

New (Virtual) Trainer Toolkit

HOW TO START ONLINE TRAINING WITHOUT IN-PERSON EXPERIENCE



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Table of Contents

How to Start Online Training Without In-Person Experience	3
• Benefits of Online Personal Training	4
• Tips for Online Trainers Without In-Person Experience	5
• Pave Your Way	6
How to Get Hired as an Online Personal Trainer	7
• Set Up a Website with These Keywords	8
• Know Who Would Benefit Most from An Online Trainer	8
• Reinforce the Benefits of Hiring an Online Trainer	9
• What Sets You Apart from Other Trainers	9
How to Get Your First Online Personal Training Clients	11
• Establish Yourself as a Pro	12
• Establish Your Processes	13
• Marketing and Outreach	14
• Keep Clients Engaged	14
• The First is the Hardest	15
How to Teach Proper Form as an Online Trainer	16
• Importance of Good Form	17
• Online Personal Trainer Video Demonstration	17
• Online Client Video Feedback	18
• Level Up to Elite Status	19

How to Start Online Training Without In-Person Experience



If you're new to personal training, you're likely considering online training. However, if you don't have any in-person training experience, you're probably wondering how you'll be successful in coaching your clients.

Follow along as we explore some of the benefits of online personal training and tips that can help you get your online business moving without in-person training experience.

Want a head start? Take [ISSA's Online Coach certification](#) to set up your marketing and taking your online business to the next level.

Benefits of Online Personal Training

Although many personal trainers and clients are returning to gyms as conditions with the Covid-19 virus improve, the personal trainers building a virtual presence with their online business now will be just as essential as those in the gym. The transition from in-person to online personal training happened quickly and was not ideal for many trainers but there's great value in having all or part of your personal training business online.

Access to Clients Who Are Not Gym Members

A large number of people don't own gym memberships. They may not have a convenient training space, don't the time, or may feel uncomfortable in a gym. Online training provides the perfect opportunity to help these types of clients.

Help Others While Social Distancing

Health professionals have consistently recommended social distancing as a way to slow the spread of Covid-19. This, however, has caused some challenges with physical and mental health—two things that can be positively impacted by exercise. Online personal training allows fitness professionals to maintain their distance and use their online business to support clients with their health and fitness goals.

Modify Your Personal Training Schedule

Depending on how you structure your online business, you may be able to adjust the time you spend in your training sessions. If you are virtually coaching your clients live, the best times to train are during the windows of time that work best for your clients. But, as you establish trust in your client's commitment, consistency, and form, you may provide them a pre-written training plan or a pre-recorded online class and have check-ins with them throughout the week. This allows you to do the bulk of your work during your availability and free up parts of your day.

Possibility to Train More Clients

This, too, depends on how you structure your online business. You may be able to increase the number of online personal training clients you coach each month. Plus, you aren't limited by the gym's hours. You will likely spend more time with new clients but once you've put good systems and processes in place and established consistent clientele, you can start to expand or bring on additional online personal trainers to work underneath you.

Diversify Your Clientele

International clients, [social media followers](#), and clients on the opposite coast all become potential clients when you have an online training business.

Tips for Online Trainers Without In-Person Experience

The following list includes nine tips for online personal trainers starting their virtual training career with little to no in-person training experience:

1. Keep It Simple

Start small! Limit the number of clients you take on at the beginning. You want to ensure you allow yourself the bandwidth to research when you need to, take your time to do things right, and develop systems and processes that help you stay organized as a personal trainer and online fitness coach.

2. Be okay With Not Knowing It All

You will not know everything—and that's okay! Be willing to learn. No one knows everything, not even an expert instructor. However, it's important to be confident, regardless. Be honest when clients ask you questions you don't know the answer to. Do your research to gather accurate info and follow up with them appropriately. Remember, 'Rome wasn't built in a day!'

3. Practice Coaching Your Close Friends and Family

Family and friends that you've stayed close with during quarantine are an excellent way you can get "in-person training" and coaching experience. You may find it valuable to practice static and dynamic [movement assessments](#) and analyze live movement with people who understand you're learning, are invested in your success as a personal trainer, and can provide solid feedback.

