



NETWORK

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF AUSTRALIAN FITNESS NETWORK

WINTER 2020

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Focusing on silver linings on the road to recovery



Well, that's an autumn we won't forget in a hurry – however much many of us may want to. Ironically, as winter hits its stride, we find ourselves tentatively emerging from the enforced hibernation that has profoundly affected every aspect of our lives and work.

To say the experience has been a learning curve would be an understatement. While we've all learnt things about ourselves in isolation, we have probably also made some unexpected discoveries about our clients, members and colleagues (who knew that Rita would be such an avid adopter of Zoom in order to keep attending her weekly, now land-based, aqua class?)

The question now is, how are things going to look on the other side of shutdown? As of this week, gyms and studios in every state and territory are reopening, provided they are compliant with social distancing and hygiene rules. It's a return to business, though clearly not as usual, with echoes of the pandemic likely to reverberate indefinitely: in the layout of gym floors, in the mandatory booking of spots in classes, in heightened cleaning protocols, and more.

In this issue of *Network*, our writers address various pandemic-related topics, from PT mental health, maintaining positivity and returning from physical deconditioning, to virtual training, optimising immunity and even COVID tax implications.

In her opinion piece on page 7, Leisl Klaebe discusses our industry's return, writing that, above all, 'There

must be heart in how we deliver post COVID-19 fitness: compassion, understanding, gentleness and permission.' On page 37, meanwhile, Brooke Turner acknowledges the frustrations of downtime, but focuses on the silver linings of the situation for fitness professionals – and the fact is, although the future remains uncertain, we must all do the same.

For one thing, the pandemic has increased awareness of the importance of good health and fitness, because healthier people have not been so personally impacted, health-wise at least. This presents an opportunity for our industry to reach out to the 80% of the population not using our services, and to recruit them to the vital cause of their own wellbeing.

On behalf of Network, I wish you the very best as we take the first steps towards recovery.

Stay safe,

Oliver Kitchingman, Editor
editor@fitnessnetwork.com.au



NETWORK'S CORE PURPOSE

'To inform, inspire and educate our members to be the best they can be'

ABN 36 624 043 367

NETWORK MAGAZINE

Editor, Oliver Kitchingman

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Unless otherwise specified, all competitions/giveaways contained in this issue commence on 16 June 2020 and conclude on 31 July 2020. Each competition is a game of skill and chance plays no part in determining the winner. The judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Winners will be selected by the editor and will be notified by email no later than 7 August 2020. Click [HERE](#) for full Terms and Conditions.

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PERSPECTIVE: REFLECTIONS OF INDUSTRY LEADERS



DON'T FORGET THE PEOPLE RETURNING TO OUR CLUBS AFTER THE SHUTDOWN

The way we operate following the industry shutdown will not be 'business as usual'. We must identify exactly what makes people choose a live fitness experience over a virtual one and do everything we can to deliver it, writes Group Exercise Manager *Leisl Klaebe*.

In isolation at home, managing my teams remotely, I do what I can to help keep everyone together, even though we're physically apart. While negotiating the challenges of our new day-to-day 'normal', I am also firmly focused on the days beyond COVID-19 shutdown. Everything will look, and operate, at least a little differently following these troubled days.

First and foremost, this is about heart. Our return to physical operations must be heartfelt. How we come back into our clubs is key. This pandemic will change the way we work and live. It will change member expectations and needs. The fitness industry that re-emerges needs to anticipate this change and be ready to deliver.

Group exercise managers, instructors and PTs that conduct group training workouts should be researching what those member expectations will be, with one main question front of mind: what makes members choose a live group experience over a virtual one?

There are not many people in the fitness industry who are in it just for the money. Most of us are in it for the people. Our 'why' is to help people live better lives and feel better about themselves, mentally and physically. Most of us are 'people people', and people are our main game – the people we work with and for, and the people we serve.

Basic tribal behaviour means that we all want, and need, to belong to a group or a tribe of like-minded people. Members are going to need to physically come together in our clubs, our group exercise classes, our personal training sessions and our workouts, more than ever once this is over.

