

FITNESS PLAYGROUND
ACADEMY

Blueprint for a Successful
***FITNESS
CAREER***



Your Ultimate Guide to Launching a Career

Is the fitness industry right for me? Can I make a great living out of personal training, or is it more of a side gig? Is a career in fitness viable long-term?

Which fitness career avenue is the right one for me? How do I even start going about getting clients? Am I going to be confident enough to support people's health journeys? How can I stand out from the crowd? How can I take my PT business from decent to incredible? Where do I even start?

If you're asking yourself any of these questions, then this e-book is for you. It covers everything that Fitness Playground's most experienced fitness professionals wish they knew before they became qualified or were just starting out.

INTRODUCTION

Being a Personal Trainer can be one of the most rewarding jobs in the world. You get to make a meaningful difference to people's lives, helping them reach their goals and transform their health. For some clients, it's no exaggeration to say that the work you do with them could be life-saving.

Yet despite being a dream career for some, around 40 percent of people who enrol in a PT qualification don't finish the course and, of those that do, 51 percent don't last two years in the industry after gaining their qualification.

WHY?

It's because while all courses teach you the nuts and bolts of training – explaining what muscles do, how to train them, and how to write programs – they often don't set you up to succeed as a coach or business owner. They fail to equip you with the tools to set up and grow your business, how to find the types of clients you really want to help, and how to coach people in a way that influences their behaviour – not only during your training sessions, but also throughout the rest of the week.

That's where this e-book comes in. It's what Fitness Playground's most experienced Personal Trainers and educators wished they'd known when they were starting out. The tips, tricks and exercises we cover will give you a head-start in terms of what you need to know to make it as a Personal Trainer.



YOUR MENTORS



**TOM
MERRIMAN**

*PT Mentor & Head of Education,
Fitness Playground Academy*

Having graduated university and completed his Certificate III/IV equivalent in 2013, Tom travelled to Australia from Scotland in search of career opportunities in fitness. Since then, Tom has educated hundreds of coaches through his various roles with Fitness Playground.



**MATT
DUNCAN**

*Head of Coaching,
Fitness Playground*

After graduating uni in the UK, Matt created sport programs for at-risk youth. During travels to Australia in 2010, he stayed on to work in fitness. Today, Matt's PT client base covers everyone from people recovering from stroke to celebrities like Rose Byrne. He's in charge of Fitness Playground's entire PT department.



**JUSTIN
ASHLEY**

*Co-Founder & CEO, Fitness
Playground & FP Academy*

With two decades of experience in the fitness industry, Justin progressed through a range of gym-based roles before co-founding the award-winning Fitness Playground gym and PT company. In 2021, his many achievements were recognised when he was named Australian Young Entrepreneur of the Year.

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CHAPTER ONE

Is fitness the
right fit for you?

IS FITNESS THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOU?

There's a lot of reasons why you might want to get into the fitness industry. Often it's an extension of your own fitness journey; you like the gym, you spend a lot of time in the gym – why not get paid to be there?

But, there's more to being a great trainer than just enjoying exercise and being able to instruct someone to smash out 20 barbell squats. To become a great Personal Trainer you not only need to have a passion for fitness, but a passion for helping people. If you can get satisfaction from helping others achieve success, you'll love a career in fitness.

WHAT'S AWESOME ABOUT WORKING IN FITNESS?

- ✓ Make meaningful differences to people's lives – gain satisfaction from helping people transform their health and reach goals
- ✓ Ditch the 9-to-5 grind
- ✓ Choose your own hours
- ✓ Control how much you earn
- ✓ Build your own business instead of slogging away to make money for others
- ✓ Connect with people rather than screens
- ✓ Enjoy an active lifestyle and work on your fitness on the job
- ✓ Develop coaching/leadership skills
- ✓ Enjoy a long-lasting career with lots of opportunities to evolve and progress

Our trainers get to do what they love every day. To help you figure out if it's something you'd love, we're going to help you pinpoint why it is that you think you might want to work in fitness and help you define your purpose...



ACTIVITY: Find your why

Defining your “why” is an incredibly powerful tool. It's a step that many of the most successful businesses and professionals use to guide their work.

Knowing your why not only helps you take the right steps forward, but when you do encounter setbacks, going back to your why can help steer you in the right direction.

So, the first questions you need to ask yourself are:

1. Why is it that you want to become a Personal Trainer?

2. What changes do you want to make to clients' lives – or for the fitness industry as a whole?

If it was a cinch to answer these questions, you're already starting from the right place.

If you're still staring at empty space, or you're not so committed to your answers, that's all good. Your why isn't always perfectly clear from the start. Let us help you define things further...



ACTIVITY: Find your purpose

What's the reason that you jump out of bed each morning? If it's not work, you're like many people in this world – but, if you can find purpose in your career you'll feel happier, more fulfilled and be more driven to succeed because you truly love what you do. Purpose and "why" can be pretty much interchangeable, and true purpose is best described by this diagram...



Ikigai diagram

Each of these is a trait that you can find in any task or activity, but how they interrelate determines what role that activity can play in your life – ideally, to find your true purpose, all the circles should combine. So, let's talk briefly about what they each mean...

1. DO WHAT YOU LOVE

It's said that if you do what you truly love, you'll never work a day in your life – so, does working in fitness tick this box for you? Let's start by answering the following questions:

- ▶ Is stepping into the gym, or however else you exercise, the highlight of your day? **YES/NO**
- ▶ Has fitness changed (or at least enhanced) your own life in some way? **YES/NO**
- ▶ Do you wish others could have that same experience? **YES/NO**
- ▶ Do you like giving people tips and tricks that can help them with their fitness? **YES/NO**
- ▶ Are you excited to keep learning about what gets results? **YES/NO**

The more of these you've answered yes to, the more likely it is that you'll be doing something you truly love by entering the fitness industry.

If you're already in the industry and know it's the right place for you but, are wondering whether starting a business is the right choice for you, then answer questions like...

- ▶ Are you excited about starting your own business? **YES/NO**
- ▶ Does having the ability to plan your own day the way you want to fill you with joy? **YES/NO**
- ▶ Do you see challenges as growth opportunities? **YES/NO**

Whatever stage you're at, as yourself questions that help you figure this out.

2. DO WHAT YOU'RE GOOD AT

You already know you love fitness, but it takes a bit more than that to be great trainer. Here are 7 skills that, from experience, we believe the best trainers have. How many do you think you have now?

- You genuinely care about people
- You want to help others
- You've overcome your own struggles with fitness
- You love to see others succeed
- You're naturally curious
- You love to keep learning and improving
- You're a good leader and motivator

Haven't ticked all of them? That's OK, that's what education and progression is for. The main thing is that you're willing to learn how you might gain any of the skills you might be lacking in.

3. DO WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS

By its very nature, working in fitness qualifies as doing what the world and people need. Your clients need your motivation, support and knowledge to help them meet their goals. And meeting those goals has a clear pay-off for both them and the world at large.

A terrifying 67% of Australian adults are overweight or obese. And the problem's only getting worse. Severe adult obesity has risen from 4.9% to 9.4% over the past 20 years. And apart from helping people lose and maintain weight, exercise has been shown to reduce the

risk of heart disease and many cancers, improve mental health and much more.

The second you enter the fitness industry you start to offer a service the world needs. Who would you want to help?

1. If you could help any group of people in the world with fitness, who would you help?

2. What would you help them do?

3. What impact would this have on them? Or on the industry/society?

If you do enter the fitness industry you'll be exposed to a range of diverse types of people, and your answers to these questions might change completely over time. Right now, just think of this as a tool to help you connect with your purpose or why.



4. DO WHAT YOU CAN BE PAID FOR

This is what makes fitness your business rather than just your hobby or passion. After graduating from the Fitness Playground Academy, Personal Trainers can earn anywhere between \$70,000 and \$130,000 a year – and you can too.

But working as a PT, with us or with another gym, can be just the start of your business journey and income. We'll talk about how your career might progress later in the book – but, for now we'll just point out that fitness trainer Kayla Itsines is one of Australia's wealthiest young entrepreneurs!

What did you discover?

If you feel you fill all the criteria in each of these areas, great, working in fitness will fulfil your purpose. But what if you didn't? That doesn't mean working in fitness is not for you, and it doesn't mean that you can't be really successful in the industry.

Maybe you like to keep work and true passion separate and fitness could meet your professional goals if not your "true purpose" goals.

