

# Make More Money as a Personal Trainer



**ISSA**

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# How Much Do Personal Trainers Make?



There is always someone who wants to get fit and live a healthier lifestyle, and you've decided to make a career out of helping them do that. And what you typically want—along with the satisfaction of having a positive impact on someone—is to make as much money as you can working as a certified personal trainer.

There's an approach for that.

Like fitness itself, it starts with establishing a goal. Once you know what you want to achieve in your career, you can follow the path you think will best help you get there. And certified personal trainers truly have options when it comes to career paths.

## PERSONAL TRAINER SALARIES

According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), the median annual salary for personal trainers in 2018 was \$39,820. This means half earned more than that amount and half earned less. The low 10 percent of those personal trainers earned less than \$20,160 while the top 10 percent earned more than \$76,090.

Most of the jobs (58 percent) were at fitness centers, but not all jobs in the fitness industry reside in gyms. Civic and social organizations, self-employed workers, educational services, and the government were other sources of employment.

It's common for newly certified personal trainers to work at a gym or health club early in their careers to gain experience and build relationships with clientele before considering branching out on their own. The typical nationally recognized gym has a staff of certified personal trainers that earns a percentage of the fee the client pays for a training session.

Most gyms charge about \$50 per session, and the certified personal trainer can expect payments anywhere from \$6 to \$25 per session. A typical session lasts from 30 minutes to an hour.

Some gyms ask their trainers to find their own clients while others have a sales staff that signs up and assigns clients. Personal trainers who find their own clients usually earn a sales commission for each new person they sign up.

There also are bonuses for meeting sales goals and for getting clients to extend their training sessions when an agreement reaches its end.

## MAXIMIZING INCOME AS A CERTIFIED PERSONAL TRAINER

Working for a large fitness company certainly provides the opportunity to make money, but owning your own business or working as an independent contractor is the way for certified personal trainers to make the most money. Experienced trainers working for themselves can expect to earn between \$50 and \$100 per session, depending on geographic location.

Independent contractors and business owners have total control of their work schedule, the hourly rate they elect to charge, and where they do their work. And ISSA studies have shown that salaries for personal trainers who are independent contractors can be up to 10 times more than those of fitness professionals who work for someone else.

One way to work as an independent contractor is to “rent” space at a nearby gym to train clients. In this instance, the gym receives around 10 percent of the personal trainer’s fee for use of the facility. But these types of arrangements are becoming less common.

Few of the larger gyms allow independent contractors because they can make more money by bringing on their own personal trainers. Trainers looking for this type of arrangement should concentrate on smaller, locally based gyms.

The best way to gain independence—and maximize income—is to own a small business. As daunting as that might sound to some, it doesn’t necessarily take a major financial commitment to create a successful business.

For example, certified personal trainers can specialize in training clients in their own home. The necessary equipment includes dumbbells, a weight bench, an exercise ball and strength bands, and a vehicle to get where you need to go. Those who think bigger and have the financial means can rent space for a gym and rent the equipment to fill it.

Some trainers have elected to set up gyms in their own homes and have the clients come to them. Again, there are upfront costs, but there is room for a big return on the investment.

Regardless of the direction one goes, maximizing earning potential involves spending a little money up front to get a bigger return. Independent contractors should be prepared to purchase business cards and to invest in various forms of marketing and advertising.

You can print flyers promoting your business at minimal cost and distributed them at such places as grocery stores, senior living facilities, and shopping centers. Taking out a small ad in the local newspaper can also bring in new business.

Social media also can play a major role in maximizing income. More fitness professionals are posting video and workout demonstrations on the likes of YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook to increase their exposure and reach potential clients.

Similarly, more personal trainers who reach a certain level of success strictly offer their services online. Rather than scheduling individual, in-person training sessions they make workouts available online for a prescribed fee.

## ADVANCED EDUCATION BENEFITS PERSONAL TRAINERS

Like most professional fields, those who serve as specialists in the fitness industry can expect to be compensated accordingly. There are people who proclaim that nothing but the best will do, and they are willing to pay for it. There are avenues for certified personal trainers to help gain the distinction of being among the best in their field.

ISSA's [master trainer certificate program](#) first requires a personal trainer certificate, certification as a nutrition specialist, and certification in four of the nine specialist categories that are offered. Those who achieve master status typically charge approximately \$100 per session.

ISSA also offers an [elite trainer certificate program](#) that guarantees job placement on completion of the course. Graduates of the course will be certified as a personal trainer and as a fitness nutrition coach. For the job placement guarantee to apply, the course graduate must apply for three jobs in the U.S. within 90 days of completing the course. ISSA will aide in the job search process and refund the money paid for the course if a job offer isn't made.