4. Don't Mislead Clients

Be honest with your clients about being a new personal trainer and let them know you are growing and learning. Ask them to be open with you about the things they like or don't like. This allows them to be invested in you and help you by [providing critical feedback](#) that will help you become a better online personal trainer.

5. Complete Your Personal Training Certification and Continue to Invest in Yourself

Become a [certified personal trainer](#) through an accredited program. In addition to your personal training certification, a degree program like exercise science or other higher education is valuable as well – but not required. Expand your skills as a health and fitness professional but remember other types of learning are worthwhile for your growth as a personal trainer and entrepreneur. There are courses on organization, marketing, business, etc. Many of them have online course options, making them safe and convenient. You don't need to complete every course at once, but you must be properly educated (with an accredited certification) and committed to lifelong learning.

6. Find an Online Trainer Who Can Mentor You

There are numerous successful online personal trainers. Many of them have navigated some of the challenges of both in-person and online training. Experienced online personal trainers can suggest resources or platforms that can help you stay organized, critique your training, and help you improve your online movement analysis and remote teaching skills.

7. Work on Your Video/Tech Skills

A huge part of personal training is helping clients activate the right muscles and minimize injury. This means you need to ensure your client's form is correct. When clients are learning new exercises, you must provide clear instruction and cues, common errors, and an exercise library with proper lighting. Both live and recorded videos can be helpful. When clients submit training videos to you, there must be good lighting and they should provide views from more than one angle as well. Check out this article for additional [tips on making the best videos](#).

8. Invest in Good Technology

You don't need much to be successful! However, you'll want to have access to solid wi-fi, a good computer or phone, and take the time to determine which online platform is best for your live interactions (Facebook, Zoom, Skype, etc.). Practice using the technology so you know what you're doing and can provide clear directions to your new clients. Once you have the basics, you can navigate which additional tools, apps, and resources will help improve your online personal training business. Spend time improving your social media and marketing skills as they can be key in helping you grow your online business as well.

9. Consider Your Equipment Needs

Initially, you may start your online personal training clients with bodyweight exercises. This is ideal because you don't need to invest in equipment and bodyweight training can be appropriate for your beginner and advanced clients. A [bodyweight training program](#) is also a great way to help clients perfect their form. As your training progresses, you can think about the equipment best suited for your training style, space, and clientele's needs. Keep in mind, most clients won't have a full gym in their home, so you'll want to keep things simple when you start to add equipment.

Pave Your Way

There are many [successful online personal trainers](#). So, virtual training can be done and can be done well. Don't be afraid to be a beginner at something new. That's where everyone starts. The knowledge you have is valuable. The passion you have is important. The world needs people that are invested in the health and fitness of others. Your ability to adapt and learn will help you pave your way and make a difference.

Are you ready to become a personal trainer? ISSA is a world leader in fitness education and certification with students in more than 140 countries. You too can help change the world by becoming an [ISSA Certified Personal Trainer](#).

How to Get Hired as an Online Personal Trainer



When people consider hiring a personal trainer, many believe that the only way to do it is to join a gym. Yet, the internet has made online personal training another option. Clients who want to lose weight, gain muscle, or simply improve their level of fitness can do so online. If this type of model is of interest, what can you do to increase your appeal to potential online personal training clients?

Set Up a Website with These Keywords

Since your business is partially or fully online, it's important for prospective clients to be able to find you. Including search words (keywords) they'd likely use on your website increases the likelihood that you'll show up in their results.

For individuals searching for an online coach, think about the phrases they would use. This might include "online health coach," "online fitness trainer," or "online athletic trainer." Include these on your website so search engines can identify your business as offering these services.

Also include other fitness keywords to help search engines better make this connection. Some of the [top fitness keywords](#), or the words searched most often, include:

- Gym
- Bodybuilding
- Gyms near me
- Exercise
- Treadmill

Know Who Would Benefit Most from An Online Trainer

Online training isn't right for everyone. Some people need that face-to-face interaction with a personal trainer to keep them motivated with their workout plan. Others would gain more benefit from an online trainer. Understanding who falls into this latter category helps you also know how to reach them with your marketing efforts.