Or maybe it's helped you realise that you love fitness, that you love helping others, but that you don't want to earn a living this way. Perhaps you'd rather coach the local running club, a junior sporting team, or something else that just gives back to the community without earning you an income. That's OK too, maybe that's your why.

To help refine things further though, let's talk about values.

The importance of values

Our values are the beliefs that drive us. They reflect who we are as an individual and, even if we don't realise it, they affect every decision we make and the way we behave every day. So if you want to be happy with your career and run an authentic business, it's important that what you do reflects them.

Here's an obvious example that illustrates how values might work in your career. If you're someone who cares passionately about the environment and sense of community, you would probably never truly feel happy working for a

company with a high carbon footprint. If you moved to a company with a strong eco-slant, you could be doing the exact same job, but everything would feel more positive and you'd start to thrive.

The same concept is relevant for every single job out there, including those in the fitness industry. So, if you value competitiveness and challenges, you might be best off training people in a Bootcamp or Group Fitness style environment where you can encourage those traits in others.

If you're more about balance, calmness and creativity, you might thrive more in a boutique studio with clients focused on their health holistically.

Ensuring your career plans fit your values helps determine whether what you're about to do really is the right choice for you – even if it's not your absolute reason for living. And it helps you refine how you are going to progress within the industry in a way that feels true to you.

So, how do you know what your values are? This simple exercise will tell you.



ACTIVITY: **Define your values**

Below is a list of the most common values people possess. Read through it and circle all those that you feel are important to you – not what you think should be important, but what really jumps out as what has helped shape you as an individual.

If a value is really important to you, you should be able to remember experiences where either a demonstration of a value positively impacted your life, or where a lack of it left you feeling negatively towards something or someone.

If you find this exercise hard, think about what you look for in friends or colleagues, which often reflect your own values.



MOST COMMON VALUES:

A

Accountability
Accuracy
Achievement
Adventure
Altruism
Ambition
Assertiveness

B

Balance
Belonging
Boldness

C

Calmness
Carefulness
Challenge
Cheerfulness
Clear-mindedness
Commitment
Community
Compassion
Competition
Consistency
Contentment
Continuous improvement
Contribution
Control
Cooperation
Correctness
Courtesy
Creativity
Curiosity

D

Decisiveness
Dependability
Determination
Diligence
Discipline
Discretion
Diversity
Dynamism

E

Economy
Effectiveness
Efficiency
Elegance
Empathy
Enjoyment
Enthusiasm
Equality
Excellence
Excitement
Expertise
Exploration
Expressiveness

F

Fairness
Faith
Family
Fitness
Focus
Freedom
Fun

G

Generosity
Goodness
Grace
Growth

H

Happiness
Hard work
Health
Helping society
Honesty
Honour
Humility

I

Independence
Ingenuity
Inner harmony
Innovation

Inquisitiveness
Insightfulness
Intelligence
Intellectual status
Intuition

J

Joy
Justice

L

Leadership
Legacy
Love
Loyalty

M

Making a difference
Mastery
Merit

O

Obedience
Openness
Order
Originality

P

Perfection
Positivity
Practicality
Preparedness
Professionalism

Q

Quality-orientated

R

Recognition
Reliability
Resourcefulness
Restraint
Results-orientated
Rigour

S

Security
Self-actualisation
Self-control
Selflessness
Self-reliance
Sensitivity
Serenity
Service
Shrewdness
Simplicity
Speed
Spontaneity
Stability
Strategic
Strength
Structure
Success
Support

T

Teamwork
Thankfulness
Thoroughness
Thoughtfulness
Timeliness
Tolerance
Traditionalism
Trustworthiness
Truth-seeking

U

Understanding
Uniqueness
Unity
Usefulness

V

Vision
Vitality

Once you have a list of all those that resonate with you, look over them. Do they reflect what working in fitness and/or running your own fitness business is likely to offer you? If yes, then you're on the right track.



ACTIVITY: Take things a step further

Task (a):

Pinpoint the 5 values that you'd like to be most known for in your career or business, and then put them in order.

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____

This is the "Values Statement" that will help shape your business and career. Whenever you make a decision, look at whether it fits with your primary values. If it does, you'll be more likely to do what it takes to make your business a success because it feels authentic and true to you.

Task (b):

If you don't feel that the fitness career that you originally had in mind matches your values, where is the mismatch? And is this going to negatively affect your future plans? Reflect on that here...

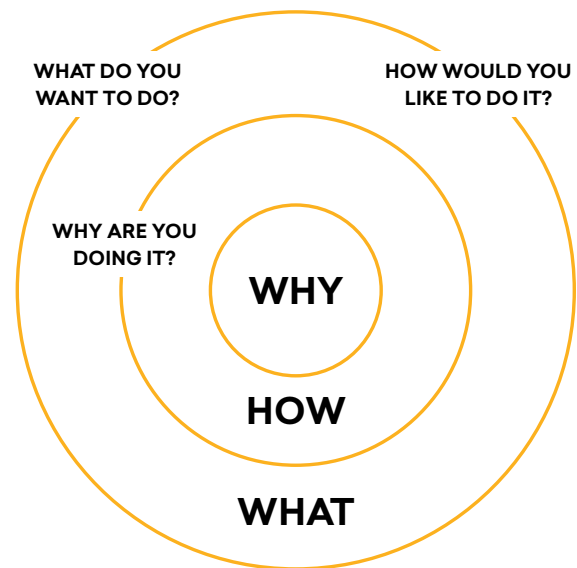
Is there a way to work in fitness that does reflect your values?



ACTIVITY: Fine-tune your why with the Golden Circle

Now it's time to really fine-tune your WHY. You can do this by filling in a diagram called the Golden Circle.

This is where you set the goals for what, why and how you're going to move forward.



Think of this as your what, your how and your why going forward. Try and condense it into a short statement that sums up who you are and what you want to do...

Use this to guide you going forward.

So, now you know what you want to achieve, let's talk about getting started.

**DO I HAVE
TO BE SKINNY,
RIPPED OR
20-SOMETHING
TO BE A GREAT
TRAINER?**

It's true that there are certain stereotypes about Personal Trainers. Sure, possessing a butt you can bounce a coin off might mean someone is good at shaping their own body, but it doesn't always mean they'd be good at helping someone else achieve their goals.

There should be as many different types of trainers as there are potential clients – and those come in all shapes, ages and abilities. Yes, to a degree a trainer needs to incorporate traits that their client is aspiring for, but they don't all have to be physical traits. It might be confidence, enthusiasm, determination or getting back to fitness after injury or pregnancy.

It's more important that you come through for your clients and that you understand and motivate them, than it is to look a certain way. You don't need to be all six-packs and high-fives to be a great trainer.

CHAPTER TWO

Getting started
in business

GETTING STARTED IN BUSINESS

If you're thinking about getting into the industry you might be wondering how you get started once you have your qualifications. Or if you're already being educated, you might be wondering what happens next. So here we explain the most traditional route into working in the fitness industry..



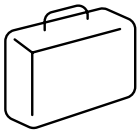
HOW MOST TRAINERS GET STARTED

The good news: you don't just need to jump into business waving your certificate and hoping that clients will come at you. Well, you can try that, but it's not usually a recipe for success – mainly because while you may know all the theory when you finish your course, you don't yet have the practice.

Depending on what course you've done, you might not even have worked yet with a client who isn't one of your (usually fit) fellow students (which is why one of the most valuable parts of any Fitness

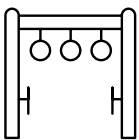
Playground Academy course is the hours you spend training actual clients, under the guidance of professionals). You need real-world experience to make you a better trainer and to help you find your niche for when you do branch out alone.

This is why working inside an established gym – whether it's one of the household names or a smaller, more boutique set-up – is usually the first step for most Personal Trainers. This gets you that client experience. There are 3 business model options that trainers normally work within at first...



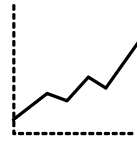
1. THE EMPLOYEE MODEL

In this model you're employed by the gym and likely have set hours – but also a set salary. Things like your superannuation and holiday pay are also taken care of for you. This approach is low on autonomy but high on support, as clients are given to you. You'll get the same wage training one person as training 20. The downside: you can't do more to earn more. But it is a good way to become exposed to lots of different clients and find your feet with a level of financial security. The gym's success and your success are linked so they'll likely give you lots of support.



