

How to Select the Right Personal Trainer

In the era of processed foods, nutrient-deprived vegetables, high-speed technology, and sedentary jobs, we need exercise. Let's face it, as mankind becomes more technologically advanced, his physical activity decreases.

Thus, we would think that if people were made aware of these challenges, then they would take steps to correct or offset them. Ironically, though, most adults understand the importance and benefits of proper nutrition and exercise, yet fail to make the lifestyle changes needed. Why do people fail? It is because of the following: lack of knowledge, discipline, motivation, patience, and procrastination. So, how can personal trainers help to combat these issues? Qualified fitness professionals directly address the previously listed problems. They possess the ability to inspire and guide their clients' fitness journeys. There are important prerequisites, though, that fitness professionals must meet to be considered qualified.

First, the trainers should be nationally certified and/or degreed. There are over 400 certification bodies. The certification serves as the common denominator for fitness professionals. The legitimate certification also separates the personal trainer from fly by night' trainers looking to make fast, easy cash. Further, it shows that the person has invested time, money, thought, and energy into expanding his/her knowledge.

Experience is also invaluable. We know that everyone has to start somewhere. If a personal trainer is new to the profession it is important to know how many practical (hands on) hours of training he/she has completed. Conversely, if a trainer claims to have a wealth of experience then the person should have a proven track record to back any claims made. Some reassurances can come in the form of client testimonials/ referrals, and before-and-after photos.

Also important, is the trainer's ability to adapt to your needs or limitations. Many trainers use a cookie-cutter style of servicing clients. Meaning, there is a predesigned workout, regardless of who the clients are and what their needs are. A qualified professional will consult with the prospective client about his/her needs before the first workout ever begins.

During the initial consultation, the fitness professional should ask a series of questions as listed:

1. What is the client's medical history in detail, such as heart, respiratory, circulatory system, structural system (bones, joints, connecting tissues), fatigue, chronic conditions, medications taken, injuries, surgeries, and family history?
2. Past physical activity is important to know. For example, is the person a former athlete?
3. Think about daily activities. Some practices that may be deemed as insignificant by the client may be root causes of other problems.
4. What are the client's current eating habits? The trainer should know what the person eats in an average day, how frequent, and why he/she eats certain foods. Most people have food issues, and it is best to address them early.

Now, on every December 31 of each year millions of people start making those New

Year resolutions. They may sound like, 'I'm going to drop fifty pounds before my class reunion in May, this is my year.' The next step they take is migrating to their local mega gym'. After joining the gym they soon realize that the membership dues and inflated initiation fees are paying for access to the latest equipment, lots of new gadgets, and semi-clean locker room. The club membership does not include expert advice from a fitness professional. That part of the club's service is extra. So when the new exerciser steps inside the facility he/she is at a crossroad. Should the person pay more money to learn how to exercise correctly or first try to workout on his/her own? General Norman Swortzkoff has been quoted as saying, 'Indecision has cost Americans more money than making the wrong decision.'

Sadly, though, most people choose to procrastinate. They think that exercising is simple enough to jump into a new weight-training program on their own. The mindset here is that the trainer is an unnecessary expense. So, now equally as much money and/or time is spent on workout DVDs', diet pills, books with the latest fad diets. Some people seek out the advice of a friend or family member who looks fit. Then there are those whose pride will not allow them to ask for help so they drift from machine to machine with no plan of action. This cycle may continue for months, or until there's an injury from improper technique or over working muscles. Unfortunately, some of the new exercisers will just give up, because of a lack of results and motivation.

Hello, my name is Jamal Robinson, owner of Gym Works Personal Training. I wrote this piece to empower the consumer. It is truly my passion to help people achieve their goals. I learned the importance of having passion for my profession from my parents (retired teacher and journalist). Throughout their careers I observed their interactions with peers, students, and subscribers. I also had the privilege of witnessing what it took for them to be successful in their careers and how others were impacted as a result. I learned that there must be an endless pursuit of knowledge and excellence. This approach elevates certain people above their peers and greatly enhances the lives of those who they encounter.

At Gym Works we have raised the bar of excellence. We possess the great intangibles needed to navigate your fitness journey. When you find a fitness professional that has these qualities, don't procrastinate. Allow he/she to help you, and your life will be greatly enhanced. GET FIT!!!'

Visit our fitness studio to improve your overall health and well-being.