Who could benefit most from hiring an online trainer?

- Someone who doesn't feel comfortable in a gym environment
- Someone who lives in a rural area with no access to a nearby gym
- Someone who travels a lot and can't always meet with a personal trainer in person
- Someone with small kids who doesn't have access to affordable childcare
- Someone who acts as a caretaker and needs to exercise at home
- Someone who works from home and wants to work out on their lunch hour without having to get in a car and drive somewhere

Tailor your website content to speak directly to these individuals. Let them know you're the online personal trainer for them.

Reinforce the Benefits of Hiring an Online Trainer

In your online content, reinforce the benefits you provide as an online fitness coach. For instance, talk about how online workouts means no commute. No fighting traffic trying to get to and from the gym before or after work. This is time that can be spent elsewhere, which means more time with family and friends.

Talk about how an online personal trainer offers accountability and convenience. Because your services as a fitness instructor are over the internet, there is flexibility. Workouts can be scheduled at a time that fits in their calendar best.

Another benefit of hiring a personal trainer online is that it teaches them how to get fit at home. It provides the tools needed to achieve their fitness goals between training sessions. It also helps at other periods of time when they don't have direct access to your coaching.

What Sets You Apart from Other Trainers

There are roughly [325,500 personal trainers](#) in the United States. Why should the person consider you as their prospective trainer?

To get hired as an online personal trainer, you must be able to say how you're different from your competitors. You also have to share why you're better. Do you have a specific style of personal training that provides more benefits? Have you earned awards or received recognition for your fitness instructing?

What sets you apart is called your unique selling proposition, or USP. This should be things that you provide as a personal fitness trainer that clients can't necessarily get from every other trainer out there.

If you have a niche, let your prospective clients know. Maybe you have a lot of experience with [strength training for seniors](#). Or you've worked with a number of athletes in a certain sport. Highlight this expertise so others in that same demographic know you understand them. That you know how to help them reach their fitness goals.

Offer a Variety of Personal Training Services

The more services you offer as a personal trainer, the wider your pool of potential clients. The wider your pool of potential clients, the greater your likelihood of being hired. What services could you provide as a fitness professional?

- **Individual online personal training.** Some clients prefer a one-on-one training session. This provides them a workout designed specifically for them. Individual personal training is also good for people who may need a little more guidance or training. This would include beginners who are new to the fitness world.
- **Group fitness options.** Others are more interested in online exercise classes. This is good for you as an athletic trainer because you get to help more clients at a time. You could offer a kickboxing boot camp, group dance class, or some other type of workout.

- **Ad hoc services.** You can also add to your personal training services by letting clients choose add-ons to their training program. For instance, if you have your certification in nutrition, you can offer nutrition coaching in addition to being an exercise coach. This is beneficial for clients who struggle with their fitness in multiple areas. It also provides for a more comprehensive program.

Show Results You've Provided Past or Current Clients

Before and after pictures can help potential clients physically see the results you're able to provide as a coach. This makes it easier for them to imagine you as part of their fitness journey, providing the same results for them.

Using photos of past or current clients requires that you obtain permission first. You can either have a local attorney draw one up for your personal training business or download a photo release form from the internet.

This form should say that you can use their images for commercial use. This enables you to use them in all your marketing and advertising content.

Emphasize Your Personal Training Certification, If You Have One

Technically, you do not have to be a certified personal trainer to be an online coach. That said, there is value to [obtaining your certification](#).

When you can say that you're certified, it tells prospective clients that you have a certain level of knowledge. That you've been educated in areas relating to fitness, exercise, and training clients. This says that you know how to create an effective workout program. A program that will help them achieve weight loss or reach their other fitness goals.

If you're offering online training on behalf of a gym, health club, or another company offering online fitness programs, the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) reports that having your certification may be necessary to provide this service.