2. THE RENT MODEL

In this model you rent the right to work at a gym. You pay the gym a bond, you get locked into a contract for an amount of time you'll stay with them and then you pay weekly rent. The main downside of this is that at first, when you don't have many clients, you might be paying \$400 a week and only training one person, so you need to have some money set aside to fund your start-up. But, once things are built up, you control your business, including when and how you work.



3. THE PROGRESSIVE MODEL

This is how we work at Fitness Playground and it's also the approach at a few of the other big gyms. Here you don't pay rent, but you pay the gym a percentage of the amount that you earn per session. When you're first starting out, the gym will really support you in finding clients and you'll pay the gym, say, 30 percent of the fee charged per session (meaning if you charge \$100, you'll pay the gym \$30 and keep \$70). As you get more established and experienced, and able to attract more clients, the level of support offered by the gym will drop off, but so will the percentage you pay the gym.





HOW DO YOU KNOW WHICH MODEL IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

This will depend on how much you're happy to take on right at the beginning of your career.

If you feel you want to get used to working with clients, generating relationships and learning the “fitness side” of being a trainer before really having to worry about the business side of things, you'll be looking for a model with a greater level of support.

If you're ready to take on training clients and you feel confident in your ability to generate leads, as well as having an understanding of the other elements of running a business like accounting and taxation, you'll probably be happier with a model that has more autonomy.

Your personal financial circumstances and level of risk you're willing to take also play a role in which is the right model for you at any stage of your career.



ACTIVITY: What feels right and why?

Going through the Values Exercise again can help you determine which might be the right choice for you. Answer the questions below to help.

1. Which choice feels right for you and why?

2. What skills do you already have that make this right for you?

3. What skills do you need to develop to help ensure success?

4. Anything else you need to put in place to help make this your reality?

WHAT ABOUT ONLINE TRAINING?

Online training has become an incredibly successful career model for many trainers, including some very high-profile ones, which might lead you to believe that going the traditional route is no longer the best way into the industry. But, while you shouldn't discount online training in the future, it's often not the best option for someone who's just starting out.

While anyone can sell some training programs online if they've got a good enough social media following, actually training people online is a different story.

You need to be an excellent in-person coach before you can be a good online coach because you lose the immediacy of what normally happens in a session. The feedback between you and the client isn't always the same and, unless you're highly experienced, and can spot things that perhaps your client isn't telling you, they won't get the results they want, and they won't stick around long enough for you to find out why.

It helps to be a good generalist before you can become a great specialist.

GETTING YOUR FIRST JOB

Now you know where you might be able to work, how do you make that happen? Well, there's no magic bullet, getting a job in fitness is very much the same process as getting a job in any industry – but you can make yourself stand out a bit more with some good advice.

HOW TO: WRITE A CV FOR A FITNESS JOB

The job of your CV is to establish your credibility, so it's essential that you include your relevant qualifications and experience. It's also essential to tailor your CV specifically for the job and company you're applying for instead of just sending out blanket CVs to everyone.

Here's what else can help you stand out:

- ▶ **Tell your fitness story, including any challenges you've faced and overcome.** Explain why your own fitness journey gives you a unique perspective that can help you when it comes to supporting clients to achieve their goals. Always link it back to the client, not just yourself.
- ▶ **Demonstrate your passion for fitness and helping people.** Remember, being a trainer requires a combination of both.
- ▶ **Add the keywords from the job advert** – but also demonstrate how you can achieve them.
- ▶ **Explain other relevant experience.** You might not have worked in fitness before, but you probably have worked in other jobs with transferable skills. If you're moving from

advertising, for example, you can talk about how you understand motivation and buying behaviour. And anyone who has worked retail or hospitality probably (hopefully!) has good people skills.

► **Add facts about your retention or sign-up rates**, if you've trained clients already.

HOW TO: NAIL THE INTERVIEW

► **Turn up well-dressed.** Working in a gym means you'll spend your days in gym gear, but this is still a job interview, and turning up in more traditional interview clothing shows respect for the process.

► **Do your homework.** Have an understanding of what the business looks like. How many gyms do they have? How many Personal Trainers do they have? What type of vibe or culture are they giving off in the gym and via their website and social channels? Be passionate about their brand as well as your potential part in it.

► **Prepare questions.** It shows that you're interested, have done your research and that you actually care about and want this job.

► **Share that you're willing to commit to it.**

There's still sometimes an impression that personal training is just a short-term or side gig that you might do in the evening after your "real job", but you actually need to commit to PT as your primary career if you're going to make a success of it.

► **Be yourself.** PT work is about you as a person, so show who you are in an interview. The gym needs to see what kind of experience you're going to offer your clients.

► **Show passion.** Explain who you are and why you've chosen training as a career. What's brought you here? Let them see why this is important to you – remember your why.



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Where do you see yourself in 5, 10 or 15 years? It might seem strange to think about this now when you're only just considering the fitness industry, but mapping out your potential future path can help you focus on what you need to learn and do to help make that happen.

Just as there are a few different models that are common when starting out in the industry, there are also different ways you can branch out on your own...



1. MANAGING YOUR OWN GYM

You might want to run your own studio or think about becoming a franchisee. These are the most common types of gyms...

24-hour franchise gyms

- ▶ Sell convenience & low prices to members
- ▶ Job opportunities: rent-paying PTs, club management or franchise ownership
- ▶ \$300,000-600,000 initial investment to buy
- ▶ Largely hands-off management
- ▶ Minimal staff – PTs tend to be rent-paying
- ▶ Simple business with franchise system to support you

Small franchise studios

- ▶ Smaller studios that tend to offer community-focused group training, offering a specific training style

- ▶ Think F45, Barry's Bootcamp or Orangetheory
- ▶ Job opportunities: group instructing, studio management, studio owner or franchisee
- ▶ \$150,000-\$200,000 initial investment to buy
- ▶ Usually owner-operated with 3-5 total staff
- ▶ Relatively simple operation with consistent programming

Independent boutique studios

- ▶ Usually small studios run by one person using their own methods and programming
- ▶ Might employ trainers or the owner might work directly with clients themselves
- ▶ \$250,000-\$350,000 initial investment
- ▶ Always owner-operated – potentially up to 10 staff
- ▶ People-based business with a higher risk of failure
- ▶ Not wise to even attempt this without a few years' experience in the industry

2. INDEPENDENT PT WORK

Maybe you don't want the start-up costs associated with running a premises, but do like the idea of branching out on your own – in which case, it's possible to run a few different types of training businesses outside of a gym...

Outdoor PT

- ▶ Work one-to-one with clients, but in a park or other outdoor space rather than a fixed premises
- ▶ \$2,000-\$20,000 initial investment (no premises, so set-up costs are limited to a permit for the area you train, and equipment – not to mention marketing)
- ▶ Usually owner-operated
- ▶ Risks include being weather-dependent, it's a low cost to clients so you'll need good sign-up rates and retention, and marketing costs can be high

Mobile PT

- ▶ Instead of clients coming to you, you travel to train with them (usually their home or work)
- ▶ \$2,000-\$20,000 initial investment
- ▶ No rent payable on premises, but you need to supply equipment, and travel time can eat into training time
- ▶ Sessions are convenient for the client, which can help retention

Online Training

- ▶ Allows you to train people anywhere, any time, expanding your range of potential clients hugely
- ▶ Usually owner-operated
- ▶ Set-up costs are low, but you do need a clear space to work at your end and excellent internet connection
- ▶ Sounds easy, but as we explained, you need a strong level of coaching and fitness knowledge to make this work effectively for your clients, and a good level of marketing knowledge to make it work for you

Outdoor Group Training

- ▶ Usually offered in parks or at beaches, training small groups of people
- ▶ \$1,000-\$30,000 initial investment
- ▶ Can't charge as much per client, but can potentially earn a high hourly rate if you train a large group
- ▶ Easy to set up but you need a good understanding of fitness and session planning to work with a group of people at once, and marketing expenses can be high





ACTIVITY:

Work out what could work for you

1. Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years?

2. Why does that appeal to you?

3. What skills or experience might you need to make that work out for you?

4. What obstacles might stand in your way and could you overcome them?

5. What do you need to focus on achieving over the next 12 months to help you move towards that?

How are you going to prioritise these?

So, now you know where you might want to work and the different models you can use to establish your business, let's talk a little bit about what running a fitness business actually involves.

CHAPTER THREE

Starting your
business &
generating leads

STARTING YOUR BUSINESS & GENERATING LEADS

Whichever route you choose in the industry, being able to train bodies is only part of the skillset you need as a trainer. Once you branch out into the coaching world, it's not just all about writing programs. You need to work on your motivating skills (understanding behavioural change to be able to influence your clients' habits), marketing skills, sales skills and time management. And, depending which model you're working in at any given time, you might also have to understand accounting, taxation and superannuation.

