arm presses, lying on a bench in Irving gym. Suddenly his arm buckled and his dumbbell – I won’t tell how heavy – hit his face. (And you thought it hurt when you pinched your finger in the free weights.)

Even gym veterans make mistakes. Maybe it’s because they’re tired, like Aaron, or because they never really learned to train correctly.

You know exactly what you’re doing, you say? How’s your posture on the squat? And what about those times you used momentum instead of your muscles to do your last few repetitions? Whether you’ve been training for seven years or seven days, you might be making one of these common weight room mistakes.

1. Having bad form with weights and machines

Not using proper form will make you look bad and make you feel worse. Having bad form won’t give you the results you want because you won’t be isolating the right muscles. Training the wrong way can cause strains and injuries.

"The only way to get results -- the only way to not hurt yourself -- is to have proper form," said Ted Deckero, marketing director of gymamerica.com, a fitness network of professional athletes and health experts.

"A person who does a bizarre exercise incorrectly makes me say, 'What is he doing?'" Deckero played baseball at Harvard and in the minor leagues, so he’s been training almost his entire life. Still, he’s not afraid to ask questions.

"Take your time to figure out the exercises you want to do, then do them well," he emphasized. "Don't be embarrassed to ask someone, 'What does this do?"

2. Using the wrong weight for your goals

Besides having bad form, there are two other ways to get nowhere, fast: lifting too little and lifting too much.

In general, use more weight and fewer repetitions for bulk, said Takeshi Fujii, a personal trainer and former graduate assistant for fitness and marketing promotion at BSU Rec. To tone your muscles, use less weight and more repetitions.

People who lift too little aren’t challenging their muscles. On the other hand, people who lift too much have a bigger problem: they tend to use momentum instead of their muscles, and they are more likely to be injured.

Erika Hubeart, manager of Club Fitness in Fort Lauderdale, has worked at the same club for 15 years and knows that patrons need to work up to heavier weights slowly.

"We are careful instructing people, but they want to go bigger," she said. With patience and persistence, she promises, less is more.

Using too much weight is the most common mistake that Michelle Southgate sees as a manager of Gold's Gym in Indianapolis. She holds a degree in exercise science from Ball State, but says that most men don't want to take advice from a woman on the issue of weight.

"Some people are very cocky about what they know," Fujii said. "Those people will learn eventually by hurting themselves."
3. Avoiding weight training

Cardiovascular exercise isn’t always enough. Strength training increases muscle mass, raising your metabolism and helping you lose weight.

"You need to build your muscles to burn fat faster," said Southgate. "You don’t have to use big, heavy weights."

Some women think that weightlifting will make them bulky. The truth is, lifting the right amount can make women more toned and sculpted.

Darcy Poulos, a former Ball State tennis team member with a degree in exercise science, said her team lifted together three days a week.

"It gives us power and coordination," she said. "It strengthens bones."

Head powerlifting coach and assistant strength coach Justin Cecil agrees. The Ball State graduate student of sports biomechanics and human performance trains Ball State athletes and people all over the country.

"The most important thing about strength training for women is what it does for their bone density," Cecil said. "It’s an investment in your future. Get strong, healthy bones while you’re young."

4. Not knowing how to spot

Different exercises require different spotting techniques, and spotters need to pay attention.

"I almost killed a guy once," said Gregg Brody, a former diver and Ball State alum. "He’s one of the biggest guys I know, and he needed my help. He was doing a squat with the weight in front. I was looking the other way and all of a sudden, ba-boom! The whole weight room turned to look. He said, ‘Thanks a lot, Gregg.’"

Spotting is not so much about verbal support as it is about physical support, Deckero said. That means you need to know where to stand and where to lift.

"Be in a position where you can actually help someone. If you’re not comfortable spotting someone, tell them you’re not comfortable with the weight," Deckero said.

5. Listening to friends instead of trainers

If you’re not sure about your form or weights or anything else, ask a certified trainer. Even if you think you know it all, trainers have extra tips that will help you get the most of your workout.

Call 285-1753 to get a $15 one-hour session with a trainer from the Office of Recreation Programs (BSU Rec), or visit gymamerica.com for animated demonstrations.

"People are wrong a lot," Deckero said. "Ask a trainer. Just be safe."

Know your stuff in the weight room and you’ll look and feel a lot better this fall — unless you have a bruise the shape of a dumbbell on your forehead.

Ted Deckero said the main reason people avoid the gym is that they don’t know what they’re doing.

"They don’t want to look like idiots," he said.

The only way to prove you’re not clueless is to show respect to other patrons.
TOP FIVE WEIGHT ROOM MISTAKES

Ball State senior Aaron Alverson was finishing his final set of arm presses, lying on a bench in Irving gym. Suddenly his arm buckled and his dumbbell – I won’t tell how heavy – hit his face. (And you thought it hurt when you pinched your finger in the free weights.)

Even gym veterans make mistakes. Maybe it’s because they’re tired, like Aaron, or because they never really learned to train correctly.

You know exactly what you’re doing, you say? How’s your posture on the squat? And what about those times you used momentum instead of your muscles to do your last few repetitions? Whether you’ve been training for seven years or seven days, you might be making one of these common weight room mistakes.

1. Having bad form with weights and machines

Not using proper form will make you look bad and make you feel worse. Having bad form won’t give you the results you want because you won’t be isolating the right muscles. Training the wrong way can cause strains and injuries.

