

The Essentials of Online Training



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How to Do Fitness Assessments for Online Clients



Maybe you've been doing online training for a while or thinking about including an online option for clients. One of your big challenges as a personal trainer working with clients mostly or solely online is assessment. This includes initial fitness assessment forms, like health and activity questionnaires, but also ongoing fitness tests, health and body composition measurements, and assessment of specific exercises.

Assessment is essential for setting fitness goals, tracking progress, making changes to programs, and training safely. It's not as easy to do when working as an online personal trainer, but there are ways to assess clients virtually so that you can keep working.

About Online Personal Training

If you have never trained a client online, this is a new world, and it may feel a little overwhelming. Some of the tools online trainers use to work with their clients include:

- Streaming videos of workouts and exercise demos
- Mobile apps to track progress and workouts
- Email and messenger apps to communicate
- Document sharing online for training programs
- Video conferencing for face-to-face sessions
- Social media sites for sharing information
- Personal trainer software for tracking clients and for organizing business information

A big difference in online training is that more responsibility goes to the client. They need to be motivated to get the work done that you assign, and that can be a challenge. Communication with clients is necessarily different too. It's easier for some people than others, so work with clients individually to find the best way to talk and meet.

Why is Assessment Important?

Assessing clients online is a big challenge, but it is not insurmountable. Although it may seem more difficult, it's important that you don't let this part of training slide. Assessments are essential for many reasons:

Initial Assessments Help You Set Goals and Plan Programs

To help your clients determine their personal fitness goals, and then design the programs that will achieve them, you need to know your clients: current fitness level, health status, nutrition choices, strength level, preferences, and more. An initial assessment helps you get to know your client and sets the foundation for successful training.

Ongoing Assessments Track Progress

You also need ongoing assessments of your clients' health measurements, fitness level, and strength to ensure progress. If you don't measure, you don't know if they are succeeding or if you need to make changes to their fitness program.

Assessments are Motivating

[Motivating online clients](#) is especially challenging. Assessments help mark victories and point out areas of needed improvement. They help motivate clients to keep going or to double down on effort.

Fitness Assessments for Online Clients May Be Even More Important

Assessment is important for all your clients, but the special circumstances of online training make it even more essential. When you meet with clients face-to-face you can learn so much more about them. You will find you are constantly assessing them, simply by talking to them and observing their workouts. With online clients, that isn't possible, so put an emphasis on formal assessments.

The Challenges of Assessing Online Clients

Some aspects of assessment are easily done online, especially those that involve your clients filling out forms. For instance, a PAR-Q, or physical activity readiness questionnaire, is essential before starting with a new client. It gives you important health information about a client so that you can plan safe workouts. This is easy to do with an online form.

You can also have new clients make certain measurements and report them to you: height, weight, specific body circumference measurements. Body composition, an important measurement of body fat versus lean muscle, may not be possible. Most clients don't have the tools for this.

Also more difficult is assessing how a client moves and what their form is like. Do they have good posture? Do they make similar errors in form for most of the exercises? What is their cardiovascular fitness like? These things are all easier to assess in person, but you can still get most of the information you need online. It just requires some special strategies.

Tips and Tools for Making Fitness Assessments for Online Clients Work

Not only is assessing online clients doable, it is crucial. For all the reasons that assessment is important for in-person clients, it is possibly even more essential for those you only see online. You can't be physically there to watch your clients move from every angle, take measurements, or correct their form hands-on.

When you work with a client in a gym, it's much easier to see progress or setbacks. When you don't have that in-person connection, you rely more on formal assessments. These measurements will help you get a more accurate picture of how a client is progressing or struggling. Here are some tips to help you do it right.

Start with a Thorough Questionnaire

A PAR-Q is necessary for any new client, but with online clients, include even more information. Be as thorough as you need to be to get information that will establish a baseline and ensure you can provide safe workouts.