All this can be challenging and that's why a lot of people drop out of the industry. If you can't find clients or retain clients, then you're not going to make this work no matter how much you love the job.

It's helpful to understand the reality of running a fitness business so you can start working on developing the skills you need to make your new role a success.

Let's start with the basics...

SETTING UP YOUR BUSINESS

If you are running your own business, rather than working as an employee, there are a few steps you need to take to get started:

- Choose a business name

- Set up your ABN
- Understand tax and superannuation obligations
- Decide whether to register with AUSactive (not mandatory, however benefits include-representation at a government level, improvements to quality and standards, Implementation of industry changes, member discounts, events and awards.)
- Purchase insurance (\$10 million in public liability, \$5 million in professional indemnity)
- Get your First Aid and CPR certificates

Once you've got those boxes ticked off, then you can start thinking about attracting clients, and the process for this usually follows the pattern below...



So, let's start with the first part... Lead generation.

HOW TO GENERATE LEADS

Definition of a “lead”: *Someone who expresses an interest in training with you.*

Building awareness and generating leads for clients who might be interested in using your services is the first thing you need to work on when launching your fitness business.

There are lots of different ways to find leads, including:

- ▶ In the gym
- ▶ Referrals from friends, family & other clients
- ▶ Social media: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, TikTok
- ▶ Your website/blog
- ▶ Online directories like One Flare
- ▶ Paid advertising
- ▶ Podcasting
- ▶ Networking groups
- ▶ Flyers or business cards
- ▶ Referrals from other professionals (i.e. can you work with a local nutritionist or physio to help each other?)

If you work in Wollongong, there’s no point targeting people in Perth! If you’re selling fitness, there’s (probably) no point in having an online chat with a cake blogger. Focus on trying to connect with people in your community, as they are the ones that will actually be able to come to the gym and train with you. The strategies you use to generate leads should reflect this.

WHO IS YOUR TARGET MARKET?

Definition of “target market”: *Your ideal customer. Who you’re aiming your services at.*

Who this person is depends a lot on which stage of your career you’re at. We’re often told that having a niche is the way to differentiate yourself from the crowd in any industry and, eventually, that’s true – but when you’re first starting out it can be a mistake to pigeonhole yourself into a small market. It’s more important to work with as many different people as possible so you can find out:

- ▶ Who you enjoy working with
- ▶ Who you get the best results with
- ▶ Who you connect with
- ▶ Who you retain

You’ll only discover these things from training a diverse group of people; and so your target market is likely to be less defined than someone who is say, five years into their training and wanting to niche down to really focus on doing what they love.



FINDING YOUR MARKET AT THE START OF YOUR CAREER

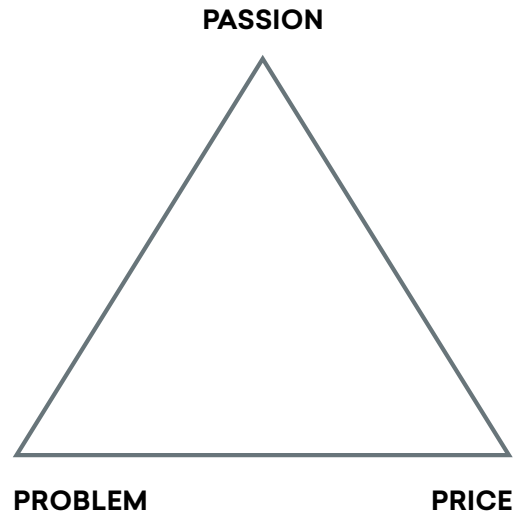
Even if you're keeping things broad, you will have a target market in terms of location, income, problems they need fixing, etc, so start thinking about who this is...

THEN... CHOOSING A NICHE TARGET MARKET

If you're a bit further along in your career (at least 6-12 months in, maybe more), and want to try and niche down your market, you need to think a bit more specifically about the type of person you want to aim at and ensure that they need your services at the price you're hoping to charge...



ACTIVITY: Choose your niche by answering these questions



1. PASSION

Work out: Who you like working with most.

Ask yourself:

a) Who do you genuinely care about helping?

b) Who do you have a personal affinity with, or connect with in some way?

c) Who do you really enjoy working with?

2. PROBLEM

Work out: How they need your help.

Ask yourself:

a) What problem(s) does your Passion group have that you can solve?

b) Is there significant upside to solving that problem for your client?

c) Are you equipped to solve that problem?

3. PRICE

Work out: How much you can charge this group

for your service. Ask yourself:

a) Does this group of clients understand the value of using someone like you to solve their problem?

b) Can they afford to pay for your services?

c) Are they willing to pay for them?



PICTURING YOUR PERFECT CLIENT

Once you know who you’re aiming at, it helps to create a customer “avatar” which helps you decide where and how to focus your message – you should be able to spot your ideal customer walking down the street, in a restaurant – and of course, at the gym.



ACTIVITY: Create a picture of your avatar

Answer all the below questions to build out a picture of who they are and to get inside their head.

- ▶ What’s their name?
- ▶ What’s their age?
- ▶ What do they look like?
- ▶ Where do they live?
- ▶ Do they have kids?
- ▶ Are they in a relationship?
- ▶ What do they earn?
- ▶ What do they do on weekends?
- ▶ Where do they hang out?
- ▶ Where do they shop and what do they buy?
- ▶ What social media do they use?
- ▶ What do they read/watch/listen to?
- ▶ What are their dreams and aspirations?
- ▶ Who are their role models?
- ▶ What motivates them?
- ▶ What are they passionate about?
- ▶ What problems can you solve for them?

Once you know all of this you can use the right language and the right mediums to more effectively grab their attention.

It’s OK to have more than one customer avatar, the key point is you really need to know who each ideal customer you’re aiming at truly is.

REACHING THAT MARKET

Now you know who you are aiming at, it’s time to work out how best to approach them. Here’s how to decide what your next step should be...

Task 1:

Which of all the lead-generating mediums out there (we mentioned a fair few in the “How to Generate Leads” section) do you think would work for your target market, in terms of where they spend time? Be really specific – e.g. if you’re thinking social media, specify which social channels.

Task 2:

- ▶ Which one of these approaches do you currently feel most comfortable implementing?
- ▶ What 3 steps can you take to start your awareness campaign via this medium?
- ▶ When are you going to start this?

Task 3:

- ▶ What other mediums can you use in terms of where your market spends time, which you already understand?
- ▶ What 3 steps can you take to raise awareness via this medium?
- ▶ When are you going to start this?

Task 4:

- ▶ If you don't understand any of the mediums you've decided are relevant to your target market, how can you start increasing your knowledge of using this medium?
- ▶ What first 3 steps can you take to do this?
- ▶ When are you going to start this?

UNDERSTANDING YOUR VALUE

Another hard part of starting out in fitness is knowing what to charge. You can do some basic budgeting exercises looking into how much you need to earn to cover your business and life expenses and divide that by how many training hours you need to work to come up with a basic idea of session pricing. But when you first start it can be hard to judge your value more beyond that.

As time goes on, looking at how long clients stay with you, how many sessions they book and what sort and level of referrals you're getting is a good way to determine if you're matching the value you provide with the amount that you're charging.

Three possible scenarios to analyse:

- ▶ If people hear the price you're charging and no-one wants to work with you, there may be a mismatch between your price point and the market you're aiming at or, more likely, the perceived value that market has of your service.
- ▶ If people choose to work with you, but then leave quite quickly, there's a mismatch between what you're promising and what you're delivering.
- ▶ If you're getting great results and people are staying with you a long time, that's a great sign – and, you might even be able to put your prices up. This is a scary point in any business as there's always the worry that if you put your prices up, you may lose the clients you've built up, but if it's just \$5-10 extra a week and they feel there's enough value in what you do, they'll cut back somewhere else.

Just focus on giving the best service you can to the people you work with now so they stay a really long time and tell their friends about you – and then, you're in a good position to put your prices up a little each year.

THE RULE OF 90 DAYS

The most high-risk period when training a client is the first 90 days. If someone leaves in this time, it's a sign that their expectations have not been met. If you can keep them after 90 days, you typically keep them for a long time.

TURNING LEADS INTO CLIENTS

Knowing who you are aiming at and generating leads is the first step to a successful business; the second step is knowing how to convert someone's initial interest into making an appointment with you.

