



Simply Business

THE SIMPLY BUSINESS GUIDE TO

# Becoming a personal trainer

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*“Covering thousands of personal trainers means we’ve learned a thing or two about what it takes to set up, stay in business and grow your trade.”*

## Introduction

# 01

**A**re you passionate about health and fitness? Perhaps you’re looking to help other people feel good and get healthy?

If you’re currently thinking of kicking your career into shape and love the idea of flexible working, why not become a personal trainer - one of the [UK’s fastest growing industries](#).

Covering thousands of personal trainers means we’ve learned a thing or two about what it takes to set up, stay in business and grow your trade. And in that time, we’ve found that careful planning and a bit of background research can make all the difference.

Think of this in-depth guide as an initial step on your way to that all-important first client.

# The benefits of becoming a personal trainer

# 02

**A**s a personal trainer, you set your own hours, act as your own boss and work to promote a positive change in others.

Being an advocate of health and fitness, you encourage clients to make better lifestyle choices that positively impact on their health, wellbeing and self-confidence.

Above all, this job lets you work around like-minded people who share your passion. The benefit? A stream of support, tips and shared knowledge - a handy bonus for both you and your clients.

The industry is open and accepting of anyone, regardless of age, gender and experience. Different clients want different things, so there's always a lucrative niche for a motivated personal trainer.

# Becoming a personal trainer: what to be aware of

# 03

**P**assion for your work will be crucial. But it's equally important to remember that you may have to make some sacrifices to achieve your goal.

Getting a business off the ground takes hard work, and you'll need to be prepared for:

## **Unpredictable working hours**

A flexible working pattern could mean working unsociable hours. Split shifts and adapting to your clients' schedules will be the norm, so it's worth thinking how this could affect your [work-life balance](#).

Don't fancy working the hours immediately before and after the regular working day? That's fine, but be prepared to lose out to those personal trainers who are willing to work awkward hours.

## **Forfeiting a stable, routine pay cheque (until you drum up a steady clientele)**

Starting out on your own can be tough. Until you develop a regular client base and the word-of-mouth recommendations start to roll in, you may feel the pinch.

Budgeting is key. Before starting out as a personal trainer, try to save as much as you can. This will help cover any costs in between finding new clients. If you need to take time off, these savings will also come in handy if you experience any loss of income during illness, injury and holidays.



### Keeping your paperwork in check

As a self-employed worker, you have to ensure you're always on top of the legal aspects of your job. For instance, keeping up-to-date on your [insurance](#) is as fundamental as your personal trainer qualifications.

But don't worry, there's help at hand. Just like you're an expert in your field, there'll be a range of companies and individuals more than happy to help with the more [technical aspects of running a business](#).

*“Passion for your work will be crucial. But it's equally important to remember that you may have to make some sacrifices to achieve your goal.”*

# 04

## Personal specs

***“While friendly testimonials and engaging marketing can reel in new customers, it’s just as important to convert your clients into loyal advocates.”***

Becoming a personal trainer involves a significant investment of your time and money. While friendly testimonials and engaging marketing can reel in new customers, it’s just as important to convert your clients into loyal advocates.

To arm yourself with the tools needed to retain those all-important clients, ask yourself - do you have the below?

- patience
- organisational skills
- a willingness to listen to the unique needs of your clients
- the ability to be a motivated self-starter
- leadership skills to share that motivation
- knowledge of anatomy and physiology
- knowledge of nutrition and healthy diets
- a strong understanding of health and safety



### **Deciding freelance or fulltime: will you work independently or as part of an established network?**

If you decide to work independently as a contractor - either visiting gyms or clients' homes and places of work - remember, the actual training is just the start.

[As a contractor](#), you will be responsible for:

- [paying your own taxes](#)
- arranging your own [insurance](#)
- developing and keeping the relationships with your clients

- networking and building up a support network of other personal trainers
- long-term planning of your business

Being a sociable person is crucial for a personal trainer; the vast majority of your time will be spent with different clients who you not only need to be able to get along with, but also encourage and inspire!

[Contractors](#) have no backup or support network in the event of illness or injury. The connections you form outside of your training sessions can be hugely important.

To an extent, the professional contacts you build up over time could help cover your clients' sessions when you have no other option but to cancel. Organisations such as [Meetup](#) are a great place to start and broaden your horizons when it comes to meeting like-minded people.

Despite your best efforts, there are going to be times when unavoidable situations arise that mean losing out on a payday. You need the long-term planning skills to account for this possibility.

# Create your personal trainer business plan

# 05

**A** successful personal training business requires an airtight business plan.

Your business plan will need to cover everything from qualifications to marketing as well as progressing your offering to keep clients satisfied.

Creating a comprehensive business plan can be daunting, but keep these eight points in mind and you'll be on the right track:

## **Why do you want to become a personal trainer?**

To sell yourself to prospective clients, it's important to understand and effectively convey why it is you want to be a personal trainer.

## **What clientele do you want to appeal to?**

The health and fitness industry is highly competitive, so it's important to try and define what your product offering is and how it can stand out from the crowd. Figure out your specific training interests and develop a niche.

## **Do people need personal trainers in your area?**

You need to do some market research and consider what your potential clientele and market size could possibly be.

## **Networking - How will you get the word out?**

The health and fitness industry is highly competitive, so it's important to try and define what your product offering is and how it can stand out from the crowd. Figure out your specific training interests and develop a niche.

Social media is an increasingly effective way of boosting your brand.



Facebook and Twitter can help you target people in your area, whilst Instagram is awash with personal trainer success stories. Create a loyal community through great content and watch your social engagement snowball.