Do an Initial, Face-to-Face Video Consult

It may not be feasible to chat online regularly with all your clients, but at the least, you should make time for an initial consultation. Paperwork can only tell you so much. Require that new clients get online with you to chat. Use FaceTime, Google Hangouts, Zoom, or other video conferencing so you can see each other. Use the completed assessment forms to direct the conversation and ask questions and clarifications.

Set a Schedule for Assessing

Make expectations clear from the beginning with an established schedule for assessing your client's progress toward physical fitness. This may vary by client, but for instance, it could include weekly measurements for weight and body composition and bi-weekly assessment of specific exercises, like squats or push-ups.

Setup Video Uploads

Live video chats like your initial face-to-face consultation are a great time to conduct [assessments of the kinetic chain](#) and more. But that doesn't have to be the only time you check on your client's movements. Include video uploads in your assessment schedule. Write up a description or create a demo video detailing the moves your client should make for physical assessments. Instruct your client to record themselves doing these moves. They can submit their videos by uploading to a client-specific Google Drive folder, via a personal training app, or through whatever platform works for you.

Use Tape Measurements

An easy way to [track progress quantitatively](#) when you can't be in the same room with a client is to have them tape measure parts of the body. Instruct new clients on how to do this accurately during your initial consultation. Then, agree on how often they'll take new measurements to report back to you. Useful measurements are waist, hips, thighs, biceps, shoulder, and neck.

Use a Body Fat Calculator

Body composition is one of the most useful assessment strategies for health and weight. But the best way to measure body composition will always require tools your clients don't have at home. As an alternative, try a calculator for body fat, which is easy to find online. This technique isn't as accurate, but it will still give you a good sense of how a client is progressing. You'll need to get a few measurements from the client: weight, waist circumference, wrist circumference, forearm circumference.

Invest in Technology for Assessment

If you think you'll be doing online training for the long haul, it may be worthwhile to invest in tools for easier, more accurate, and more varied assessments. Fitness assessment software designed just for trainers can be useful for gathering and organizing information on clients.

What makes these kinds of tools so useful is that they capture and breakdown movements so you can do the assessments you would typically do in person, in the gym. Some programs focus on assessing to reduce injuries

and pain, while others analyze functional movements in 3D. With tools like these, you can have clients record their movements and assess them as if you were right there.

A few programs even offer a whole package of tools for trainers. These include business tools, websites, apps, workout libraries, e-commerce function, custom branding, payment processing, and assessments.

Choose the Right Assessments

Whichever tools or measurements you use to assess clients, make sure they are appropriate for the individual. The assessments should match the client's abilities and goals. For instance, those trying to lose weight will need to be assessed through weight and tape measurements. For those more interested in building strength, assess individual exercises. You don't necessarily need to do a full range of assessments for every client.

Online training presents a unique challenge. If you're up for it, consider how you'll effectively assess clients. This is an essential part of personal training, and even in an online setting it's possible to do it well.

Want to learn more about building a successful online fitness business? Sign up for [ISSA's Online Coach course](#)—the fastest way to transition to virtual training and expand your business!

How to Create Better Workout Videos on Any Budget



Exercise video are a key part of online training and there are many benefits to creating your own exercise videos. Increased brand recognition is one. The more people who see your workout routines, the easier it is for them to identify your brand. Get enough viewers and you become a household name.

Another advantage of offering video workout classes is that it gives you another revenue stream. The more products and services you offer, the more money you can make as a certified personal trainer. The best part is that it is passive income. Tape your training session once and you can sell it repeatedly, even if you're not actively working.

How do you create appealing workout videos if you don't have thousands to spend on production? The answer lies in ensuring that your video contains all the necessary elements.

5 Elements of a Good Workout Video

There are good workout videos and there are bad workout videos. To ensure that yours falls in the first category, it should contain these five elements:

#1. Beaming with Energy

Who are you more inspired by: a fitness trainer who is energetic and excited to help you or a trainer who lacks enthusiasm and appears ready for a nap? Infusing energy into your video workouts makes you fun to watch. It also encourages viewers to get their heart rate up because that excitement is contagious.