When someone first shows interest working with you there's a bit of a journey you both need to go on before you end up working together – you've

got to turn them from what we call a “warm lead” to a hot one who signs on the dotted line.

Lead types:

- ▶ A cold lead is someone who isn't interested in working with you (at the moment)
- ▶ A warm lead is interested but not yet ready to commit
- ▶ A hot lead is someone ready to work with you

Remember, most people who are going to enquire about your service are already warm leads. You just need to move them from warm to hot.

Everything starts with a first phone call, and the sales process that follows it. Mastering this process is so essential to running a successful business that we're going to dedicate the whole of the next chapter to it.



CHAPTER FOUR

Making sales

MAKING SALES

Not many Personal Trainers get into the business because they love selling. If that was your true calling, you'd probably be in real estate. But it has to be an essential part of your business toolbox.

If you find that a bit uncomfortable, we have some good news. Chances are, you're already better at it than you think.

Here are 4 reasons why good trainers also make good salespeople:

1. *You're a people person*
2. *You're good at helping people change their behaviour*
3. *You're great at motivation*
4. *Working on fitness means you're determined and able to push yourself*



ACTIVITY: Answer these questions

1. What worries you most about sales?

2. How do you think you might change that?

One thing to always remember is you're not trying to trick someone into anything when you sell to them; you're just trying to demonstrate the value you can give them. Your job is to explain how you can help them achieve things more effectively than they would manage alone and why you're the right person to do that. If you're clear on that, they will be too – and that can increase your chance of success.

WAYS TO OVERCOME YOUR SALES WORRIES

► Realise that you're trying to help them.

Don't think of the process as making a sale, think of it as explaining how you can contribute to your client's experience. The best salespeople are detached from what they get from the sale – and focus instead on what the person buying the goods or service can get from it. Always see your sales presentation as a way of showing the best option for your prospective client. If you truly believe your service IS the best option you can give them, you're working to help them.

- ▶ **Don't go in with expectations.** If you assume the client isn't going to buy, your language – verbal and non-verbal – will communicate that. They wouldn't be sitting in front of you if they didn't have some interest in your service.
- ▶ **Believe in yourself.** If you really believe you can help this person and understand what they need, it's your duty of care to help them see that too. That's not selling, that's potentially changing someone's life.

THE SALES CYCLE

To understand selling further though it's good to know how a sale happens and how you take a client from being a warm lead to a hot one. Remember, this process is not luck, it's a clear process and so how you work through that, step by step, is going to be the main focus of this chapter.

Remember, each sale usually follows this pattern:



We've touched on lead generation, so now let's look at the rest of the process.

Your job during each potential sale is to show exactly why you can deliver value to your potential client and why you're the right person to solve their particular problem.

You're trying to ensure that they know they're making the right choice and this involves creating what's known as certainty.

THE IMPORTANCE OF "CERTAINTY"

Definition of "certainty": *The firm conviction that something is the case.*

In sales terms, the customer needs to be sure that employing you is the absolute best way for them to meet their goals. But there are two types of certainty: logical and emotional.

Most people buy something on emotion and justify it logically, so it's important that you understand both types – and how to create them when chatting to the potential client.

EMOTIONAL CERTAINTY

This is when something "feels right" to the customer. You achieve this by creating an emotional connection with the client through the sales cycle. You need to show that you understand, and empathise, with the client's motivating factors and fears – and can help.

So, during the different elements of the sales cycle you really need to tease out:

- ▶ What is important to them?
- ▶ Why is it important to them?
- ▶ Have they tried & failed in the past? If so, how?
- ▶ How confident are they that they could do this on their own?

Your ability to understand, articulate and connect these back to your service will help your client feel more sure that you can help them and that working with you will be different.

LOGICAL CERTAINTY

This is where the customer sees the “common sense” benefits of working with you. To achieve this you need to present a rational argument that 1-to-1 coaching can help them achieve their goals more effectively than trying to work alone.

To help you do this, these are the areas you need to work through with the client during the sales cycle:

- ▶ What are the potential risks or limitations that may prevent them from achieving their goal?
- ▶ What are the features of your service that will help them overcome those risks/limitations and achieve what they want?

- ▶ What are the benefits of these features to the client?
- ▶ How can you show that you can help them?

If you don't know the answers to these questions yourself, you need to address them before you get to your final pitch – the Price Presentation.



**ACTIVITY:
Make yourself a plan**

Think about what type of certainty you want to create through each stage of the sales cycle. Also think about how you want the client to feel, at each of these stages.

	TYPE OF CERTAINTY	HOW THE CLIENT FEELS
Phone Call		
Pre-Exercise Questionnaire		
Consultation		
Intro Session		
Price Presentation		

HOW TO UNDERSTAND YOUR CUSTOMER

Here's some advice that's going to possibly change everything you think about being a PT. Coaching is not about "telling" people what to do. It's about asking questions that help your client see what they need to do themselves.

Many new trainers don't realise this and wonder why, even though they've written a killer program, the client can't stick to it.

Fact is, you can't make a client change, they have to do that themselves – your job is to help them achieve that.

If you're telling clients what they should do and they're thinking, "I don't want to", you're just reinforcing the wrong thing. So instead, ask the right questions to help people learn about their

own attitudes and beliefs. That lets them hear what they are saying in their own head and you trigger a big shift in perspective that helps both of you get better results.

THE PRICE CHAT

This is the last stage of the process and it usually happens directly after the first session.

Hopefully by now, the person has moved from warm to hot and they are ready to work with you, but if they still have some uncertainty at this point, this is your chance to change that using everything you discovered about them to this point.

A great sales chat therefore doesn't start with the prices – instead, it follows this process:

Engage > Frame > Summarise > Plan > Recommend

1. ENGAGE

This is the chat you have with them as you leave the first session and head to wherever you're going to chat about prices. You're aiming to affirm their positive experience during the session and help build their confidence in achieving their goals. Start with a question and add a compliment to build confidence.

Sample conversation:

- James, how did you find today's session?

- It was great, thanks!

- And what did you find most useful in today's session?

- You really helped improve my form on those Romanian Deadlifts. They felt really good.

- Awesome. And what was most difficult?

- Definitely the Assault Bike at the end. Not worked that hard in a while!

- We deliberately moved you out of your comfort zone today, but you picked this up really quickly and worked really hard. I can tell this is important to you.

2. FRAME

In this part of your chat, you're outlining how the conversation is going to run – in order to create transparency. You want to gain

permission from the client to move forward and begin discussing how you would help them – and the price you charge to do that.

Sample conversation:

What I would like to do now is look back at what took place in our last two sessions and show you what I believe are your best options for moving forward from here. How does that sound?

3. SUMMARISE

The summary is the part where you reaffirm exactly all the information that you gathered over the course of the consultation and intro session. You are not looking to present how you're going to help them, more so just outline what you have identified & understood about the person.

In this part you will summarise:

- ▶ Their goals – what they want to achieve, why they want to achieve it and, if applicable, when they want to achieve it by.
- ▶ Their limitations – what has previously got in the way of achieving these.
- ▶ Their movement quality – whether there are any movements that need to be addressed.
- ▶ An overview of the intro session – what you did over the course of the session/s.

Sample conversation:

- James, when we first sat down you explained to me that you are working towards increasing your muscle mass, particularly around your upper body, to give yourself the best chance of getting into the university soccer team when you go in a few months' time. You've mentioned you hadn't had too much experience in the gym, coming a few times with your friends, and you're really looking for some structure and support with your training, as you mentioned that without it, you may struggle to be consistent and disciplined – especially as you're often out with friends.

Have I missed anything?

- No, I think that's everything!

- During the session, I noticed that you weren't quite able to achieve what we call "neutral spine" during your Romanian Deadlift, causing you a bit of discomfort in your lower back.

To safely add more reps or weight required to get stronger in this position, this would be something to address early on.

Other than that, we saw that your movement quality is, in general, really good, which is why we were able to push you.

Have you got any questions on what we did during the session?

4. PLAN

At this stage you will map out how their first 12 weeks with you would look. You're going to talk them through their "transformation journey" (from where they are now to where they want to be), explaining how you plan to get them there. This is where all that prior knowledge you've gained on the person during the past steps of the sales cycle – their goals, their why and their obstacles – comes to fruition. You already know how you can

specifically help them from your research.

By this point, you should always have a clear, personalised strategy for how you're going to help the client. Always make sure you can tick the boxes on these three questions:

- ▶ What can they achieve in 12 weeks?
- ▶ How are you going to help them do it?
- ▶ What is the focus of each program going to be?

