



# A Guide to Starting **your own** Personal Training Business

ACE →<sup>®</sup>

# Starting your business

Congratulations on taking the first step towards transforming your fitness passion into a thriving business. This guide equips you with essential knowledge and strategies to launch your personal training business and navigate your way through the health and fitness industry, covering everything from finding your purpose to practical tips and tricks from ACE experts. ACE is proud to support you as you turn your dreams into reality.



*"My ACE Certification has taken my career to new levels, including having my own thriving business. I apply the behavior-change knowledge that I learned from ACE to form meaningful connections with my clients, building trust. This sets me apart from other trainers, which is key!"*

Anthony F., ACE Certified Personal Trainer

## 01 Build a strong foundation

With a strong core identity and a deep understanding of "why," you can lay the foundation for a thriving and successful business. To help you get started, we have a set of questions for you to think about:

*What do I want to be doing?*

*Who is my ideal client?*

*How will I know I am successful?*

Keep your responses from above in mind as you think about the following for your business:

### a **BUSINESS plan**

serves as a roadmap for your business, providing a detailed description of how the business will be structured, operated, and managed.

### a **MISSION statement**

defines an organization's purpose, objectives, and activities. It answers "what do we do?" and "who do we do it for?"

Example: "To empower others to achieve their health and fitness goals by providing personalized training programs."

### a **VISION statement**

describes the future aspirations and desired long-term outcome of a brand. The vision statement answers the question: "where do we want to be?"

Example: "To be the catalyst for change in the lives of others, inspiring them to adopt a lifelong commitment to health and fitness."

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING TO CREATE YOUR OWN "WHY" STATEMENT

I will (the service you will provide):

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for (the type of client you will serve):

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so they can (how they will succeed):

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Use the above as the foundation to build your business plan, mission statement, and vision statement.



# 02 Get up and running

Getting your personal training business up and running requires careful consideration of various business aspects, encompassing both legal and operational perspectives.

Launching your business successfully requires not only dedication, hard work, and a genuine commitment to helping others, but also requires the protection and compliance of your brand. It is crucial to safeguard your business by adhering to local laws, regulations, and professional standards that pertain specifically to personal training in your area or online. By implementing these measures, you can ensure the long-term success of your business and maintain credibility within the industry.

## Business Checklist

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct market research  | <input type="checkbox"/> Get insurance to protect your business and clients  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Create business plan   | <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain federal and state tax identification numbers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fund your business   | <input type="checkbox"/> Decide on what you will charge for your services    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decide if you need a physical location and/or online session   | <input type="checkbox"/> Build a website or online presence                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Choose appropriate business structure<br><small>Example: Sole proprietor, partnership, LLC, etc.</small> | <input type="checkbox"/> Open for business                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Establish business name  | <input type="checkbox"/> Start marketing your business                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Register business and apply for license and permits  | <input type="checkbox"/> Develop continuing education plan with ACE          |

### What does it mean to conduct market research?

Market research begins with defining your ideal customer and learning where they are living or where they spend most of their time. If you have a physical location, will you rely on foot traffic? If you're online, what site and online community groups should you reach out to? Do you appeal to an international market?



ACE offers support to ACE Pros by answering all these business and personal brand building questions. Learn more at [ACE Pro Compass](#).

### Where should I conduct my business?

You have many options, will you lease/rent a commercial space and provide your own equipment, will you be working with a gym and scheduling your classes around theirs, will you hold sessions at home or online? These are important to your business plan and where you feel you'll be most effective as a Personal Trainer.

### How do I determine what to charge for my services?

First know that there is no 100 percent right or wrong way to determine a price for your services. Research what others in your area charge by exploring studios and trainers. This information can serve as a reference point for your pricing strategy, considering your unique value proposition.

# 03 Marketing your business

To achieve long-term success, your new personal training business must have a solid marketing plan. It's crucial for building brand awareness, attracting clients, and establishing trust and credibility. Marketing is an ongoing process that demands continuous effort and adaptation. By investing time and resources into marketing, your personal training business will be positioned for success.

Here are 3 steps we recommend to kickstart your marketing plan.

## 1 Pinpoint Target Audience

Find your niche and understand their behaviors, preferences, and needs. Being specific and detailed in your niche enables you to customize marketing strategies.

## 2 Identify Marketing Channels

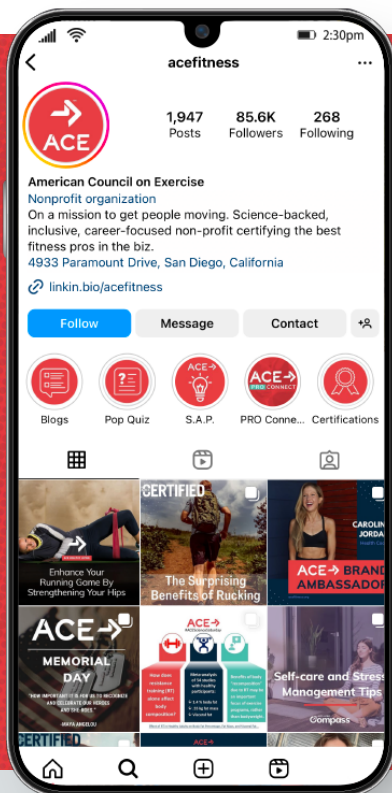
Research and choose the best marketing channels to reach your audience. Consider where they frequent and the media they consume. Understand their habits to strategically select engaging channels that connect with your audience effectively.

