

HOW TO CHOOSE A TRAINER

A LIFE CHANGING INVESTMENT

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Introduction

Be wise… avoid unqualified cowboys

Your body is an extremely complex organism and not understanding it correctly can lead to incorrect or poor prescription of exercises or techniques to perform said exercise.

At the end of the day you are putting your health in someone else's hands. Too often I have seen trainers injure their clients through poorly prescribed programmes or allowing their client to perform exercises incorrectly.

I am providing you with a brief guideline of how to select a trainer, so you can choose wisely and also know what to expect from my services.

A professional trainer first and foremost should be able to communicate to you the anatomical and physiological function and benefits of an exercise or movement. They should clearly discuss the anatomy, how the anatomy/body works to perform the movement and the benefits of this to your daily function.



Unfortunately, the industry is flooded with people who have good intentions but no qualifications. No knowledge of the human body or safe exercise prescription! Personal Trainers are technically health professionals... would you pay for surgery from a "doctor with no qualifications"? I think not!

There is also a huge range of variety in level of professional trainers/coaches available. Individuals whom complete 1 month ‘personal training’ courses and are then qualified personal trainers. They have completed the minimal theoretical requirements but have no practical knowledge or application.

These people are fitness ‘motivators’... depending on your needs you may simply want motivation, direction and encouragement. If you want truly safe and life lasting benefits with the lowest risk of injury you need to be able to tell the motivator and true professionals apart.



01 The Essentials

When considering employing an exercise professional, there are 6 essential aspects to consider:

1 - Qualifications and Certification

A qualified personal trainer has an education in physiology, health promotion, athletic training, kinesiology or a similar field. They should have first aide and CPR certification as well as certification from a reputable organisation such as a Sports Science Degree, NASM, Charles Poliquin, CHEK practitioner or similar.

DO NOT hire anyone who does not have a good level of certification! We live in a crazy world… the age of social media where anyone who is fit and posts exercises, workouts or what they eat thinks they are a specialist coach. Especially here in Asia, I know many "so called trainers and coaches" who have ZERO qualifications and knowledge of what they are doing. You might as well hire your Mum to coach you!!

Qualifications and knowledge matter! You need to learn about your body and scientific/proven methods to achieve your goals… not just pay someone to count your reps and motivate you.



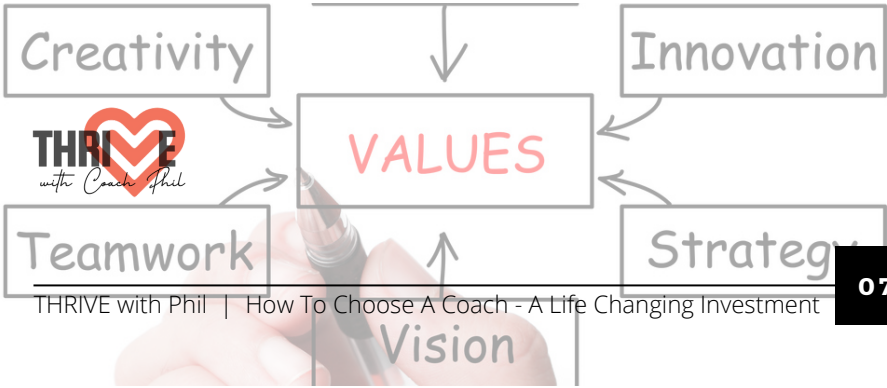
2 - Look Beyond The Price Tag

Of course you're going to want to know how much the coaching will cost, but it's important to consider the value, not just the price.

Coaching is an investment in yourself, in your continued development and growth. In health and fitness you should be learning a better way to live, so that you not only achieve your goals but you can effortlessly maintain your new health, vitality and body after finishing your package with the coach. You're not simply buying training sessions or time from your coach; you're buying personal transformation and an education.

I've meet 1,000's of clients who have worked with other coaches before investing in my services. Some paid 60% less per session but after 8 months and $1,000's of dollars later still did not lose any weight or achieve their goal. The same client then sign up to my programmes, pay DOUBLE the amount per session but in 2 months have achieved their goals and feel great... having sent half of the total amount with the other coaches.

Remember, the value of the transformation is usually far greater than the price of the coaching, so resist the temptation to see it as only an hourly rate cost. View the investment on the quality of information and how much you are going to learn



3 - Work History/Experience:
Have they honed their skills in a gym/clinical environment and developed practical experience and knowledge.

Who has mentored them, performance reviewed their work, and practically educated them to apply the knowledge gained from their qualifications? This is the most important aspect to consider when paying a coach to look after your health.

When I finished my degree and consequential diplomas I thought I knew a great deal about successfully training and coaching people. I quickly realised that wasn't the case when I began working for the University of Waikato. It was then that I committed to seeking out and working with the top organisations and successful coaches, so that I could absorb and acquire the practical skills and experience to deliver the best methods and systems in the industry.

Work history and experience is crucial to informing you of the quality of trainer you will be hiring and entrusting your body and health to.