#2. Works Regardless of Fitness Level

Unless you're producing a fitness video for a very specific group, it should appeal to both beginners and those who are a bit more advanced. This gives you a wider group of people who can use your training sessions. It also helps if you include exercises that don't require a gym. This enables them to use your video with the equipment they have at home.

#3. Shares Proper Form

The last thing you want is to create an exercise video that doesn't provide results. Talking to the viewer about using proper form increases effectiveness.

#4. Relevant to Your Viewer

People won't watch your video unless they know it will help them meet their fitness goals. Reinforce relevance in the video's title, such as "20-Minute Glute Strengthening Workout." Talk about its benefits during the program. For example, if it is a muscle-building program for older persons, explain why strength training is important for seniors.

#5. Looks Professional

Admittedly, this is where costs can easily rise. Yet, you can still [create a video that looks professionally done](#) with little to no expense.

- **Consider your environment.** What's going on behind you? You can shoot your video at home, but be sure to clean up and use good lighting. If you're going outside, avoid noisy areas, overly bright sunlight, and backgrounds with a lot of activity.
- **Dress to impress.** Even if you're shooting at home, do your hair and makeup so you look nice on camera. Pick clothes that show up well against your background (skip colors that are too dark or too light).
- **Check your sound.** If your viewers can't hear you, they won't keep watching. Consider doing voice-overs or splurging for a nice microphone that cuts out ambient noise.
- **Edit your videos.** Cut out the scenes where you're turning the camera on and off. Add your logo and contact information. If you shot the video with your smartphone, download it to your computer, then edit it using free software.

Ultimately, your video needs to inspire viewers to want to get off the couch and exercise. How do you do that without a lot of high-cost frills?

3 Low & No-Cost Ways to Make Videos that Inspire Viewers to Workout

It doesn't matter how good your video is, if it doesn't inspire viewers to want to exercise, it's a waste of time to create. While you can't force motivation, there are three things you can do to make viewers want to watch (and do) your exercise videos.

#1. Highlight Your Expertise

The reason it is important to highlight your expertise is that it gives you more credibility as a personal trainer. It says that you know what you're doing. It also proves that you can provide results. This will inspire your viewers to stick with the exercise, even if they feel like giving up.

One way to do this is to begin your video with a few simple statements. Tell viewers that you're a certified personal trainer. Talk about the results your workouts deliver.

Throughout the video, educate viewers on how each move can help them reach their fitness goals. This shows that you can apply what you know in a way that resonates with your audience.

Use rest periods to continue to show your expertise. For example, if your video includes both aerobic exercise and weights, talk about whether cardio and strength training work together. Teach your viewers something new and they will begin looking to you for all their fitness advice.

#2. Give a Custom Workout Feel

If you want to keep your video viewers engaged, it helps to make them feel as if you created that workout solely for them. Granted, custom workouts aren't an option for each individual audience member, but it should feel like it is.

Plus, if your video workout is too easy, you'll lose viewers with more advanced levels of fitness. If it's too hard, beginning exercisers won't want to try it. This is partly where providing alternatives based on the level of fitness comes into play.

When creating video workout programs by yourself, this involves showing different ways to raise or lower the level of difficulty. Another option is to have other people in the fitness video with you. Have one person performing the movement so it is easier and another showing how to make it harder.

For instance, if your exercise program includes squats, have one person barely squatting down and the other with their thighs parallel to the floor. If you're doing a bodyweight exercise like push-ups, have one person do them with straight legs and the other with knees on the ground.

This enables viewers to watch the person best matched to their current fitness level. It creates a custom workout feel they can modify as they get stronger and more fit.

#3. Make the Videos Easily Accessible

No matter how committed your viewers are to their fitness, there will be times when their motivation is lagging. The easier you make it for them to access your videos when they feel this way, the more likely it is they will.

There are several options for creating easily accessible videos. For instance, you can place your videos on Instagram or another social media platform. This keeps them in your follower's news feeds. It also enables them to save the videos for future use.

You can also load your videos onto a personal training or workout app. This gives your viewers access to all your workout plans in one convenient location.