Our online workouts, streamed live classes and virtual one-on-one training are filling a void right now, but people are missing the full fitness experience they are used to having in our clubs. We must identify exactly what it is they are missing, so that we can deliver it in spades when we re-open. My own research shows that people are missing 'the people factor' of connection, community and group energy – as well as the variety of equipment only facilities can offer and coaching that pushes them harder than they are able to do at home.

There must be heart in how we deliver post COVID-19 fitness: compassion, understanding, gentleness and permission. We need to be genuine, honest, caring and considerate. Connections between staff, members, clients and trainers must be real and meaningful, and we will need to place more consideration on the factors of physical touch, eye contact, humour and being authentically present for those we interact with.

It is likely that many people, having pent up energy, stress and frustration, will want to come back hard and fast in a bid to return to their previous 'normality'. But will they be capable of that, both emotionally and physically? The desires of members, clients and fitness professionals may be aligned – to train hard and socialise in order to regain fitness losses and reconnect with their tribe – but coming back to classes or training too intensely, is not ideal for anyone.

Instructors, coaches and trainers need to look after and pace themselves while also encouraging members, participants and clients to do the same. We need to role model this behaviour by listening to our bodies, setting SMART goals and timelines, and taking one step at a time towards our previous fitness levels.

Life and work post-COVID-19 is about people taking care of people. Our 'why' will not have changed, but how we deliver it already has. **N**

Leisl Klaebe

Leisl is the Group Exercise Manager of three Virgin Active clubs in the Sydney CBD. She manages a timetable of over 400 classes a week and a team of over 70 GEX coaches. With close to 20 years' experience in the health and fitness industry, Leisl is a well-respected motivational leader and a former recipient of the prestigious Virgin Star Award. She has recently been appointed Global Ambassador for the Women in Fitness Association.



INDUSTRY INSIGHT

| News, views and lessons learnt

INDUSTRY CALLS FOR NATIONAL CONSISTENCY FOR GYMS REOPENING DASHED AFTER VIC VIRUS SPIKE

Ahead of Victorian gyms and fitness facilities reopening this week, industry registration body Fitness Australia had called on state governments to take a national approach to gym reopening guidelines to ensure consistency for Australia's 4 million gym users, more than 35,000 exercise professionals and thousands of support staff. Developments in Victoria in the past week, however, appear to have thwarted these hopes.

Victorian gyms were the last cab off the rank, with the Victorian Government permitting up to 20 people per space (clearly defined zones of at least 200 square metres each), but only 10 participants per class, and subject to the four square metre rule and individuals keeping at least 1.5 metres apart.

After a spike in COVID-19 cases in Victoria in the past week, any hopes that class sizes, and total numbers of members able to attend facilities, would be increased to reflect the higher figures allowed in other states have been dashed.

Fitness Australia has been fighting for safe but fair guidelines on the reopening of gyms in all states and territories since the first signs that Australia was successfully flattening the curve. In addition to state-based government guidelines, Fitness Australia has developed a COVID Safety Plan framework for Operations in the Fitness Industry Under COVID-19 Restrictions, available to all businesses in the industry, as well as a COVID Safety Plan Checklist exclusively available to Fitness Australia members.

