

"The most thorough, A-Z guide for those considering embarking on a career of personal training." Barbara Harris EVP/Editorial Director Active Lifestyle Group, Weider Publications LLC

Becoming a Personal Trainer FOR DUMMIES®

Melyssa St. Michael

Certified Personal Trainer and
Certified Nutrition Consultant

Linda Formichelli

Health and fitness writer

A Reference for the Rest of Us!



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About the Authors

Melyssa St. Michael: Melyssa St. Michael is a certified personal trainer and certified nutrition consultant. She was named one of the top 40 entrepre-neurs under age 40 by *Baltimore Magazine* in 2001. Setting out to “raise the bar” in the personal-training industry, Melyssa founded her first personal-training company in February 1995. She rapidly expanded her business into a thriving entity with over 2,000 clients, a 3,000-square-foot state-of-the-art personal-training/nutrition facility, and a staff of ten full-time trainers. Currently, Melyssa consults within the fitness industry and is a renowned fitness expert appearing on national news channels, including CNN, CBS, NBC, and ABC. She has been interviewed by such publications as the *Los Angeles Times*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *SHAPE*, *Muscle & Fitness*, and the *Sunday Times* (London).

Linda Formichelli: Linda Formichelli is a freelance health and fitness writer who lives in Massachusetts with her writer husband and two cats. She is the co-author of *The Renegade Writer: A Totally Unconventional Guide to Freelance Writing Success*. She’s a karate enthusiast (okay, she’s a karate freak) who enjoys sipping port and reading weighty tomes (okay, it’s lemonade and Archie comics). Linda has an M.A. from U.C. Berkeley in a subject completely unrelated to writing.

Dedication

Melyssa dedicates this book to her best friend and soon-to-be-husband, Brian, and to her sister, Krys.

Linda dedicates this book to Eric.

Authors'

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Project Coordinator: Maridee Ennis

Layout and Graphics: Jonelle Burns, Andrea N. Dahl, Joyce Haughey, Stephanie D. Jumper, Michael Kruzil, Barry Offringa, Lynsey Osborn, Jacque Roth, Mary Gillot Virgin

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Introduction

Maybe you're a fitness buff who would like to help people get healthy for a living. Or maybe you're already a professional personal trainer, and you want to boost your business or update your skills. Either way, *Becoming a Personal Trainer For Dummies* is for you.

You're in the right place at the right time. According to American Sports Data, Inc., more than 5 million people in the U.S. pay for the services of personal trainers every year, with the average personal training client attending 20 sessions per year. The size of the U.S. personal training market is approximately \$4 billion — that's a lot of dough!

About This Book

Personal training requires more than the ability to bench-press your own bodyweight or run an hour on the treadmill without breaking a sweat. Personal training is a business, just like, say, a print shop, a doctor's office, or a grocery store. You need to have a solid grasp not only of exercise, but also of marketing, business structures, legal issues, accounting, customer service, certification, and more.

Don't flip out! We know that's a lot to think about, but we're here to help. In *Becoming a Personal Trainer For*

Dummies, we give you the scoop on everything you need to know to start, run, and even expand your personal training business.

Becoming a Personal Trainer For Dummies tells you all the stuff you really want to know, such as:

- ✓ How do I know if personal training is for me?
- ✓ How do I become certified?
- ✓ How do I write a business plan?
- ✓ Should I go solo or work for someone else?
- ✓ How do I get clients in the door?
- ✓ Do I need an accountant, lawyer, and insurance agent?
- ✓ How do I perform an initial consultation and fitness assessment?
- ✓ How do I create exercise plans that will get my clients strong and healthy?
- ✓ How do I keep my clients motivated?
- ✓ What are some ways to expand my business?

Foolish Assumptions

They say that to assume makes an ass out of you and me, but we're going to take that risk — because we need to assume certain things about you, our reader. We assume that you're interested in personal training. We also

assume that you have some basic knowledge of anatomy and physiology, cardiovascular exercise, and weight training. You may already be certified, or you may be studying for your certification. Or you may even be a full-fledged professional personal trainer who wants to build your clientele or motivate your clients.

How to Use This Book

You can use this book in two ways:

✓ **If you want to know everything there is to know about becoming a personal trainer**, read this book from cover to cover. You'll get a thorough overview of what it takes to start and run a successful business, and you'll even find out about things you may not have thought of, such as how to write a marketing plan, how to name your business, and where to find a mentor who can guide you to success.

✓ **If you want to find out about a specific topic**, flip to that page and start reading. For example, if you plan to take your certification test, you can turn to Chapter 2 to get study tips. You can read any section in the book without reading what comes before or after — though we may refer you to other parts of the book for related information.

How This Book Is Organized

Becoming a Personal Trainer For Dummies is divided into five parts. The chapters within each part give you more detailed information on each topic within that part. Here's an overview:

Part I: Shaping Up to Be a Personal Trainer

So, you want to be a personal trainer. What type of trainer do you want to be? What kinds of clients do you want to work with? And most important, how do you get started? If you don't know the answers to these common questions, this part is for you. We give an overview of the personal training business and tell you how you can get a piece of the action, including tips on developing your personal training identity, finding your niche, getting certified, interning and apprenticing, and weighing the pros and cons of going into business for yourself.

Part II: Being a Successful Personal Trainer

Before you start training clients, you need to have all the business basics in place — like a business plan, a business name, a record-keeping system, a marketing plan, and a support system of professionals, such as a lawyer and an accountant. If you jump into training without these basics, you can land in trouble when, say, the taxes are due, you want a business loan, or you gain so many clients that you can't keep track of them (because you don't have a record-keeping system!). That's what this part is all about. We also tell you not only how to bring in clients, but how to keep them coming back with tips and tricks that will help them stay happy and motivated.

Part III: Putting the Personal into Personal Training

Clients — they're the people who make your business a business. Without them, you'd be doing chest presses all by your lonesome. That's why in this part, we tell you all about how to understand, work with, and advance your clients. You'll find out how to perform an initial consultation and a fitness assessment, plus how to create individualized exercise programs and how to advance your clients to the next level.

Part IV: Growing Your Personal Training Business

When you're ready to get big — and we're not talking about your muscles — this part is for you. To expand your business, you may want to hire employees — and in this part, we tell you how to hire, motivate, and alas, fire workers. You can also expand by offering additional services like massages, workshops, and nutritional services, or by selling products like exercise equipment — and in this part, we show you how.

Part V: The Part of Tens

You may notice that *Becoming a Personal Trainer For Dummies* is chock-full of valuable information. In this part, we put that information into easy-to-read lists for your convenience. We provide you with great ways to expand your services, highlight equipment that will help your clients reach their goals, and outline ways to be the best personal trainer you can be.

Icons Used in This Book

Icons are those little pictures you see in the margins of this book, and they're meant to grab your attention and steer you toward particular types of information. Here's what they mean:



The Tip icon points you to great strategies for running your personal training business.



We use this icon to give helpful reminders. This is information that you may already know but that's easy to forget.



This icon flags information about potential pitfalls to your business, from business snafus to common exercise mistakes to client-relations gaffes.



This icon flags information that's great to know but isn't mandatory for your success as a personal trainer. You can use this information to impress your buddies in the gym, but if you're short on time, you