Free Workout Videos vs Charging Clients: Which Is Best?

Some personal trainers offer free fitness videos to help grow their business. Or they provide them at no cost, but only to paid training clients. In this case, they are a perk that enables clients to workout between training sessions and better meet their fitness goals.

Other certified personal trainers charge for their workout videos. This includes charging viewers to download a particular workout program. Another option is to charge a recurring fee for access to a number of different videos. Which is best? It depends on your goal.

If you want to build your brand and gain more recognition as a fitness professional, offering free videos is one way to achieve this. Encourage the sharing of these free resources and you can reach a wider audience yet.

Conversely, if your goal is to increase your revenue, charging for your videos might make more sense. Pair these fitness videos with other items—such as dumbbells, [fitness trackers](#), or weight loss meal plans—to make them more appealing to your target audience. You can charge more by doing this as well.

To increase the likelihood that people will buy your fitness video, offer a 30-day free trial. This reduces their risk. It also allows time for them to start to get results. This makes it much easier to pay for the video further down the road.

How to Create Better Workout Videos in Less Time

When you're first starting out, a workout video can take you hours, if not days to create. Rest assured, the more of them you produce, the faster you will get. However, if you don't have a lot of time to spend getting your workouts out there, another option is to release short videos instead. For instance:

- Create a 10-minute workout designed to give viewers their “daily burn.”
- Offer short bodyweight workouts people can do during commercial breaks of their favorite shows.
- Develop 1–2-minute exercises people can repeat in HIIT workouts (high intensity interval training).

The benefit of these shorter videos is that viewers don't expect them to be ultra-fancy. All they care about is the information provided and how it will help them achieve their fitness goals. They want to know that it will enable them to transform their bodies.

To learn even more about how to help clients make permanent changes, ISSA offers a [Health Coach Certification](#). This course teaches the skills necessary to positively influence clients' behaviors. It also enables you to help them reach higher levels of physical and mental health. Check it out today!

How To Better Motivate Your Online Training Clients



Being an online coach in the fitness world offers many advantages. One is the ability to grow your business by removing the geography restrictions faced by in-person fitness professionals. This enables you to increase your client count by providing in-home personal training to anyone with a digital device and internet connection.

Another benefit of coaching online is that you can teach clients how to improve their fitness without them having to go to the gym. Not that the gym is bad, but some people struggle with finding time to go or don't feel comfortable working out around others. For them, the gym is an obstacle to their fitness goals, and it can be overcome by having access to an online exercise program.

Despite these benefits, there is one major challenge that online personal training presents. Because you're not physically in front of your clients, it may be more difficult to keep them excited about the exercise program you've created. What are some ways you can keep your clients motivated as an online personal trainer?

Motivate Your Online Clients with These 7 Tips

Keeping online training clients motivated can be a major challenge. But we have the tips to help you overcome it and, ultimately, to help you grow your online personal training business.

#1: Understand the Different Motivational Styles

This is a key ingredient to ensuring your clients get results from your online personal training program. After all, it's tough to motivate your clients if you have no idea what techniques they respond to best.

As Penn State University points out, there are many different motivational styles. For instance, some people will be more motivated to lose weight when you're direct and assertive. Others will respond better to an indirect, subtle approach.

To know what will work best for your clients, conduct motivational interviewing when bringing them on board. Motivational interviewing is a technique often used by counseling professionals when helping patients who struggle with substance abuse, but can also help those who struggle with food or exercise.

To be an effective interviewer requires adhering to the five principles of motivational interviewing:

1. Being empathetic through reflective listening practices
2. Separating the client's goals and values from their behaviors
3. Not arguing or directly confronting the client
4. Adjusting to their level of resistance
5. Supporting their confidence and positivity

#2: Remind Them of Their 'Why'

To help clients achieve the highest degree of success possible with the fitness workout you've created for them, consistently remind them why they want to get in better shape.