Sample conversation:

"From my experience, I see your goal as being achievable within 8-12 weeks and I would approach it in 3 phases.

Phase 1:

First of all, to help you get more out of your exercises, we will focus on refining your technique. Typically, this would be over a 2-4 week timeframe, depending on how quickly you pick it up.

Phase 2:

Once you're moving well, from here we want to build on this and start to increase the sets and reps of your exercises, focusing on building muscle.

Phase 3:

By Phase 3, you should be stronger through each of your main exercises while maintaining great technique, allowing us to begin dropping the reps and increasing the weight to really drive your performance forward.

Do you have any questions about any of the phases?

Does this sound like a good plan for you?

Once you've outlined your 12-week plan for the client, you can talk more specifically about how you work within these phases and your coaching system.

There are 3 main things that you should cover:

► **Program overview:** How you will deliver their program

► **Nutrition:** The level of nutritional support they will receive

► **Assessments:** How progress will be tracked and measured and why

Other features: Is there anything else that your service delivers that can support them?

Sample conversation:

Let me show you my Coaching System. All of my clients are provided with an app called Trainerize. This is where your program will be uploaded so it's right there when you're performing your workouts. With your program I recommend that you start with a full-body program for 3 days a week.

For any workouts you would be doing alone, you will have video tutorials of all the exercises, be able to time your rest periods and record all of your reps and weights. Would you like to see the app?

Of course, reaching your goal isn't all about exercise. For support with nutrition, we have two options. The first is we take a habit-based approach, where we progressively replace bad habits with good ones. The second is a macronutrient focus, where you record your daily nutrition and we divide the calories into targets for your fat, protein and carbohydrate intake. Which approach sounds more like you?

Lastly, one of the most important aspects of any training plan is the assessment process. Based on your goal, I would suggest using progress photos and girth measurements, particularly around your chest and arms, around every 4 weeks.

Is there anything you'd like to go over in more detail?

5. RECOMMEND

This is where you will finally present your prices and packages and suggest the best option for

them. Keep it simple. Present with confidence – show that you're the right person for the job.

Sample conversation:

Whatever option you choose, all of your programming, nutritional support and assessment are included, all you pay for is the cost of the session, which becomes cheaper the more sessions a week you do.

Outline your prices.

“Some of my clients do 3 times per week, but based on your goals and experience I’d recommend working together at least twice a week for the first 12 weeks, and then training on your own for the other day.

Which do you see yourself getting started with?

3 NON-VERBAL SIGNALS TO LEARN

What your body is saying is as important as the words that come out of your mouth when conveying a message. Here are 3 things to practise:

- 1. Look relaxed and open.** Don’t fold arms, fidget, touch your face or move around too much.
- 2. Mirror their movements.** If they grab water, you grab water!
- 3. Smile!**



CONGRATULATIONS!

Hopefully you just made the sale. If you didn't – don't beat yourself up. It's not a personal rejection, it's just business. But whatever the result, use each sales chat, good or bad, as a learning experience...



ACTIVITY: Answer the following after each sale

1. What areas went well?

2. Where could you improve?

3. How would you change how the process went?

So, now you understand how to start signing clients, there's another essential person your business needs to look after – and that's you. Here's why you need to integrate some self-care into your business plan and how to do that.



CHAPTER FIVE

Taking care
of yourself

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

When you're on a plane the cabin crew always say to put your own oxygen mask on before helping others. This advice is just as essential when running a business as it is 40,000 feet in the air. If you're run down, tired, burnt out and fed up you're not going to give your best to your clients.

One way to avoid this is to set boundaries and define how to use your time efficiently from day one of your business. It might seem strange to think about turning down clients before you've even got any, but it's also really hard to take a step back if you realise you're overloaded once you have established clients. That leads to disappointment for them – and you. So set things up to get them right from the start.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD TIME MANAGEMENT

Time is your most finite resource so you need to use yours effectively to meet your goals. Most of us think we need to work harder to get better outcomes, but that's not necessarily true. Often success comes from working smarter not harder, and that can mean taking a step back and looking at everything with a fresh eye.

To do this effectively you need to:

- ▶ Identify your most essential tasks
- ▶ Prioritise them
- ▶ Batch them

The first step in doing this is to work out exactly what you have to do in a week – and there are four types of tasks to look at:

1. Work in the business: This is the time when you're actually training clients, working on their programs, doing any follow-up calls and admin directly related to your current clients. This is what brings the money in and keeps the lights on every week.

2. Work on the business: This is what grows your business, so include tasks like generating new leads, advertising, social media and further education.

3. Time for you: This is the bit many business owners ignore, but it's actually the first thing you should book into your diary when scheduling your week. If you need an hour a day for your own training, book it out. If you don't want to train people on Sundays, scratch that day out. If you know you can't do late nights and early mornings every week without getting cranky, schedule your appointments within a timeframe you know will allow you to give your best to those you're working with.

4. Garbage tasks: What are you wasting time on? Good indicators that a task fits into this box is if you feel you should do it (because everyone else does) but you're not sure what return it's giving you. Also include things you could be delegating

to someone else. And look at any time wasted by things like poor scheduling – if you’re spending as much time travelling to and from an appointment as training your client, you need to work on your scheduling.



ACTIVITY:
List all your tasks by type

List all your tasks based on category, and think about how much of your week, or day, you need to spend on each category.

Work in the business tasks:

Work on the business tasks:

Your non-negotiables (time for you):

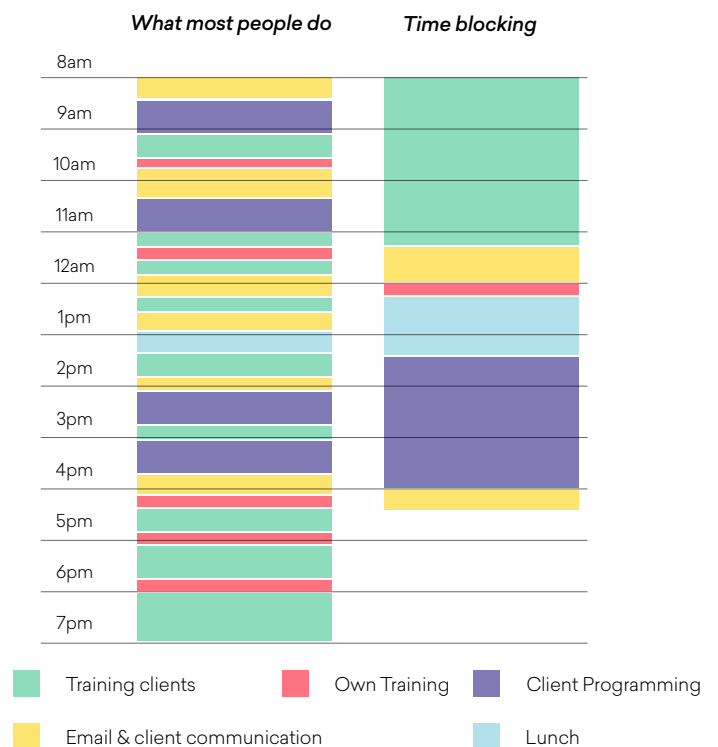
Garbage tasks:

Which of these tasks are daily tasks?

Which of these tasks are weekly tasks?

Which are things you should lose, delegate or outsource?

Once those things are booked in, you can begin to schedule your days. And it’s a great idea to block time for tasks all together like this.



So, try and train all your clients in, say, a three-hour block in the morning and a three-hour block in the evening (rather than one at 6am, one at 9am, one at 6pm and one at 9pm). This may not happen perfectly at the start, but if you have the time blocked out as your primary training time, it will help you guide people towards these times when you're booking them in.

Then batch your other tasks. So, let's say you allocate 90 minutes every Tuesday afternoon to write new client programs or one hour on a Wednesday morning to follow up all your leads. By batching tasks like this you get into the right mindset and focus for a task. Schedule client sessions around these – not the other way around, or you'll always be playing catch-up with your other tasks. If tasks don't take as long as you expected then you can do some of your less important tasks during the gaps.

WHAT IF THERE AREN'T ENOUGH HOURS IN THE DAY?

You can't add more hours so there's no option but to reprioritise things. To do this you can use a simple technique called the Eisenhower Box.

This helps you divide your tasks by “urgency” and “importance” – which helps you decide how much time to allocate to them.