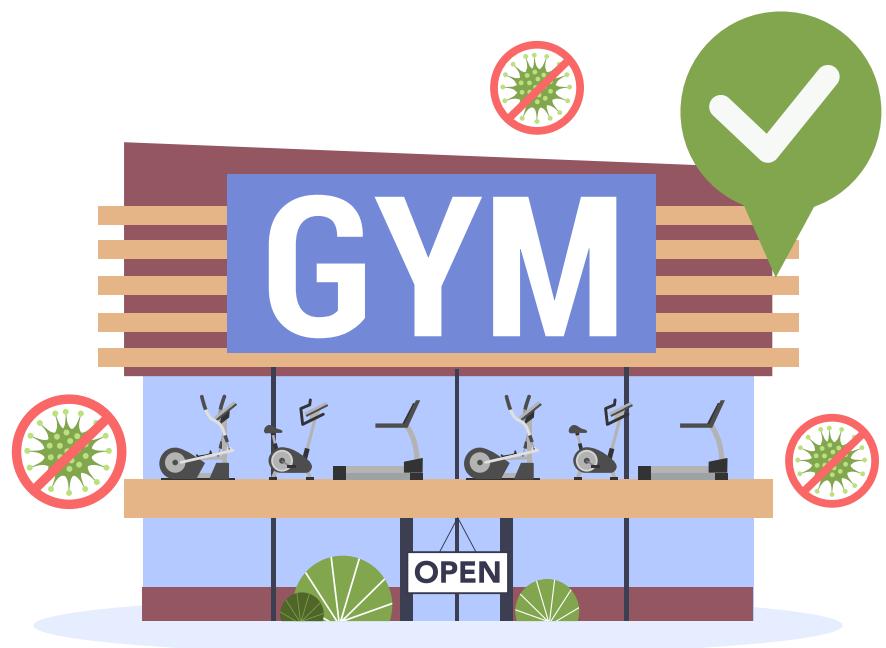
Fitness Australia members who complete the Checklist will have the opportunity to download and display 'COVID Safety Plan In Place' branded assets to show they are adhering to strict industry reopening standards.

The Checklist has been designed to help facilities implement and follow industry best practice procedures to safeguard the health and safety of members and employees.

Fitness Australia CEO Barrie Elvish said 'Ensuring gym users and the broader community have the confidence and comfort that the fitness industry is doing everything required to ensure a safe exercise environment is our top priority'. Emphasising the high standards that the industry is championing, he said 'Gyms create a COVID safe environment when strict measures are enforced to protect the health and safety of members and employees from COVID-19. While we are advising all our members to check with their state government requirements, we have gone one step further and developed a Checklist that goes beyond the standard considerations'.

The Fitness Australia COVID Safety Plan framework is available at fitness.org.au/covidsafetyplan and the COVID Safety Plan Checklist is available to members via the dashboard at fitness.org.au.

Source: Fitness Australia & Australian Fitness Network



THE FITNESS SHOW LOCKS IN 2021 DATES

After closely monitoring the evolving situation and following the Australian Government directive, the operators of The Fitness Show recently made the decision to reschedule the upcoming shows to 2021. The decision followed earlier postponements of the shows to later dates in 2020, a move which clearly became untenable. The Fitness Show Sydney will take place at the International Convention Centre Sydney from 30 April to 2 May 2021 and The Fitness Show Melbourne will take place at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre on 16 and 17 October 2021.

A statement from the Show's operators said 'Initially, we were optimistic that both Fitness Shows would run later this year, and our principle focus was on ensuring that any new dates for the events were ideally positioned to support our community. However, following consultation with you, our customers and stakeholders, we have concluded that the best option is to refocus for the future with the Sydney and Melbourne editions of The Fitness Show. We appreciate that this is disappointing news, however we have made this decision with everyone's health and safety as our number one priority. We can now look ahead to the 2021 editions of The Fitness Show with more certainty.'

Source: *The Fitness Show*



NEW HOST FOR BUSINESS PODCAST

Producer of The Fitness Business Podcast, Justin Tamsett, recently announced that the new host of the show will be US group fitness specialist Dori Nugent, who will be taking the helm from 1 July.

'We launched an international casting call for our new host and had 55 applicants who then went through a rigorous selection process. They were ranked by international judges on their applications. Applicants then had video interviews and finally the listeners had an opportunity to have their say. At every stage, applicants were ranked and Dori was consistently at the top of the rankings!'

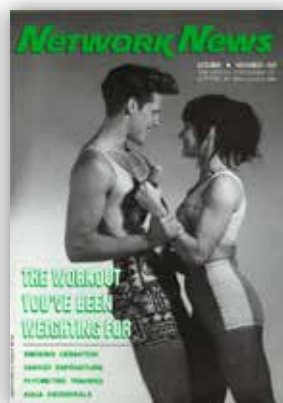
'Dori's enthusiasm for the industry after 22 years is infectious and we know people will feel inspired when they hear her with the guests. Her management and leadership experience will allow her to take guests to a deep level of implementation actions so listeners get even more value from the show.'