The reality is that there remains a growing need for certified personal trainers. Opportunity and financial success are there for those who commit to learning the practical and scientific methods that lead to good health and proper fitness.

If you're ready to get involved in the personal training industry, [sign up for the ISSA's Personal Trainer Certification course](#).

# How Much Should I Charge for Online Training?



If you work for a gym, the cost of your coaching program is likely set by that facility. For independent trainers offering personal training sessions online, the area of how much to charge is a bit muddier.

You don't want to charge so little that you can't survive but you also don't want to charge so much that no one wants to hire you. How do you decide your rates?

Answering the question of how much you should charge for your online coaching sessions begins with first understanding how much a typical personal trainer makes today.

## AVERAGE HOURLY PAY FOR FITNESS PROFESSIONALS

According to a number of professionals currently working in the fitness field, the [average cost of hiring a personal trainer](#) varies from \$30 to \$125 per hour (or more). However, it is important to note that your personal trainer salary potential is dependent on a variety of factors.

For example, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that the average annual wage is often higher for a personal trainer who works directly with individuals than for a personal trainer providing services within a residential facility. This is something to keep in mind if you decide to grow your business by reaching out to corporate clients in addition to individuals. They may want to pay less than you typically charge when you coach one-on-one.

Another factor impacting your pay as a fitness coach is location. The BLS also says that health and fitness trainers in New York, Massachusetts, and the District of Columbia typically make the most money. While this may not seem relevant as a trainer who offers sessions online, it does give insight as to whether your rates will seem low or high depending on where your client lives. So, what should your rates be?

## HOW MUCH SHOULD I CHARGE AS AN ONLINE TRAINER?

Setting your rates can be difficult as a fitness professional since there is such a large range. But there are a few factors that, once considered, will give you a better idea of what amount is perfect for you.

### An Amount That Makes It Worth It

If you were told that you could earn \$5 per hour as an online personal trainer, would you still want to do it? What if that number increased to \$150 per hour? Would it be worth it then?

Whether you work in fitness or any other field, if you aren't paid a certain amount, you may start to resent your career and your clientele. Work will begin to feel more like a punishment than a way to earn a living. Before you know it, you want out.

Certainly, we'd all love to be paid as much as possible for the expertise we offer. But we also all have a minimum dollar amount that won't make providing services worth our time. Figuring out what that number is for you is a good place to start.

## Your Level of Experience

Have you been a fitness trainer for years or are you [new to the coaching industry](#)? The reason this question is important is that the more experience you have, the more you can charge. Why? Because with experience comes knowledge.

If you've been coaching clients for decades, you've learned tips and tricks that increase your effectiveness. This helps you create more effective coaching programs for your new clients because you can draw on what has worked for those you've instructed in the past.

Does this mean that you can't charge a decent rate if you're just starting out? Of course not. You're still a professional. But it does mean that you should consider raising your rates as your level of experience increases.

## Whether You are Certified as a Personal Trainer

If you are updating your house and in need of a good plumber to put a sink in your new kitchen island, who do you think would do the best job: a plumber or a certified plumber? If you answered a certified plumber, you already understand the value of certification.

When you obtain your certification as a personal trainer, you're telling your clients that you've learned the information necessary to develop a safe and effective fitness program. This increases their confidence that you can deliver a workout plan that will help them achieve their fitness goals. It also makes it easier to pay you more.

## Your Fitness Business Costs

Setting the rates you'll charge for your online fitness program is also partially based on your business expenses. The more costs you have, the more you need to break even, let alone earn a decent income.

For instance, do you [market your coaching sessions on social media](#)? If so, you need to make enough to cover what you spend buying Facebook ads, Instagram ads, or ads on any other social media platform.

Other costs to consider include:

- Internet connection
- Website development and maintenance
- Online coaching / video platform fees
- Additional marketing and advertising expenses
- Office equipment (computer, printer, software, etc.)
- Office supplies (paper, pen, staples, etc.)

Create a list of all the expenses you have in a typical year and divide them by 12. This tells you how much you need to earn per month to keep your business afloat.

## **Type of Personal Training Services Provided**

Another factor to consider when setting your rates as an online personal trainer is the services you provide. For instance, do you offer individualized one-on-one coaching or [group training sessions](#)? The more personalized your program, the more you can charge because you tailor the training specifically to your client's fitness goals.

Also falling under this category is how available you are to your clients. Convenience and access don't come without a cost. So, the easier it is for them to reach you when they have questions or need help, the higher your rates can be.