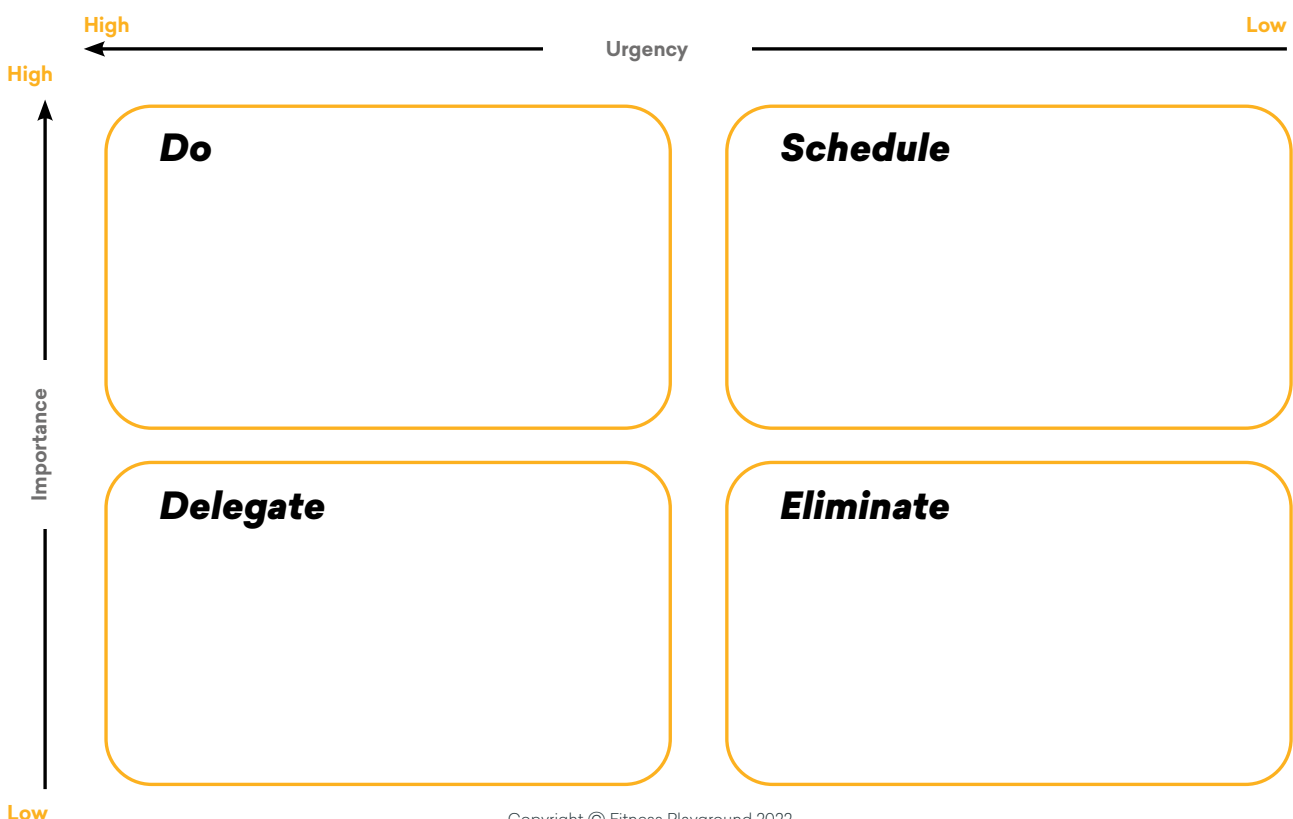


ACTIVITY: Fill in the Eisenhower Box

Go back to that list of everything you need to do – and allocate each task to one of the boxes below. This can be hard but you need to be ruthless.

With every task ask yourself:

- ▶ Is this essential to keeping my business afloat?
- ▶ Do I have to do it myself or could I get some help?
- ▶ Is it actually giving results?
- ▶ If not, will it ever give results – perhaps if you upskill, or find someone else to help you with the task?



Once you ask yourself these questions you should find it easier to place the tasks in a box.

From here you can start to plan your schedule more effectively. But to really make it work for you, also look at these areas...



ACTIVITY: Self-reflection on how you work best

Are you a morning person or an evening one?

You should schedule the tasks that require your highest level of focus (like programming or marketing) at the time when you feel most alert, energised and productive.

When's your power hour? What needs to be done then?

Are you time-focused or outcome-focused?

Do you prefer to set a time to complete a task and stick to it, or, do you want to complete say, *four* sales calls or *three* programs. Allocate things accordingly.

Which works best for you? Setting a time or targets?

Allocate time/outcome goals for your four most important tasks.

1.

2.

3.

4.

How many "should" tasks do you do?

These are things you think you should do because everyone else does – so, maybe you feel you should post on Instagram every day because everyone else does – but if you're aiming at 50-something CEOs, are you really reaching them doing that or are you just wasting your time?

Identify your "should" tasks.

How important are they really?

What can you lose?

What can you outsource?

Do you need help?

Once you're making a little more money, delegating tasks like administration, bookkeeping or social media to someone else can free you up to do things only you can do, like training your clients. You don't need to spend a fortune or take on a full-time staff member. For example, there are agencies that allow you to book an online virtual assistant for just an hour or two a week.

Is there anything you could or would like to outsource?

How could you do this?

How much can you afford to pay?

TOP TIP: PARKINSON'S LAW

This states that every task will expand to the time you allocate to it. If you find you're constantly chasing your tail, try allocating a little less time to complete the work you need to do for a few weeks – and see if you can do the same amount of work in less time.

TRACKING YOUR KPIS

KPIs stands for Key Performance Indicators and these are the numbers you need to be aware of that help you track your business health and allow you to see what you need to focus your time on. If any of these are performing lower than you hope or expect, it's a sign you might need to spend more time on a task, or upskill your knowledge on it.

SALES METRICS

These will reveal if you need to spend more time on lead generation, or refine your processes. Check them weekly.

- ▶ Leads – how many people are enquiring about training with you?
- ▶ Appointments – how many leads convert to appointments?
- ▶ Price Presentation – how many do you get to discuss pricing with?
- ▶ Sales – how many then actually sign on to be clients?

BUSINESS HEALTH METRICS

It is essential that you always know the current position of your business. This should then be compared against your goals. Is your business where you want it to be? Look at these weekly:

- ▶ Sessions – how many paid-for sessions are you doing a week?
- ▶ Clients – how many paying clients do you currently have?
- ▶ Session/Client ratio – is this something you're happy with or should you be trying to upsell more sessions, change your hours or find new clients?

EXPERIENCE METRICS

This gives you a clue as to how happy your clients are. This should be measured monthly.

- ▶ **Cancellations** – how many clients are cancelling? What were their reasons for cancelling? Some cancellations are uncontrollable, but often there is something that you could have done more of to prevent it from happening.
- ▶ **Average length of stay** – how long do your clients stay with you before cancelling the contract. This may give you insights about your pricing, your delivery or how well you set up their goals to start with.
- ▶ **Referrals** – how many new clients have you got from existing ones?

REASSESSING YOUR BUSINESS

You may come to a point in your business life where you realise that your workload is unsustainable. At this point, you might need to reassess your workload and/or pricing to create a better level of balance for you.

- ▶ You might want to put up prices so you can achieve the same financial success by working fewer hours.
- ▶ You might decide to cut expenses or income goals so you can work fewer hours without having to change your pricing.
- ▶ You might decide it's time to take on another trainer to share the workload with you.

No one journey is the same in the fitness industry, so it's important that you always take what you learn in the industry and apply it to your situation, your goals and your business.

One thing that doesn't change though is that the fitness industry is constantly evolving, so, let's finish off the book talking about the importance of education.



CHAPTER SIX

The learning
never stops

THE LEARNING NEVER STOPS

The first educational step in becoming a Personal Trainer is your initial qualification that allows you to practise – known as the Certificate III and IV in Fitness. Technically, once you hold these you can work as a trainer. In reality, though, it takes a bit more knowledge to become a good trainer – and then a great one.

For this reason, even once you have those initial qualifications under your belt, the learning doesn't stop. The fitness world is constantly changing and, alongside this, your clients are also evolving. You might start off working to get someone stronger and leaner, but if they stay with you, they might go on to want to train for a specific event, they might get pregnant and need support during pregnancy and post-partum, or their training might need to adapt for injuries or illness.

ESSENTIAL EDUCATION

As mentioned, you must hold your Certificate III and IV to train clients, but once you have those, there's very little regulation around keeping on top of your skills in the fitness industry, unfortunately.

