A PRACTICAL WORKBOOK FOR PERSONAL TRAINERS

ACE Mover Method™
Healthy Eating Coaching Guide

Helping clients eat more fruits, vegetables, and fiber—one conversation at a time

BASED ON ACE-SPONSORED RESEARCH

One brief, client-centered coaching conversation each week – added to normal training sessions – significantly improved fruit, vegetable, and fiber intake over 10 weeks.

STEP A

Ask

Begin with curiosity. Use open-ended questions to help clients identify what matters most to them rather than telling them what they should eat.

Conversation Starters

Goal Questions

- What would you like to improve about your eating habits?
- If you could change one thing about how you eat, what would it be?
- What healthy eating habit feels most realistic for you right now?

Dig a Little Deeper

- Why is that goal important to you?
- How would your life be different if you achieved it?
- What would success look like?

TRAINER NOTES

Client's priority:

Why it matters:

Break Down Barriers

Explore what may be standing in the way. Once the goal is clear, help clients identify the obstacles they may encounter. Resist the urge to solve the problem for them. Instead, ask questions that help clients identify realistic solutions that fit their life.

Helpful Questions

- What's getting in your way?
- When is this hardest?
- What usually happens before you make a food choice you're unhappy with?
- What's one thing you could start doing?
- What's one thing you could stop doing?
- What resources or support would make this easier?

BARRIER WORKSHEET

Biggest obstacle:

One possible solution:

Support that may be needed:

STEP C

Collaborate

Turn insight into action. Work with the client to develop a SMART goal that feels realistic and achievable. Encourage them to choose how they will monitor their progress and adjust the plan together as needed.

Build One SMART Goal Together

This week I will:

How often?

How will I track it?

- □ Calendar
- □ Phone notes
- □ Habit app
- □ Paper log
- □ Other: _____

Confidence (1–10):

> If confidence is below 8, ask: "What would make this goal easier?"

COACHING GUIDE / 06

EVERY SESSION

Weekly Healthy Eating Check-In

At the beginning of each session (2–3 minutes):

- What went well this week?
- What challenged you?
- What did you learn?
- Would you like to continue this goal or adjust it?

FROM THE RESEARCH

Practical Tips

✓ Keep conversations brief – often just 5–10 minutes during a workout.

✓ Let the client do most of the talking.

✓ Personalize every conversation.

✓ Sometimes one eating habit deserves several weeks of attention.

✓ Other clients may be ready to work on more than one goal.

✓ If a client isn't sure about barriers, give them time to think and revisit the conversation at the next session.

✓ Group training can reinforce general healthy eating messages while still encouraging each participant to pursue individualized goals.

STAY WITHIN YOUR SCOPE

What personal trainers can – and shouldn't – do

Personal trainers can:

- Help clients clarify healthy eating goals
- Use coaching skills to support behavior change
- Help identify barriers and action steps
- Encourage accountability

Trainers should not prescribe individualized nutrition plans or treat medical nutrition concerns. Refer clients to a registered dietitian or other qualified healthcare professional whenever nutrition recommendations extend beyond your scope of practice. This distinction was emphasized throughout the study.

CLIENT WORKSHEET – KEEP FOR YOUR RECORDS

My Healthy Eating Plan

Client name: _____ Date: _____

A – My Goal

What I'd like to improve:

Why this matters to me:

B – My Barriers

Biggest obstacle:

One possible solution:

C – My SMART Goal

This week I will:

How often:

How I'll track it:

- □ Calendar
- □ Phone notes
- □ Habit app
- □ Paper log
- □ Other: _____

Confidence (1–10):

Week	What went well	What challenged me	Continue / Adjust