Not yet certified? Get started with [ISSA's Personal Trainer Certification](#) course! You can complete it online and at your own pace!

How to Get Your First Online Personal Training Clients



If you're new to the game, you may not even be certified yet. A lot of people interested in online personal training consider NOT getting certified... Is this a [good idea](#)? Unlikely. There are many reasons why skipping a certification is a poor business practice. The biggest reasons? You cannot obtain personal trainer insurance and it kind of kills your credibility! How can you claim to be an authority on a subject if you didn't do the legwork to learn everything you need to know? Even with years of experience, it's not the same thing.

Also, if someone gets injured doing something that is not biomechanically sound, you're on the hook. A certification will guide you in programming and injury prevention when you train your client through their fitness journey.

So, bottom line—if you're not yet certified, DO IT! You can check out the ISSA Personal Training Certification and bundles [here](#)! Do your research and pick the best certification for your learning style and budget.

For those who are already certified and running a personal training business, you have some things to learn as well! Processes like marketing, assessing clients, fitness goal setting, taking online payments, and how you'll deliver your workouts and plans must be considered. With the trend toward online fitness, there are many online personal training certifications aimed at helping you as a business owner. The ideal program will not only show you how to market yourself and your business, but also how to work with, engage with, assess, and effectively train clients in an online setting. Don't settle for just a marketing program—you are not selling shoes—you're selling YOU! The process is very different.

ISSA is offering the most inclusive and wholistic online coaching certification available right now! Check it out: [ISSA Online Coaching Certification](#)

Establish Yourself as a Pro

When you are the product, you must represent every day. When you train a client in person, they see you, how you're dressed, how you move, and they get to hear the passion in your voice. When you train online, the things you post, the messages you send, and the voice you have on the phone must convey the same sense of trust and passion to be effective.

Whether you are looking for your first client or your 100th client, behave as a professional. You will need to stand out amongst everything else a potential client will see online. Steven Pressfield wrote a book called "Turning Pro" with some great tips on how to be a professional, not an amateur, at what you do. It applies to so much more than sports!

1. The professional shows up daily
2. The professional stays on the job all day
3. The professional is patient
4. The professional accepts no excuses
5. The professional is prepared

6. The professional doesn't show off
7. The professional will reinvent themselves
8. The professional is recognized by other professionals
9. The professional dedicates themselves to mastering technique
10. The professional endures adversity

You'll also need to specialize. No fitness professional can be great at training every possible type of client. Choose a niche of people you'd like to train and get great at training and working with them. This will also help you in your marketing processes.

Offer a full program in nutrition and training with your online business. Clients are looking for a one-stop-shop for all their fitness needs in a convenient format. This means that if you aren't well versed or certified in nutrition, that may be your next stop! Educate yourself so you can educate your clients and help them get the results they are seeking.

It is possible to be a [part-time personal trainer](#) with an online personal training business. In fact, it's probably easier to do in this format. Practice good time management and set expectations of your availability with clients from the start of the relationship and you can excel!

Establish Your Processes

Payments, scheduling, assessments, oh, my! There is a lot a personal trainer has to consider when running a successful training business. Before you start marketing to a single new client and moving your services online, you must sort out the HOWs and WHATs of your business:

- HOW to [assess online clients](#) effectively
- HOW and WHEN to communicate with clients
- HOW to [motivate any type of client](#)
- HOW much [will you charge](#) for your services
- HOW will you process payments
- HOW will you offer virtual sessions
- WHAT is your target audience (niche)
- WHAT packages will you offer
- WHAT intake and liability forms will you require
- WHAT are your policies for things like late payment, non-payment, or canceling services
- WHAT documentation or 'homework' will you require of clients and at what frequency

Write out a list of questions that you would have if you were hiring an online trainer. Perhaps ask an existing set of clients their questions as you transition your business. You'll need to be prepared with answers to every possible question you may get. Think outside of the box! How will you handle cancellation of a training session

by the client? What if YOU have to cancel a session or meeting? What's your policy on changing a fitness plan (upgrade or downgrade) mid-month?