Maybe they're taking medications and they want to get healthy enough to get off them. Or perhaps they want to increase the odds that they'll be around long enough to see their grandchildren grow up.

Reminding them of their 'why' encourages them to continue to engage in their online fitness sessions, even on days when they don't feel like it. It helps them remember that they're taking these steps to create the life they want most.

#3: Publish Motivational Posts on Social Media

Another way to increase your online clients' motivation levels is to publish social media posts that inspire them to want to keep going. This works in part because [social media can enhance self-motivation](#).

In other words, when you post photos and status updates to show your online personal training clients that you are doing the same exercises, the same type of workout that you are asking them to do, it inspires them to keep going and work harder.

Posting on social media also puts your motivational posts directly in your client's feeds, enabling you to reach them when they're not actively thinking about their fitness goals.

A few ways to motivate clients on social media include:

- Post an exercise directed at an area they struggle with (stomach, upper arms, etc.)
- Post an exercise they can do when they only have a few minutes to work out, enabling them to feel as if they're doing something, even if they can't do a complete workout
- Post a reminder that a lapse doesn't have to turn into a relapse

#4: Create a Members-Only Facebook Group

Having a members-only Facebook group helps your clients see that they're not alone in their struggles to lose weight, gain muscle, or improve their health. It also allows them to make connections with others who are just like them.

To keep motivation stoked in a members-only group, encourage them to interact. Ask open-ended questions to get them communicating. Also, adjust the security settings so they're able to post when they are struggling. This allows them access to encouragement when they need it most.

A members-only Facebook group is also a great place to post about [what to expect at your first personal training sessions](#). This can help your newer clients better understand how the process works, reducing any anxiety they may have about your online program.

#5: Offer Group Training Sessions

Group training sessions enhance motivation in much the same way as members-only Facebook groups. How do you hold these types of sessions when your training is completely online?

One way to help your clients know that they're part of a group is to do live exercise classes and mention people by name when they appear online. This tells them that, even though they can't see the rest of the group, they are there.

Another option is to schedule group sessions in which you can talk about nutrition, stress, sleep, or any other factor that may be keeping them from meeting their goals. Use a platform with a side chat so participants can easily communicate with you and each other.

Alternatively, if you have a large number of online clients, break them into smaller groups and do training sessions that enable everyone to appear via video. Sometimes it helps them to actually see the others' faces, strengthening the connection—and their desire to do better—even more.

#6: Send Story-Based Emails

Emails meant to cheer clients on are great, but if you really want to draw them in, tell a story. In fact, this is a highly recommended marketing tool because it is so effective. Plus, if it works to get people to buy products or services, it can also work to motivate them to stick with their fitness program.

Think about some of the clients you've worked with in the past. Does anyone stand out as having a story that is motivational by nature? Is there someone who defied the odds and improved their fitness despite the many challenges they faced? Share their story to inspire others to keep going as well.

Some people are natural storytellers. For the rest of us, it's helpful to know that a powerful marketing story needs five things:

- **A hero.** Even though it may seem like you, as a personal trainer, will be the hero, that approach can get you ignored. Instead, make the hero the client whose story you're sharing. This creates a more compelling message.
- **A goal.** What type of transformation did your client seek? What changes did they want to make to hit their desired goals?
- **An obstacle.** What stood between the client and a more fit body? To make the story more relatable, share some of their self-imposed obstacles. We all tend to stand in our own way from time to time. Let your email recipients know they're not alone.
- **A mentor.** This is where you come in. What did you do as a personal trainer to help coach the client to fitness success?
- **A moral.** What is it that you want your email list to get from the story? Be clear and actually list it out so there is no misunderstanding.

Don't forget to end your story-based email with a clear call to action. If you tell them exactly what you want them to do, they're more likely to do it.

#7: Follow Up Regularly

The only way to know your online fitness clients are struggling with low motivation is to ask. A good question to start with is whether they're keeping up with their workout routines.

If not, go one step further to learn whether they're letting all portions of their exercise program slide, or if it's just certain parts. For instance, are they keeping up with their strength and conditioning, yet not doing their cardio?