It's one of the few practical professions in Australia where, technically, you could take a training course and still be practicing 15 years later with that initial knowledge. Not only will the industry move on in that time, so will our understanding of coaching, communication, the body and almost everything that is involved in the profession! That's why good trainers stay on top of things even if they're not obliged to.

One way to stay relevant and up to date with the industry is to take courses that offer Continued Education Credits. You'll also need to earn a certain number of these each year if you want to maintain your AUSactive membership.

Other things you must update include your CPR certificate, which should be renewed every 12 months, and your Australian First Aid Qualifications, every three years.

Which essential qualifications do you need? What's your first step to taking these?

It's easy to step into the industry and immediately be overwhelmed with how much there is to learn. When you take a step back and look at some of the skills that the most successful Personal Trainers have, it's hard to know where to start or if you'll ever get to their heights. But with the right approach, you can!



The important thing is to focus your early attention on the things that are going to have the biggest impact on your success, and maybe more importantly, learn to ignore the rest. As a young Personal Trainer it's easy to get caught in the noise created by other people, through their social media and YouTube videos, and lose sight of what you actually *need* to know.

All the exercises and advice in this e-book will give you a big headstart in this respect, but we've only touched the surface in regards to the skills that might help you. We have created 6 “buckets” that we recommend Personal Trainers focus on your first 1-2 years, including some resources that we recommend to get you started...

BUCKET 1: BUSINESS

The majority of Personal Trainers actively working in the industry will work as sole traders, whether it be in some kind of rent or progressive model, or, running their own business. As a business owner, then, it's important that you understand how to run a business!

A basic understanding of how to acquire clients (through basic marketing and sales strategies), as well as knowing and communicating why you do what you do, can be a great place to start.

Resources we rate:



TED Talk: *How Great Leaders Inspire Action*, by Simon Sinek

In one of the [most watched TED Talks ever](#), author and international speaker Simon Sinek highlights one simple yet powerful differentiating factor that elevates the most successful companies in the world.



BOOK: *Changemaker*, by John Berardi

This is an essential read for any new Coach. This all-in-one book lays out actionable strategies and a clear roadmap for creating career success in the fitness industry, delivered by the founder of one of the most successful nutrition companies in the world, Precision Nutrition.



BOOK: *Way of the Wolf*, by Jordan Belfort

The “Wolf of Wall Street” reveals his step-by-step sales system that helps you communicate your value and create certainty in others about you and your service.



WEBSITE: The Personal Trainer Development Centre (PTDC)

The PTDC has loads of great articles and resources to support you on the business side of things.

BUCKET 2: CHANGE PSYCHOLOGY

Being a Personal Trainer is about helping facilitate positive change in clients' lives. To help them change from their current state, to a more desirable state – whether that be through supporting weight loss, muscle gain, lifestyle change or nutrition. Yet change is unique to the individual, there isn't one approach to help someone change

Resources we rate:



BOOK: *Atomic Habits*, by James Clear

Change happens as a result of a series of small improvements. It's not always about giving your clients a 60-minute program five days a week or recommending they eat chicken and broccoli daily. *Atomic Habits* provides a framework for meeting a client where they're at, helping you support small changes in them.



BOOK: *Mindset*, by Carol Dweck

Often our limiting factor is our belief. Psychologist Carol Dweck outlines key strategies to help ourselves, and our clients, cultivate a mindset of success. An essential ingredient in supporting change.



MODEL: Transtheoretical Model of Change

The transtheoretical model of behaviour change assesses an individual's readiness to act on a new healthier behaviour, and provides strategies/processes of change to guide the individual.

BUCKET 3: COACHING & COMMUNICATION

The fitness industry is a people industry, an industry built on relationships. And communication is at the heart of building relationships. Learning how to build rapport, ask effective questions and support your clients through the changes they are trying to make is always going to be much more valuable than your ability to write the perfect program.

Resources we rate:



BOOK: *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, by Dale Carnegie

Full of lessons on how to cultivate relationships and build rapport, this should be on every Personal Trainer's bookshelf.



BOOK: *Motivational Interviewing*, by William Miller & Stephen Rollnick

An essential part of a Personal Trainer's role is their ability to ask the right questions. Questions that empower the client and help create a roadmap to change. Motivational Interviewing outlines a key communication style you can use to support your clients.



BOOK: *Never Split the Difference*, by Chris Voss

Written by a former FBI negotiator, *Never Split the Difference* provides communication strategies that have worked in the most high-stake situations – yet can be used in any situation.

BUCKET 4: EXERCISE SELECTION

When it comes to running a session, the last thing you want is to have to fumble your way through, frantically trying to find an exercise that they can do because they're just not getting the ones you give them. Nothing tells a client "my PT doesn't know what they're doing!" quite like that.

Having a library of exercises to draw upon for each movement pattern, known as progressions and regressions, will allow you to always have an exercise option regardless of your clients' ability, equipment availability or in-session struggles. On top of that, being able to effectively coach that exercise will increase your clients' chance of success.

Resources we rate:



BOOK: *Language of Coaching*, by Nick Winkelman

How you communicate with a client is integral to how they move and how they learn a skill. The coaching could be the difference between success and failure. This book explores how instruction, cueing and feedback can significantly affect training outcomes.



COACH: Mike Robertson (Robertson Training Systems)

Co-owner of IFAST, Robertson's approach to training clients is simple, yet effective. His articles, videos and podcasts will provide Personal Trainers with a plethora of coaching and exercise ideas.

BUCKET 5: NUTRITION

When it comes to nutrition, focus on the basics. Most people get lost in the weeds of supplements and meal timing, well before they have helped their clients nail the basics. Coaching nutrition is very closely linked to change psychology, being able to implement small changes that will help your clients make better choices. But to be able to do that, you need to have a basic understanding of some of the science.

Resources we rate:



COURSE: Precision Nutrition

Considered the gold standard in nutrition coaching and education, Precision Nutrition focuses not only on the science of nutrition, but also the coaching implementation of it – being able to implement effective strategies with clients that suit where they are in their fitness journey, and help support positive change.



WEBSITE: Examine.com

If you do want to explore supplements, at least get your information from a credible source. Examine research and review all the current studies available on supplementation to provide accurate and trusted information and recommendations.



MODEL: Hierarchy of Nutrition, by Eric Helms

Eric Helms provides a simple approach to how to methodologically attack a client's nutrition habits, helping you prioritise the right things.

BUCKET 6: PROGRAMMING

Although the best program is the one your client will actually do, there are some basic principles of program design that are important to understand, to be able to create a program tailored to your clients' goals and maximise their experience.

Resources we rate:



BOOK: *Science & Development of Muscle Hypertrophy*, by Brad Schoenfeld

The godfather of muscle development, Brad Schoenfeld's latest book condenses all the latest research in an applicable way, to help Personal Trainers get the results they want with their clients.



BOOK/WEBSITE: *Ultimate MMA Conditioning* / 8-weeksout.com

Developing a baseline level of aerobic conditioning is essential for all clients. Originally designed for MMA fighters, Joel Jamieson provides a framework for designing conditioning sessions with your clients.

What skills might you want to learn?

What course or reading material might help you with that?

EDUCATION NOT FADUCATION

The fitness world is like Newton's law of physics – things will swing one way and then they will swing back, so while it's important to keep up with new developments, ideas and trends, it's just as important to learn when to ignore something.

With every new training modality or gadget or gizmo, look to the evidence, look to who is suggesting things and where the idea has come from. Don't write anything off, but do approach everything with a critical eye.

And always, always, keep the client in mind. If you think something is going to serve your client more effectively than what you're doing now then try it – but don't just jump down every new trend rabbit hole out there.

And now... It's up to you

So, that's a quick snapshot on getting started in the fitness industry. There's still so much more we could say – that's why we run courses on it – but we just wanted to give you a taster of some of the elements that it takes to thrive in this industry and to help you succeed doing one of the most rewarding jobs in the world.

If you do want to take things further, we at Fitness Playground Academy run free, and paid, fitness industry courses that provide the skills fitness professionals actually need to enjoy a successful career in a field they love. Our courses are led by real fitness professionals, in real gyms, coaching real clients.

If you want to find out more, check out the Fitness Playground Academy website: www.fitnessplayground.com.au/study-with-us to find out more.

We look forward to helping you become the best trainer you can be.

FITNESS PLAYGROUND
ACADEMY

Visit our website
www.fpacademy.com.au