Don't just think about these questions, write the answers down! It may even be wise to create a policies and FAQ document answering these questions that you can share with clients as they begin their programs so everything is clear. Perhaps this becomes one of your intake documents requiring a signature and date.

Once you have your procedures in place and you know how you will run your entire online personal training business, then you can start to market to your target audience.

Marketing and Outreach

Connecting with current and prospective clients online is a lot different than on the gym floor. All your fitness business is conducted in a different way with online coaching—without that live, in-person finesse. Now, you don't have to be a [personal trainer AND social media influencer](#) to be successful, but you will need some kind of online presence.

Facebook, Instagram, and email campaigns have been proven as the most effective for the online fitness industry. Start by creating a business profile on any and all media outlets you choose to use. Keep these separate from your personal profiles to avoid conflicts or issues.

Email campaigns are often viewed as one-way communication, but they don't have to be! Learn how to get replies and provide usable, informative content in your emails with the [ISSA Online Coaching Certification](#). Engagement is key to email campaigns!

On social media, you have to offer engaging and informative content as well. However, you get to have a little fun with it! Using images, client testimonials, fun facts, and sharable workouts or recipes will keep your audience engaged. Social media is also a great place to begin to get to know prospective clients, learn their goals, build trust, and, when the time is right, ask for their contact information to draw them into your email campaigns.

Many online personal trainers have their own website as well. This is a place to direct your social media users to often. Your personal website can be as simple as a landing page with your details and program information. Or, it can be an informational set of pages with all of your information: philosophies, experience, program offerings, testimonials, policies, and even a payment page. The choice is yours. The site you use may grow as your business grows, so stay flexible.

Keep Clients Engaged

Let's revisit motivating clients. To prevent attrition, it is critical to keep clients engaged in an online format once you've brought them in. The goal is to keep your clients with you long-term and make them so excited and successful that they send you all their friends!

When you start to work with clients online, understand that every client will have their ideal amount of contact. Some clients may need to speak or connect with you daily. Others may only require weekly communication. Anything beyond weekly is likely to lead to disengagement, noncompliance, and, as a result, the loss of a client. NEVER assume a client who never reaches out doesn't need to hear from you. They came to you for a reason! Set your expectations early. Make sure your new client knows how often they will hear from you and when they should reach out. Be available and approachable.

Completing reassessments periodically is ideal for client engagement as well. Show clients you are invested in their results as much as they are. You can show a client their progress and relate it back to their goals.

The First is the Hardest

Getting the initial set up going for your fitness business and snagging that first client is the hardest. The more you market and service clients online, the easier it will become. You will settle into your processes and client communications just as you would with in-person training.

As discussed, the first step for you is certification if you don't have it already! Then specialize and learn your processes to grow your business virtually. The sky is the limit when you aren't limited to a local gym or space! Your income potential and ability to reach clients in every corner of the globe has just been expanded with online personal training—sign up for your [Online Coaching Certification](#) today!

How to Teach Proper Form as an Online Trainer



A common concern with online personal training clients is making sure they are safe and moving properly during their workouts. When you aren't right in front of your client, it becomes more of a challenge to not only teach good form but also monitor their form and help them make corrections.

However, with a little creativity and adaptability combined with today's technology, it can be done. We've gathered the top tips to help you teach and correct good form for your online clients.

Importance of Good Form

Proper form when exercising is one of the most important components of success. Not only is good form essential for injury prevention but it is also one of the keys to helping clients reach their fitness goals. Proper movement mechanics help engage the right muscles and joints which will elicit better results.

Even the slightest modifications can make an exercise safer and more effective. But, clients, and especially new clients, may not be able to identify incorrect form. So, it's important for online personal trainers to be able to provide examples, view their clients' movements, and communicate effective cues to help guide their clients toward proper, healthy, functional movement.

Online Personal Trainer Video Demonstration

One of the most valuable resources for an online personal trainer is a video library of exercises and/or workouts. It is a collection of video content that shows proper form for any exercises you include in your clients' exercise program. You can shoot the video yourself or find other online videos properly demonstrating the exercise.