Maybe they didn't like a particular exercise, and that was zapping their motivation to continue. In cases such as this, their motivation can potentially increase simply by making small tweaks to their program.

Following up regularly also allows you to remind them of the progress they've made this far. One of the [most common mistakes personal trainers make](#) is skipping fitness assessments. Yet, by performing this basic task, you'll have rock-hard evidence that what they're doing is working, even if they don't feel like they're going to achieve their goals at this time.

A Final Word on How to Motivate Your Online Training Clients

What's [the secret to beating the challenges of personal training](#), such as keeping your online personal training clients motivated enough to achieve their long-term goals? It begins by answering the question: How are you helping people?

If you struggle with this answer, or if you feel like you aren't doing enough, increasing your business offerings as a fitness trainer can help you better help your online clients. One trainer certification to consider is [ISSA's Health Coach Certification](#). Increasing your knowledge (and experience) about help clients overcome physical and mental health barriers to achieve their optimal wellness. This can help you grow your fitness business by improving your results, so check it out today!

How Much Should I Charge for Online Personal 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?

Answering the Question: How Much Should I Charge for Online Personal Training?

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.

When Setting Your Online Coaching Rates, 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. Sign up for [ISSA's Health Coach Certification](#). You'll learn how to help clients overcome the obstacles to their success, from setting goals to sticking to their nutrition plan. You'll help clients build a better lifestyle beyond the gym walls. This online course also comes with a free professional website and unlimited educational support.

Best Methods for Collecting Personal Training Payments



Before you even [get your first personal training client](#), you need to make a few decisions. This includes choosing a name for your new fitness business, deciding how much you'll charge for your training sessions, and determining where you'll provide services as a certified personal trainer. An additional consideration is how you're going to collect payments.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach for how to best collect fees from clients. Instead, there are several factors that, once considered, make it easier to select the options that make the most sense for your business.

7 Factors to Consider Before Determining How You'll Collect Payments

Collecting fees for your training business requires some thought. If you choose an option that you wind up regretting, you may be stuck with it or risk losing some clients. Plus, once you go through all the work to set up a particular payment solution, you're less likely to switch to another. You decide that it isn't worth the time or effort. To avoid this type of issue, here are seven factors to consider.

#1: Whether You Have a Choice

If you provide personal training sessions at big box gyms, your fees are likely included in their gym membership packages. This places you on their payroll, which means they dictate how you're paid. This could be through direct deposit into your bank account, by check, or some other method.

Alternatively, if you work for a gym as a 1099 personal trainer or run your own in-person fitness business, you collect your own fees. Sometimes this requires paying the gym a portion. The same is true if you offer online coaching. In all these instances, you have more flexibility in how you collect payments.

#2: The Way You Train Clients

It's often said that "cash is king." However, if you are strictly an online personal trainer, cash payments are out of the question.

Not providing in-person fitness sessions also makes it more difficult to collect payments via check. If you accept checks from clients you don't see, it forces you to trust them to put the money in the mail. Accepting checks also increases the risk that the payment could potentially bounce.

#3: Client Convenience

Perhaps the single most important reason to think about how you'll collect fees for your training business is client convenience. If your payment processing program is hard-to-use or overly complex, your business will suffer.

Offering the maximum client convenience generally involves providing multiple payment options. This enables each client to select the one they are most comfortable with.

#4: Personal Trainer Preference

If you are responsible for your own bookkeeping, consider your own preference as well. Yes, you want to be flexible—increasing your appeal to your training clients—but you also need to be able to record each payment received. This involves creating a system so no incoming monies fall through the cracks.

When considering your preferences, think about whether you want a cloud-based payment processing program or if you'd like to purchase personal trainer software. What's the difference?

With cloud-based payment platforms, you can access data from almost any device. This is helpful if you are on the go and want to check a client's payment from your smartphone or tablet.

If you purchase personal trainer software that doesn't involve cloud storage, your client's payment information is kept only on the device you used to download the program. This reduces your access but can be preferred if you want to make a one-time software purchase as opposed to paying monthly for a cloud-based program.

