

A Day In The Life Of A Personal Trainer

I first started training clients in college back in 1981. I was not certified but certifications were rare back then. I loved training but never really considered doing it full time until my wife became friends with a personal trainer who had an in-home studio. Becoming a Certified Personal Trainer was in the back of my mind from that moment on.

After considering this idea for a couple of years, I finally decided to put a business plan together. I then took classes, got certified, built my studio and pulled the trigger. I left corporate America in 2007 to turn my part-time passion into a full time business.

Up until 2007, most of my career was spent in insurance and information systems. I had earned a business degree in 1983 and a post-graduate certificate in computer science in 1994.

Many Certified Personal Trainers work in health clubs. The obvious benefit being a facility filled with good prospects. If they already belong to a health club, they are already interested in getting fit or maintaining their fitness level. There's a good chance they'd be interested in some instruction and/or motivation.

Some trainers start off in a health club to learn the ropes then eventually open their own studio. Others enjoy the steady stream of prospects that come through the health club and stay with that route. I had experience training in clubs but was most intrigued by starting my own studio. Like anything, there are pros and cons to both. It depends on the trainer.

Owning a studio is great because the approach and revenue are all yours. But so is getting prospects and converting them to clients. That's the tough part.

My company is Raising the Bar Inc. Starting with 0 clients meant that I wore my marketing hat a lot more than I wore my personal trainer hat at first. Two years into it, I still spend a lot of time marketing.

I utilized many different avenues to get the word out. I advertised in newspapers, magazines, radio and Yellow Pages (online and in the book). I sent a couple of different direct mail pieces out to thousands of local households, I had a website developed, I sponsored a Miss Cary, IL contestant. I also sponsored Cary Cruise Night, donated free session certificates as silent auction items to charities and purchased magnetic signs for my car.

In addition to all of the above, I joined the Chamber of Commerce and a networking group within the chamber, attended chamber mixers, scrambles, ribbon cutting ceremonies and bought booths in business expos. I even offer on-site consultation at a local doctors' office. And I went door-to-door introducing myself and dropping off business cards and HALF-PRICE training session coupons. This last method has worked best for me and it's what I continue to focus on now.

I offer training sessions day and evening 7 days a week. Of course this doesn't mean I have 100 sessions per week!

I spent a lot of money my first year but now my overhead is very low. My expenses this year will come to between \$3,000 and \$4,000. I offer 30 and 55 minute private sessions. Packages are available at reduced rates, as are semi-private (shared sessions).

Most sessions are at my studio but I also do in-home training at higher rates.

I have a lot of flexibility, which is good because I'm heavily involved with coaching my two grade school aged sons in baseball, basketball and soccer. I go through periods where I'm primarily training during the day, during the week. I also go through times where I'm training a lot of nights and weekends.

The start of my work day varies between 5:00 AM and noon, depending on scheduling. And, many days consist of morning and evening hours with longer afternoon breaks. I'm currently working about 35 hours per week and the hourly breakdown is something like this:

Training sessions	17 hours
Assessments	1 hour
Client folder paperwork (medical history, goals, etc.)	1 hour
Program design	2 hours
Continuing education and keeping up with trends through trade pubs	2 hours
Door-to-door intros and coupon pass out	2 hours
Chamber events	1 hour
Email and scheduling	2 hours
Teaching group training classes at the park district	2 hours
Traveling to in-home sessions	2 hours
Evaluating advertising ideas	1 hour
Lead tracking and reporting	1 hour
Bookkeeping/accounting	1 hour