## **Number of Personal Training Sessions in Your Packages**

When hiring a personal trainer, coaching clients look at how many training sessions they will receive in return for their hard-earned money. The more appealing you can make this package, the more likely it is they'll sign up.

For this reason, some personal trainers offer a discount to clients who sign up for a larger number of coaching sessions. The better the deal, the more inclined they'll be to hire you as their personal trainer and the more money you stand to make.

## **How Much Your Clients Are Able to Pay**

Considering your ideal client, how much can they realistically afford? If you have a soft spot for training at-risk youth, for instance, your rates will need to be lower than you'd charge a celebrity in Hollywood.

This brings up another question. Should you charge every client the same amount? While you don't necessarily have to, if you don't and they find out, it may hurt your reputation. Plus, keeping your rates the same for everyone makes bookkeeping much simpler.

## THE KEY IS TO PROVE YOUR VALUE

In the end, no matter what you decide to charge for your services as a health coach, you must be able to prove that you're worth the rate you set. The more value you offer your online coaching clients, the more they'll be willing to pay. This value could be reinforced in a number of ways, such as:

- Offering testimonials from clients who swear you create a killer workout that has transformed them. If you've provided results as an online coach, share those success stories. Let potential clients hear how wonderful you are as a personal trainer, not from you, but from those who have taken your coaching program.
- Showing before and after photos. Help people see the way you can help them transform their own body when signing up for your online exercise program. Inspire them to want to hire you to create an exercise plan for them too.
- Giving a money-back guarantee on your workout plans. Saying that you'll give clients all their money back if they aren't satisfied with your services as a personal trainer shows that you're confident in your ability to get results. There are pros and cons to this approach, such as reducing the client's risk but opening yourself up to those who want something for nothing. So, it's important to weigh this carefully if you're inclined to follow this approach.

If your goal is to make the most money possible as a personal trainer, another way to achieve this goal is to expand your service offerings. For instance, the ISSA's [Sports Nutrition Certification](#) provides the education necessary for you to develop meal plans that complement your strength and conditioning programs. This online course also comes with a free professional website and unlimited educational support. Check it out!

# Does a Personal Trainer for Seniors Pay a Better Salary?



Personal trainers are constantly on the hunt for clients who can afford their services, need their product offerings, and make ongoing fitness a consistent priority. Further, additional revenue streams or ways to maximize the dollar per hour make a successful and long-term career in personal training possible.

The best way to secure consistent business and expand fitness service offerings is by catering to the largest and most untapped market: Baby Boomers (ages 51–69) and the Great Generation (ages 70–87).

These two groups control the vast majority of wealth in the United States. As consumers seeking services, they have flexibility in their schedules because so many of them are in retirement. Baby Boomers specifically are known to be hard working, goal oriented, motivated, and loyal.

Additionally, four out of five of people over 50 suffer from at least one chronic condition. And age-related changes include loss of bone density, strength loss, increased risk of fall-related injuries, weakened core stability, and more.

This is the personal trainer's dream client: motivated, money in the pocket, and flexible spending with plenty of time to give. On top of it all, they need your help. The question becomes, how does being a personal trainer for seniors command a better salary? We'll explore the needs of these dream clients and how you can earn a better salary by tapping into their market in this article.

## SENIOR FITNESS NEEDS

As we age, we change neurologically, physiologically, and physically. Although we can't avoid these age-related changes, we can do things to slow down the process or prevent unnecessary risks. These changes include:

- Increased risk of falls
- Lack of stamina
- Decreased stamina
- Loss of balance
- Decreased strength
- Increased body fat
- Increased risk for joint injuries
- Decreased agility
- Consistent discomfort or pain

For most personal trainers, we've heard of these age-related changes. Especially noteworthy of them all is the risk of falls and the reduced stamina.

## MORE FALLS AND LESS STAMINA

The frequency of falls happens more than we realize and is discussed in depth [here](#). These are just a few of the stats.

1. One in four 65+ Americans fall each year.
2. Falls are the leading cause of fatal injury in older adults.
3. Every 11 seconds an older adult is in the emergency room for a fall.
4. Every 19 minutes an older adult dies from a fall.

These statistics prove the important role personal trainers can play in the longevity of an older adult's life. Reducing this risk is in the scope of practice for personal trainers working with seniors and a fall prevention program will include things like corrective exercise, balance training, and increased core stabilization training.

Loss of stamina is also a primary concern for the aging adult population. This can be a result from the physiological changes in the cardiovascular and respiratory systems, but it can also come from decreased activity levels associated with age. Additionally, there's a strong and negative emotional element associated with declining levels of stamina. It can lead to frustration, depression, and fear when you aren't able to do the same things you once could even just a few short years ago.