Another important consideration is developing your own website. This may seem daunting but don't worry! WordPress is an incredibly intuitive and user-friendly Content Management System (CMS), and given a bit of time, can help craft a website for your needs. We've put together this [helpful guide to WordPress for small businesses to help you out](#).

With social media you can cast a wide net to potential new clients. However, the key to getting them to choose you is having an online space where they can learn more about you, read up on successful case studies and identify your pricing.

#### **Identify the potential costs**

both variable and fixed, of starting and running your personal training business. This is vital for you to work out your pricing strategy and make sure you're charging enough to cover costs.

#### **What qualifications do you need**

to become a personal trainer and what future training will help you keep your edge? You need

to know the frequency of this training and how much of your time and resources it's going to take up.

#### **Decide what capital you need**

As with starting any business, you'll always need some form of capital. Work out early on whether you can fund this yourself or whether you'll rely on external investment, like a [start-up loan](#).

#### **What is your unique selling point?**

You'll need to create an offering that stands out. Use your clients' opinions to help fine tune your service - their feedback is invaluable and should shape your strategy.

**9/10 insurance  
customers say we're  
good (or excellent)**



CASE STUDY EXAMPLE

# The power of social media

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Personal Trainer [Kayla Itsines](#), a 24-year-old Australian, developed her self-branded training guide to appeal to millennial women who wanted to lose weight and achieve a healthy 'bikini body'.

By harnessing the power of social media, Itsines was able to use Instagram as the focal point of her strategy to drum up interest and sales of her guide. She credits her business success to the 'snowball effect' of the sense of community that her loyal clients developed through the popular app.

# What qualifications do personal trainers need in the UK?

# 06

**A**s well as experience and passion you need to ensure that you're formally recognised through the appropriate [personal trainer qualifications](#) and that these qualifications are up-to-date.

UK institutions provide basic qualifications such as:

- Level 2 Certificate in Fitness Instructing - Gym
- Level 2 Diploma in Instructing Exercise and Fitness
- Level 2 Diploma in Health, Fitness, and Exercise Instruction

If you're interested in developing your skills further, think about additional training and accreditation like Level 3 Diplomas in Personal Training or Fitness Instructing and Personal Training. If you already have existing qualifications as a fitness instructor, you can take the Level 3 Award in Conversion of Advanced Fitness Instructor to Personal Trainer Status.

And you don't have to stop with personal training qualifications. Business courses and qualifications can help with the nitty gritty of being self-employed. Once you're fully qualified, you might decide to become a part of a professional body like the [National Register of Personal Trainers](#).

Joining a professional organisation is a good way to make the most of your existing qualifications, build on them and keep an ear out for opportunities to use them most effectively.

## **Shake up your qualification offering**

Keep your product offering fresh for your clients by providing training in different disciplines. For example, sporting star LeBron James adds yoga to his exercise regime to develop on muscles that are otherwise neglected in his regular routine. By developing these hybrid workout schedules, you'll prove to existing and new clients your ability to create specific workouts suited to their objectives.

# Insurance and first aid

# 07

**P**ublic liability insurance is essential for those working as a personal trainer. It protects you if a client gets injured during a session - something that can happen even with extensive care and attention.

A tailored insurance policy can give you the peace of mind to focus on the customer's fitness goals, knowing that - should the worst happen - your business has the back-up it needs.

A first aid qualification is another necessity for professional trainers. There's a wide range of first aid courses that you can choose from, ranging from [basic sports first aid](#) from St Johns Ambulance to [emergency first aid in the workplace](#) qualifications.

*"A tailored insurance policy can give you the peace of mind to focus on the customer's fitness goals."*

*“A general rule of thumb is an average of £40 to £50 per hour for most of the country.”*

## What do personal trainers charge?

# 08

If you work directly for a gym, you'll likely earn a steady wage, but in the case of contractor work you need to [keep an eye on the market](#).

To a large extent, this will be affected by your client base and your location.

A general rule of thumb is an average of £40 to £50 per hour for most of the country. There will, however, be differences for each practitioner.

For example, if your niche is the local student population, it's unlikely you'll be able to charge as much as you would do working with bankers. Clients in larger cities tend to be able to pay a premium, but keep in mind that they'll expect a quality service befitting the price.

Your knowledge of the industry is your biggest asset here. Assess what other trainers offering a comparable service to yourself are charging and adjust your own price accordingly.

# Developing your career as a personal trainer

# 09

**E**ntry-level work at a commercial gym is a good place to start your career. Even if the work itself isn't as lucrative as you might hope, it's a fantastic place to build up your network of contacts and clients, as well as learning from more experienced trainers.

It's wise to supplement your income at this early stage with other work. Even with the most fool-proof plan it can take months, or even a year until you're making enough to have it as your sole source of income.

Networking is key to your success as an independent personal trainer, so keep space in your schedule to attend any industry events or meetups that catch your attention.

***"Networking is key  
to your success  
as an independent  
personal trainer."***

## Final considerations

**B**ecoming a personal trainer is a dream for many, and the power to realise that dream rests in your hands. While the most important lessons will come with experience, a solid foundation can make your life a lot easier.

### To build this foundation:

- Assess your local market and demand for personal training services.
- Learn from professionals with whom you're already in contact.
- Get qualified in personal training, first aid and health and safety.
- Set up [personal trainer insurance](#).
- Build up your client base steadily, until you're ready to go full-time.
- Join a professional body like the NRPT.

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### **About Simply Business**

At Simply Business, we protect people like you – the small businesses who are building Britain's economy.

We also provide news, guides and inspiration to the small business community in our Knowledge Centre and social media channels.