"The only way to get results -- the only way to not hurt yourself -- is to have proper form," said Ted Deckero, marketing director of gymamerica.com, a fitness network of professional athletes and health experts.

"A person who does a bizarre exercise incorrectly makes me say, 'What is he doing?'" Deckero played baseball at Harvard and in the minor leagues, so he’s been training almost his entire life. Still, he’s not afraid to ask questions.

"Take your time to figure out the exercises you want to do, then do them well," he emphasized. "Don't be embarrassed to ask someone, 'What does this do?'"

2. Using the wrong weight for your goals

Besides having bad form, there are two other ways to get nowhere, fast: lifting too little and lifting too much.

In general, use more weight and fewer repetitions for bulk, said Takeshi Fujii, a personal trainer and former graduate assistant for fitness and marketing promotion at BSU Rec. To tone your muscles, use less weight and more repetitions.

People who lift too little aren't challenging their muscles. On the other hand, people who lift too much have a bigger problem: they tend to use momentum instead of their muscles, and they are more likely to be injured.

Erika Hubeart, manager of Club Fitness in Fort Lauderdale, has worked at the same club for 15 years and knows that patrons need to work up to heavier weights slowly.

"We are careful instructing people, but they want to go bigger," she said. With patience and persistence, she promises, less is more.

Using too much weight is the most common mistake that Michelle Southgate sees as a manager of Gold's Gym in Indianapolis. She holds a degree in exercise science from Ball State, but says that most men don't want to take advice from a woman on the issue of weight.

"Some people are very cocky about what they know," Fujii said. "Those people will learn eventually by hurting themselves."
3. Avoiding weight training

Cardiovascular exercise isn’t always enough. Strength training increases muscle mass, raising your metabolism and helping you lose weight.

"You need to build your muscles to burn fat faster," said Southgate. "You don’t have to use big, heavy weights."

Some women think that weightlifting will make them bulky. The truth is, lifting the right amount can make women more toned and sculpted.

Darcy Poulos, a former Ball State tennis team member with a degree in exercise science, said her team lifted together three days a week.

"It gives us power and coordination," she said. "It strengthens bones."

Head powerlifting coach and assistant strength coach Justin Cecil agrees. The Ball State graduate student of sports biomechanics and human performance trains Ball State athletes and people all over the country.

"The most important thing about strength training for women is what it does for their bone density," Cecil said. "It’s an investment in your future. Get strong, healthy bones while you’re young."

4. Not knowing how to spot

Different exercises require different spotting techniques, and spotters need to pay attention.

"I almost killed a guy once," said Gregg Brody, a former diver and Ball State alum.

"He’s one of the biggest guys I know, and he needed my help. He was doing a squat with the weight in front. I was looking the other way and all of a sudden, ba-boom! The whole weight room turned to look. He said, ‘Thanks a lot, Gregg.’"

Spotting is not so much about verbal support as it is about physical support, Deckero said. That means you need to know where to stand and where to lift.

"Be in a position where you can actually help someone. If you’re not comfortable spotting someone, tell them you’re not comfortable with the weight," Deckero said.

5. Listening to friends instead of trainers

If you’re not sure about your form or weights or anything else, ask a certified trainer. Even if you think you know it all, trainers have extra tips that will help you get the most of your workout.

Call 285-1753 to get a $15 one-hour session with a trainer from the Office of Recreation Programs (BSU Rec), or visit gymamerica.com for animated demonstrations.

"People are wrong a lot," Deckero said. "Ask a trainer. Just be safe."

Know your stuff in the weight room and you’ll look and feel a lot better this fall — unless you have a bruise the shape of a dumbbell on your forehead.

Ted Deckero said the main reason people avoid the gym is that they don’t know what they’re doing.

"They don’t want to look like idiots," he said.

The only way to prove you’re not clueless is to show respect to other patrons.
HOW NOT TO LOOK LIKE AN IDIOT

Ssssh.

Do you really need to grunt like a Survivor stabbing a wild boar when you’re just training in a gym, with other non-tribal fitness fans? Random noises are fine, but if it’s so difficult that you can’t finish without screaming, should you be doing it? In public?

Re-rack the weights.

Jared Garman, a BSU Rec employee, said this is his main complaint, and Deckero agreed. They want everyone to be able to find their dumbbells easily.

Brody is annoyed when people put weights in the wrong places.

“It pisses me off something fierce,” he said.

If you’re strong enough to put the 100s on the leg press, you’re strong enough to take them off. And yes, someone saw you put the 50-pound weight in the 35 space.

Don’t hog the machines.

Don’t rush, but be respectful of people waiting for machines. Let people work in, especially when the gym is crowded. You deserve a good workout, but so does everyone else.

Dress for the gym.

Some clothes are better suited for the gym. Melissa Cordial, who visits Irving’s weight room at least five days a week, says that people who wear makeup and jewelry, especially hoop earrings, can’t be serious.

“They must not work out very much because they’d get in the way if you worked out a lot,” she said.

Get your sweat off the seats.

Bring a towel to sit on or use the towels in the weight room to wipe off your machine. People get disgusted when you leave your fluids behind.

Pick up weights, not a date.

If she brushes your hand while grabbing for a 15-pound weight, it was probably accidental. She’s thinking about her forearms, not yours.

Cordial says the gym is a good place to meet people, but not a good place to get a date.

“Don’t be offended if you see someone you know in the gym and they don’t talk to you,” she says. "The majority of the people at the gym are there to work out. That’s their priority.”