Consider these important tips to help you shoot or select the best videos for your online training sessions:

Use Proper Lighting

Proper lighting is essential for an online personal trainer. It is important that the client can clearly see the movement. Pay attention to both the electric lighting and the position of the windows in the room as they can both impact the appearance of the footage.

Capture Different Angles

Many of exercises for the video library should be shot from more than one angle. The squat, for example, should have both front view and a side view for the client. Think about what you want the client to see and take the time to collect or create the proper views.

Use a Simple Background

Again, the purpose of the video is to allow the client to see the personal trainer move properly. A busy background can make it hard to identify some of the intricate movements. You may also want to consider wearing a contrasting color to the simple background so that your body and movement are easily distinguished.

Record More Than One Rep

Perform a few reps at each angle. The flow and repetition can help the client grasp how the movement should look in a set. It also makes the online footage a bit more user-friendly when the client doesn't have to replay one rep over and over to try and understand the form.

Include Common Errors

You will want to include some of the most common mistakes with each of the movements so clients can create some awareness around what not to do. Whether you do a voice-over of the video footage or have readable content along with the video that provides these tips is up to you.

Use Simple Language

Many of the clients you will work with won't have a personal training or exercise science background. So, it is important to use basic language so clients can understand your coaching. For example, if you ask a client to abduct their leg and they aren't sure what abduction is, they may not understand your cues. Proper communication and cueing is an important part of proper form.

Take Stable Footage

If you are using a fellow fitness trainer to help you capture the video footage, make sure they have a steady hand or consider using a tripod.

Consider a Platform

To be more efficient training clients online, you may want to consider having a portal, platform, or app your clients can log into to access the content. It gives you a bit more control over access and may be much less time consuming than emailing or texting content back and forth to every client.

Online Client Video Feedback

Providing proper instruction and cueing in advance can help minimize issues with form. However, as an online trainer, you will also want to have consistent check-ins with clients to analyze their movements during exercise.

Have your clients show you their form from time to time. The following list includes a few things you should consider for your online clients.

Understand Your Client's Fitness Level

It's important to know your client. If they have been training with you for a long time, you may only need to provide them guidance when you add a new exercise to their workout routine. However, if you have a new client, it will be important that you spend more time with them to ensure proper form.

Capture Different Angles

Similar to the online video demonstrations, it will be important for clients to provide footage from more than one angle when appropriate.

Use Proper Lighting

Have your clients trial shoot a few different directions so they can determine the best lighting for the video. It is just as important for you to see them clearly as it is for them to see you clearly in the demonstration videos.

Suggest Proper Fitness Attire

Recommend that clients wear form-fitting fitness attire on the days they capture the video footage if they are comfortable with it. Baggy clothing makes it difficult to view the different kinetic checkpoints.

Live Training

Consider having a live online training session with each client. You can use FaceTime, Zoom, or some other communication platform to connect with your clients and cue them through proper movement, helping them make corrections in real-time.

For some, the shift to [virtual training](#) has been quite drastic, but the changes may actually help fitness professionals reach more people. Many people aren't owners of a gym membership. So, not only does online training allow a certified personal trainer to continue training during times of social distancing but it may also help them reach new potential clients that can't make it to the gym, aren't comfortable in a gym, prefer to workout on their own with minimal guidance, etc. So, once you get comfortable with the transition, don't be afraid to branch out and [grow your business](#). Personal trainers are needed now more than ever.

Level Up to Elite Status

Passionate about personal training? Expand your expertise!

[ISSA's Elite Trainer program](#) is designed to fully equip trainers with a solid foundation of both the science and practice of personal training, fitness nutrition, and fitness programming for special populations. You'll learn how to properly assess, train, and motivate the general population, clients needing fitness nutrition coaching, clients with chronic conditions, athletes, youth, and seniors.

As an Elite Trainer you get:

- Personal Trainer Certification (Self-Guided Study Program)
- Nutritionist Specialization
- Any advanced specialization