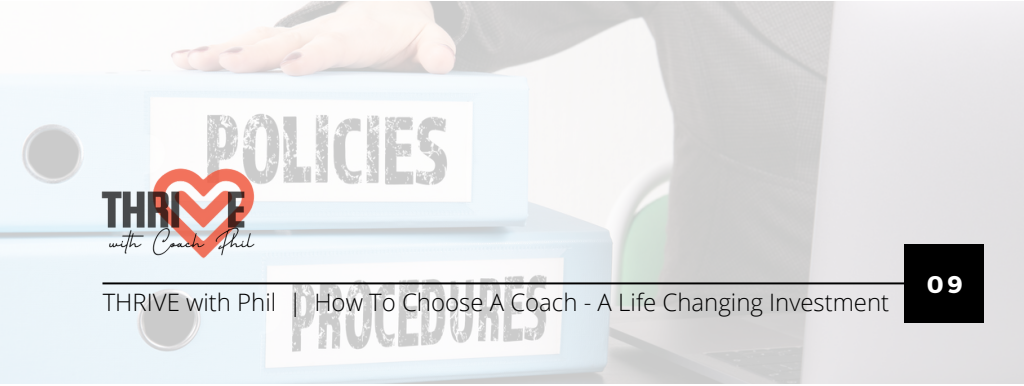
4 - Liability Insurance:
Ask if they have liability insurance? They should answer yes and be able to produce an insurance certificate

5 - Policies and Procedures:
A personal trainer should have a documented policy explaining their services, costs, cancellations, length of contract, and emergency procedures. They should also require a medical clearance form to be completed before they work with you.

6 - Referral:
Seek a reference wherever possible. Any normal job would request and check both work and character references; it's important you do the same when selecting a trainer.

Most coaches are likeable people. Can they do the job? It is important that you get a reference from a previous employer or mentor... if they can not supply this how have they learnt their craft (gotten practical experience)?

The 6 aspects above are essential to ensure you are safe and paying a fair price for an exercise and health professional.



02 Crucial Questions

In today's information saturated world it is harder to tell who really is a good coach. One look on social media and YouTube there are millions of people posting workouts, exercises and nutrition advice. A lot of which is not correct or unadvisable.

The qualifications, work experience, policies and procedures discussed in Chapter 1 are essential to establish that the coach is a commendable professional... Someone who will provide a due-diligent service and is safe to entrust your health too.

Unfortunately, those documents, articles and procedures don't actually tell you anything about the true effectiveness of the personal trainer you get! Hence, here are some additional questions you should ask to guarantee you would get your money's worth and find a 'good match' for your specific goals and individual personality:

1. What assessments do you perform?

a. Assessments should always be completed! It is impossible to properly prescribe exercise if the trainer/practitioner does not test joint range of motion, posture, strength imbalances, movement patterns, flexibility, and so forth.



These assessments tell the trainer what exercise and programme is required... without these, it's guesswork = danger!

b. Assessments done properly also include nutrition, lifestyle and supplementation for your needs.

2. Can I see some of your training programs?

a. There should be no "one size fits all" programs. You should see a correlation between assessment findings and training exercises/programme that address the findings for each individual.

Ask to see some sample programs. If they all look the same that means YOU will not receive personalised service = less results for YOU... plus aren't YOU paying for PERSONAL(ISED) training?

3. How do you keep records and track progress?

a. What is recorded and tracked will vary from client to client, but there should always be a system of tracking the programme and progression.

Monitoring allows exercise, nutrition and lifestyle professionals to track exactly how each client is doing so that we can make adjustments if and when necessary = amazing results!!



4. How fast should I perform my exercises?

a. The speed of doing exercises makes a huge difference in the results that can be accomplished with training.

b. Ask the trainer how they determine what speed the exercise should be performed at. If the trainer can't explain exactly why they choose a certain speed that means they don't understand some basic principles of exercise.

5. What do you think about exercise machines?

a. Machines are far less effective because they "turn on" fewer muscles and don't let your body move in the way that nature intended. This increases the chance of injury both in training and especially when you try to use your body in real life.

b. If the trainer's programmes have more than 3 exercises based on "machines" like the leg press, chest press or especially any abdominal machine then be very careful!

In addition to these questions a professional trainer/health practitioner should be fit and healthy. If a person is not able to help themselves be healthy and fit, when they are in total control of what they do... there is no way this person can help you whom they do not have total control over!



Final Words

Finally, you should feel comfortable with the trainer, his/her style of communication and the expectations of your time together.

You are paying a health professional to help you feel better, move better and look better... achieving this is much more than just holding you accountable to eat less and exercise more!

In a vastly unregulated industry it's important to choose your coach wisely. Ensure the coach is qualified, has policies and procedures in place to respect your time, and they've gained experience working in fitness facilities or businesses.

The 5 crucial questions will then get them talking about how they design and execute training programs, which will give you a good idea of their style of communication and whether they'd be a good fit for you and your goals.

I hope this brief guide aids you in your journey to choosing a great coach and achieving your health and fitness dreams.

All the best,
Coach Phil