## 3 Develop Brand Messaging

Decide how you want to portray your brand. Reflect on your brand voice—will you adopt a funny or serious approach? Choose brand colors and fonts that align with your brand identity. From there, create compelling messaging and content that showcases your value.



ACE has partnered with a website builder to make it easier to establish your online presence so prospective clients can find you. [Learn more about ACE Pro Benefits >](#)



### Trends in the Industry

## How to Use Social Media to Market Yourself and Your Brand

- 1 Influencer marketing.** Partnering with influencers who align with your brand values and target audience can lead to increased visibility, credibility, and potential client conversions.
- 2 Video content and live streaming.** Platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok provide opportunities to reach a wide audience and build an engaged following.
- 3 Online coaching and training programs.** Offering online coaching and training programs allows you to reach clients beyond your local area, expanding your market reach.
- 4 User Generated Content (UGC) & Testimonials.** UGC, such as before-and-after photos or workout videos, can showcase the effectiveness of your training programs and build credibility.

## Hear it from the experts

Click the links to the right for more on marketing your business.

[A New Approach to Building Your Personal Brand >](#)

[10 Ways to Design Your Instagram Grid Layout Like a Pro >](#)

[Ways to Grow Your Social Media Audience >](#)

[14 Tips for Marketing your Fitness Brand on Social Media >](#)



# 04 Understanding clients' motivations and 'why'

Once you have clients asking you for help, aligning your services with clients' goals and motivations during a discovery call creates a client-trainer relationship built on trust, satisfaction, and long-term adherence. Review the four skills of motivational interviewing, commonly referred to as OARS, to facilitate deeper conversations with your clients and discover their whys.

## 4 SKILLS TO MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

### Open-ended questions:

Use questions starting with “what,” “how,” or “tell me more” to draw more information from the client while creating a connection.

- “Tell me more about your daily physical activities.”
- “What are some physical activities you enjoy?”

### Affirming:

Involves recognizing the client’s strengths and accentuating the positive.

- “Wow, you’ve shown up every session for six weeks now!”
- “Let’s take a moment and celebrate you consistently hitting your step goals for the week.”

### Reflecting:

Or reflective listening refers to hearing what a client says then making an informed guess about what you think the client means.

- “I heard you say that it’s been challenging for you to make it to the gym because of your schedule and you made it four out of five times.”
- “So, what I’m gathering is you tend to have the most energy in the morning which improves your workout stamina rather than completing it in the evening when you’re exhausted after work.”

### Summarizing:

Is recapping the key points of your conversation to make sure you and the client are on the same page.

- “Working out was really challenging for you this week due to a busy schedule, but you think it’s important because you’re noticing progress. “
- “Waking up 10 minutes earlier every day, although challenging, allows you to pack your gym bag so you don’t miss a session.”

Every Client is Different

## Developing Unique Plans for Unique Clients

To develop unique plans for your clients, start by asking them key questions to help understand their needs and exceed their expectations.

Write down what questions you would ask your client to understand their unique needs so you can better support them during your sessions together:

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- 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
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Check out [ACE Continuing Education on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) to learn how to get ALL people moving.

# 05 Make it sustainable

Building a sustainable personal training business is the key to long-term success in the dynamic health and fitness industry. By considering long-term goals early, personal trainers can align their aspirations with business growth, leading to fulfillment, motivation, resilience, and satisfaction. It establishes a strong foundation for a clear vision, strategic planning, sustainable growth, client attraction, brand building, market adaptability, employee engagement, risk mitigation, and effectively navigating challenges and opportunities.

## ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS

How much will I work?

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What will my schedule be?

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How many clients do I think I can successfully manage at one time?

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*"Being ACE Certified means I can help people be the best versions of themselves. ACE provides so many tools to help me be a better trainer, coach and mentor to people who are on a health and fitness journey."*

Robin M., ACE Certified Health Coach,  
ACE Certified Personal Trainer, ACE  
Fitness Nutrition Specialist, ACE Sports  
Conditioning Specialist

## Stay Up on Your Training with CECs

Build highly sought-after skills clients demand and achieve new career heights with our easy-to-understand, evidence-based learning programs.

[EXPLORE CECs >](#)

## Take Advantage of Resources Available to You

Access expert insights and diverse articles to serve your clients better. Expand knowledge, refine skills, and achieve results with support.

[FREE RESOURCES >](#)

## Benefits of Being an ACE Personal Trainer

Count on ACE to provide ongoing support found in ACE Pro Connect, guidance, tools, and resources like ACE® Pro Compass or ACE Job board that help you thrive as a health and fitness pro.

[CAREER SUPPORT >](#)

## More About ACE

Since 1985, the American Council on Exercise (ACE) has been the leading non-profit education and certification provider for health coaches and exercise professionals in the United States and around the world.

With more than 90,000 highly respected certified health coaches and exercise professionals, ACE Certified Professionals are on the ground daily helping people move, stay active and make lasting lifestyle behavior changes to build healthier communities.

Headquartered in San Diego, ACE collaborates with public health partners to educate people of all backgrounds about the importance of physical activity and other healthy lifestyle behaviors; advocates for public policies to increase physical activity opportunities; and supports scientific research that investigates the efficacy of behavior-change interventions and the effectiveness of exercise practices and trends. For more resources and information visit [ACEfitness.org](https://www.acefitness.org).