Increasing stamina is often a primary goal when working with seniors and can range from helping a client simply be more functional each day to increasing the client's fitness level to take part in events like walking and running races.

## A SPECTRUM OF SENIOR FITNESS NEEDS

When training the aging adult population, it's important to remember their fitness levels will vary widely on a spectrum. It's your responsibility, then to create a unique program designed to fit their needs. The spectrum of their abilities will fall along this continuum:

- Non-functional
- Functional with Limitations
- Active Fit
- Athletic Fit

Having the knowledge and skills to create holistic programs for senior clients is critical to being successful and earning yourself a better salary. This includes being well-versed in the conditions seniors will present and how to train them. Some of the common conditions an aspiring senior fitness trainer should be prepared for include:

- Osteoporosis
- Hypertension
- Mental conditions (Alzheimer's and dementia)
- Arthritis
- Visual impairments
- Hearing impairments

There's a longer list of common senior conditions which you should be familiar with and prepared to handle for effective programming. Getting certified as an ISSA Senior Fitness Trainer not only gives you added credibility in fitness facilities, it proves your expertise in an area this population truly values. This is because [ISSA's Senior Fitness Certification](#) fully equips a personal trainer or fitness instructor to effectively train a population in dire need of activity and risk prevention measures.

## MAXIMIZING YOUR EARNING POTENTIAL WITH SENIOR POPULATIONS

You now realize the growing demand for qualified fitness trainers to have the ability to work with the aging population. You've also come to realize it's an untapped market full of motivation, resources to afford services, and needs to improve the quality of life.

### How to Find Senior Clients

Once you learn the information and earn the credentials to train senior fitness clients, you need to be able to find these customers. Below are our top recommendations for doing more personal training with seniors:

- **Use your existing client base to tap into the market.** Incentivize your clients to refer their parents, aunts, grandparents, etc. to your services.
- **Connect with a local gym that caters to senior fitness.** These types of facilities can include YMCAs, locations which offer Silver Sneakers classes, community recreational centers, etc.
- **Conduct free assessments.** This is an opportunity for you to show the value your expertise can bring to the unique needs of Baby Boomers and the Great Generation. You will have more time to develop rapport with them and discuss the benefits of a holistic program.
- **Health Provider Networking:** Given the amount of conditions these groups have, setting up a network among health gives will make you the go-to expert for helping individuals improve the symptoms or progression of their conditions beyond the walls of the medical building.
- **Use the tools ISSA gives you.** In the ISSA Senior Fitness Certification, you get an entire section devoted to marketing and business growth when working with seniors. It's full of valuable and immediately useful information for expanded your services to this clientele.

## Increase Your Salary as a Personal Trainer for Seniors

You've read the demographics on this group. They have the smallest amount of debt among the other generations and the greatest percentage of wealth in the nation. This means they have money to spend. Even better, a good portion of senior clients are retired so they have more time to dedicate to improving their health and quality of life. They're emotionally invested in their health and can be financial invested just as much- they just need to see your value.

The next step to earning a better salary is to understand the many ways you can work with these groups.

- **Self-Membership:** Unlike weight-loss clients or the general population, seniors don't have an immediate goal they're trying to reach. Quality and longevity are their goals. This means you should get them in an auto-renew program instead of a limited number of sessions package. This will support their need for consistency and the ongoing effort to avoid age related changes.
- **Partner Sessions:** Older adults like having social outlets incorporated into their lifestyle. You can appeal to them by holding partner training sessions or small group training. This increases your hourly rate, decreases their total cost, and adds an element of social enjoyment they'll seek in other activities.
- **Educational Seminars:** Baby Boomers love to learn and are self-motivated. However, they haven't grown up in the digital age, so they're especially interested in live education where they can interact with an expert. You can easily conduct educational seminars or large training sessions on the chronic conditions listed in this article. A simple flat cost of \$5 – 20 per person can sky rocket your hourly rate and open the doors with a low barrier to entry marketing opportunity.
- **Challenges:** Competitions are a fun trend the fitness industry is experiencing. This isn't just for the young and fit clients. Instead, you can set up a variety of pay-for-enrollment challenges such as daily activity minutes, class or group participation, walking contents, and more. Similar to educational seminars, it's an easy way to scale your business and get new prospects. For the clients, it offers accountability and the enjoyable social element.
- **Sport-related Sessions:** If you're in a facility or area that has active and athletic senior fitness clients, you can support their lifestyle in other ways like golf, tennis, and racquetball clinics designed to take their game to the next level. This exposes you to a group of active agers who don't necessarily need your help but want to get better at the things they already enjoy. You can charge more per hour with this niche or host group seminars.
- **In-Home Training:** It's common for the Great Generation to avoid a typical gym membership. So, being able to design fitness programs they can participate in from home will appeal to their needs and current living situation. Further, it gives you more clients beyond those you prospect to in your facility.