#5: Payment Processing Fees

Personal trainers have many ongoing expenses. If you offer [virtual training](#), your video platform might charge fees. In-person training sessions means you're paying to travel to and from the gym or your client's home. Running a personal training business also means having other typical business expenses, such as phone service, internet, bookkeeping, and office supplies. Add to this the fees associated with payment collection.

Using an online platform generally means paying monthly fees. Even if you purchase your own payment collection software, it doesn't mean that you get to keep the full amount. Some companies charge your business to collect payments via credit card or debit card.

For this reason, do your homework before selecting a specific payment collection option. Here are a few questions to ask:

- How much do they charge to use their program?
- Do they collect these fees monthly? Quarterly? Annually?
- Is there a price break if you pay for a certain time period upfront?
- Does their fee change based on how much they collect? (Some fee collection sites max out how much they charge per sale.)
- How long does it take to transfer the money to your business account?

#6: Whether You're Collecting Recurring Payments

Some personal trainers require the client to pay weekly for their training sessions. Others collect monthly payments for small group fitness classes or charge a membership rate for a specific length of time. Sometimes there are one-time fees as well, such as if you also sell fitness products.

Choose a payment program that works for your particular training business. Ideally, this program should offer a few different collection options. This provides you more flexibility if you have clients that pay at different intervals. It also allows you to offer a discount for services paid in full without having to use a different platform.

#7: Longevity of the Payment Processing Company

New payment processing options are released all the time. While it may be tempting to go with one of these and increase your client's options, you run the risk that they won't be around for long.

The longer a payment processing company's track record, the more comfort you have that it will be available as long as you have your fitness business. You also have greater peace of mind that your payments will actually be forwarded into your bank account.

3 Best Methods for Collecting Personal Training Payments Online

Once you've looked at all the factors associated with collecting the monies owed to your fitness business, it becomes easier to decide the best methods for you. Here are three of the best when collecting your payments online:

#1 PayPal

This platform is trusted by service providers in several industries. This includes Airbnb, American Airlines, and Spotify. Approximately 277 million people have active PayPal accounts. So, it's likely your client already has one set up. Plus, if your online training business is global, this platform makes it possible to collect other currencies. It costs you nothing to set up invoicing on PayPal, but you do pay per sale. For U.S. fitness instructors with clients also within the U.S., the fee is 2.9 percent + \$0.30 for each transaction. International fees are a bit higher (4 percent plus a fixed fee). You also pay more if you want the monies transferred to your bank account instantly versus waiting the standard 1-3 days. PayPal works for both one-time and recurring payments.

#2 Stripe

Many service-based businesses also use Stripe to collect payments. Some of the most well-known include Lyft, Instacart, DoorDash, and Grab. With Stripe, you can collect both one-time and recurring payments for your business. Fees are the same as PayPal when receiving payments from clients within the U.S. (2.9 percent + \$0.30 per sale). Though, if your online training business caters to international clients, its fee is a lot less (1 percent). Stripe also enables you to collect non-card payments. This includes payments received directly from your client's bank account, as well as payments received via check or wire transfer. Additional rates apply in these circumstances.

#3 Through your online training website

Depending on which platform you use for your business website, you may be able to collect payments through it. The benefit of this option is that you can run your personal trainer business and collect your fees on the same online platform. Collecting your own fees also tells clients that you're serious about your fitness business. It says that you're willing to go the extra mile by setting up your own payment platform. The con of taking this route is that sometimes it costs more to collect monies this way. It's also important to check the security of your site so clients can pay your online invoices without worrying about having their private information exposed.

Not yet a trainer but ready to help clients meet their health and fitness goals? [ISSA's Elite Personal Trainer](#) is the top course to get you started. As an Elite Trainer you get: Personal Trainer Certification - Self-Guided Study Program, Nutritionist Specialization, and any advanced specialization. Be your own boss, set your own schedule, do work you're passionate about, and create financial freedom.