

Your Personal Trainer is an idiot

ASK ROCCO
WITH
ROCCO CASTELLANO

I've been in the fitness industry for over 35 years. Yep, I'm that old. In 1991, I was one of 300 certified personal trainers in the world. Since then the industry hasn't moved forward one bit. It seems like it's still stuck in 1991 – almost nothing has changed, and most of you still see the division of the “haves” and the “have-nots.”

Personal training as a career just turned 21 last year. It wasn't even old enough to have a drink; shit, barely a generation has passed. I really shouldn't expect much from a 21 year old, but as an elder in this pool of babies, I need to stand up and stir shit up a little.

For years, I have been trying as a business coach to help the “fitness professional” (I use that term very loosely) actually be able to stand tall as a “professional.” I hate to report this, but I'm failing miserably; and it's not because of the curriculum I'm teaching or the basic business formulas. It's literally the people out there who think they can become personal trainers.

If you are a decent personal trainer you can make anywhere between \$60,000 and \$120,000 a year, depending on where you live, how much experience you have and what niche you may be in.

It's not a bad living, so every idiot who believes they look good in a tank top and shorts and can carry a clipboard thinks they can become a personal trainer, and many do. You can pay \$300 and get “certified” or be like some of the meatheads out there and just go down to Staples, OfficeMax or a local printer and get business cards that say, you guessed it, “Personal Trainer.” It sucks but it is totally legal.

I can hear my inbox filling up as I write this, from disgruntled pieces of shit, fly-by-night personal trainers thinking they can get one over on the general public. Sorry, douche bag, it's not my problem you're an idiot. It is my responsibility to expose your stupid ass.

So here's how you can tell if your personal trainer is an idiot. Go get a highlighter... I'll wait.

Holy shit where'd you have to go for the highlighter? OK, relax because there won't be any tests or quizzes after; this is just for your personal knowledge.

Lately, (over the past 8 years) so-called personal trainers have sprung up all over the place with “bootcamps” or “fitness classes” because they went to a conference or workshop and somebody on the stage said they can make more per hour teaching a class instead of training one client. Obviously, every asshole in the world wants to teach a class: work less, make more. It's a great concept, but too much goes into being successful at it. Oh, I don't know, like maybe being able to teach a class, have the confidence to lead, know what the f**k you are doing and maybe get results. So, as a consumer, please don't fall in love with the good-looking trainer and join just because you have fantasies about him, especially if there are only three people in the class – that means he is struggling. I always coach my clients to make sure they have a minimum of 10 clients and build from there. I believe in start-ups, but if you are still there after two months and it's still three people, stop the fantasies and move on.

If your personal trainer is offering “free” consultations, there are only two things going on: 1.) They want to get you in their facility so they can give you a well rehearsed sales pitch, and the consultation is just a ruse to separate you from your wallet; or 2.) They have no experience and have no clients and think it will get you into their facility.

When I was still working as a personal trainer, you couldn't get anywhere near my facility if you hadn't booked at least two weeks in advance and were willing to pay me \$250 for the consultation. If your personal trainer is as good as he claims, you had better be paying him for his time. No fitness professional “worth his salt” is going to do anything for free. His knowledge is going to change the way you buy clothes, cook meals and look naked. You want a real consultation, not a sales pitch. If he or she gives you what you need, you will automatically want them to help you reach your goals.

Always ask how long they have been helping people in your fitness situation. If it's fewer than three years, move on. Every personal

trainer should do some type of apprenticeship under another professional for at least three years. If they say one year, run for the f**king hills, or just call the next personal trainer you've Googled.

I know this sounds a little too elementary, my dear Watson, but ask if they are even certified. Twenty percent of people claiming to be personal trainers are not even certified. So, ask.

Now, like I said earlier, it's important that they weren't just recently certified. Certification just means you were smart enough to pass a test. Experience in training individuals in your specific fitness situation is what you want. You will get better and faster results.

I have seen too many fitness consumers get hurt or pay to not get the results they needed because their personal trainer was an idiot.

To quote a very smart advertiser: “an educated consumer is the best customer.”

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