These are unique opportunities that can't be readily found in general client groupings which makes personal training for the senior population an incredible way to increase your salary right away. It's time to realize the market potential this group has to offer and accelerate your business to pay yourself a better salary.

When you're an expert in this area the sky is the limit.

**More money. Motivated clients. Off-peak scheduling. Increased dollar per hour.**

The senior population is a fitness professional's dream come true.

Whether you're already a personal trainer or wanting to be one, ISSA has a program for you!

If you're already a certified personal trainer, all you need to do is get certified. You'll learn the specific science and anatomy of this population plus the art of coaching them. As a bonus, the ISSA also offers support and training in how to market to this unique and powerful group (hint: it's not the same as your typical client). Get started today with your [ISSA Senior Fitness Certification!](#)

# Master Personal Trainer: Is It Worth the Extra Work?



To some, the fitness industry is one of the least regulated industries. This is not saying that anyone can go be a personal fitness trainer. It simply means there is a low barrier to entry for a lucrative career.

According to [salary.com](https://www.salary.com), the national average salary of a personal trainer is \$41,427. This includes brand new fitness professionals making introductory salaries as well as experienced trainers setting the high end of that salary range.

Within [personal training](#) there are different levels of the certification program. The levels are determined by the amount of education a person has. The more education they have the higher level they are which in turn means the more money they earn.

## PERSONAL TRAINER

The first place to start when looking for a career in the fitness industry is with a [personal training certification](#).

The process is simple: you enroll in the course, read the content, complete the quizzes, study, and pass the exam!

This is a great place for the fitness enthusiast to start. Especially those who may not be sure if they want to make this a full-time career. Personal fitness training can be a very lucrative side hustle.

If you are looking to make this a full-time career, you don't need a master's degree in sports medicine. However, you will find more success if you achieve a higher certification, from fitness coach up to master personal trainer.

## FITNESS COACH

The next step beyond the personal trainer certification is the [Fitness Coach](#). The fitness coach program includes the personal training credential as well as any other specialization of the individual's choice.

Specialization areas include:

- Nutrition
- Bodybuilding
- Corrective Exercise
- Exercise Therapy
- Group Fitness
- Senior Fitness
- Youth Fitness
- Strength and Conditioning
- Transformation Specialist
- Youth Fitness

Not only does this give trainers an extra certification to put on their resume, but a specialization allows them to make more money through higher hourly rates and higher-level positions.

## ELITE TRAINER

The next level in the certification process is the [elite trainer certification](#). This credential means you've passed the personal trainer exam plus two specializations, one of which must be the nutrition certification.

The elite status requires the nutrition certification because it is vital to the personal trainer's long-term success. As we all know, fitness goal completion is 80% nutrition and 20% fitness.

Nutrition is part of people's everyday lives and typically happens when they are not with their fitness trainer. It's important for the personal trainer to have a well-rounded knowledge base. Not only does this help the provide a higher level of service to their client, but it also justifies them being at a higher hourly rate, in turn making them more money.

These elite trainers can offer nutrition coaching sessions, giving them another stream of income, and increasing the types of skills they can offer through online sessions.

Personal fitness training is not limited to working in a gym! Online personal training is becoming more popular as it is often times more cost effective for the client. Moving to the status of online personal trainer is often more profitable for fitness professionals in addition to being more time efficient.

## MASTER PERSONAL TRAINER

The final level for a certified personal trainer is the [master personal trainer certification](#).

This is the certification that all career personal trainers should aspire to get to. Not only does it add to their credentials and income, but it also allows them to go beyond helping clients.

Master trainer opportunities include:

- Presenter/speaker at conferences
- Speaker or expert on TV or radio
- Industry or subject expert

The master personal trainer certification does take some work. It's not something you can simply earn overnight.

## UNIT FOUR

The first step, like all the other levels, is the personal trainer certification. From there, you must complete the nutrition certification along with four other certifications of your choice.

While six courses take a substantial amount of time and effort, the payoff is definitely worth it.

The choice between a personal training career or a master training career is based on your goals and what you want to do as a fitness professional.

Are you ready to get started? [Sign up for ISSA's personal training course today!](#)