Outgoing host, Chantal Brodrick, who helped launch the podcast in 2015, said, 'I'm excited to pass the microphone to Dori. I was so impressed with the due diligence she went to in order to understand the role. The listeners will love her.'

Source: *The Fitness Business Podcast*

The way we were...

Looking back almost three decades to 1991, this handful of issues of Network magazine featured a number of articles illustrating the dominance of group fitness in the early '90s. One issue put Reebok Step under the microscope, looked at the art of music mapping and detailed the need for instructors to actively work on their vocal maintenance. Other issues looked at smoking cessation and plyometric training, stair climbing, instructor evaluation and Hia and Lia Funk (yet to be renamed HiLo).





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WHAT CAN FITNESS PROFESSIONALS CLAIM ON TAX THIS YEAR?

WITH COVID-19 UPDATES

The 2019/20 tax year will look very different for many of us, but we still need to lodge those returns. Taking into consideration COVID-19-related changes, small business tax specialist *Mark Chapman* gives us the lowdown for the fitness industry.

With the end of the financial year rapidly approaching, it won't be long before its time to lodge your income tax return for 2019/20. To get the best possible tax outcome, it's essential that you understand what you can – and what you can't – claim against your taxes, so here's a checklist of the deductions all workers in the fitness industry should be considering claiming this tax year.

Remember, this list isn't exhaustive and not all the deductions will apply to everyone. Similarly, you may be entitled to some deductions that aren't listed here. Make sure you get professional help from a tax agent like H&R Block to ensure that you're getting your return right.

Travel and meals

You may currently be housebound, but commuting and even air travel were still things many of us did earlier in the tax year – even though it may seem like it was years ago.

You can't usually claim the cost of the daily commute to and from work. The only exception to that rule is if you have to carry bulky equipment (such as inflatable exercise



balls, or other exercise equipment) to and from work because there is no secure place of storage for them at your workplace.

You can claim the cost of travelling between two workplaces, such as between two gyms or two personal training appointments. This includes public transport and taxi costs.

If you plan to use your own car for work purposes, you can either claim a set rate of 68 cents per kilometre for all work journeys, or you can claim the actual expenses incurred. If you choose the latter, you'll need to keep receipts for all costs (including

road tolls and parking fees) and also keep a logbook of all your journeys for a 12-week period.

Just because you're in the fitness or sporting industry, doesn't mean you can claim for the cost of attending sporting events. So, if you're a tennis coach, you can't claim for the cost of tickets to the Australian Open. If, however, you're coaching one of the players in the Open, you can claim the costs of attending.

When it comes to claiming meals, you can only do so if the expense is incurred due to your being away for work. The same applies to accommodation and incidental expenses.



Work-related clothing

You can claim a deduction for clothing that you're required to wear as a uniform to work that has the logo of the gym, facility or sporting club where you work on it.

Unfortunately, you can't claim a deduction for the cost of purchasing or cleaning a plain uniform or conventional clothing you wear to work, even if your employer tells you to wear them. So, general exercise clothing like tracksuits, shorts, tank tops, running shoes, socks, t-shirts and so on, can't be claimed.

There's good news, though, if you deliver outdoor training sessions, because you can claim the cost of sun protection gear such as sunglasses, hats and sunscreen. Slip, slop, slap, claim.





Buying fitness equipment

You can claim an immediate deduction for any work equipment that costs less than \$300. If the item cost more than \$300 and you purchased it between 1 July 2019 and 11 March 2020, you can write off the cost over the expected life of the asset. This could include weight sets, TRX, kettlebells, treadmills, exercise bikes, and other personal training equipment.

Remember, if you also use the equipment for your own training, you'll need to apportion the cost between work use and personal use. You can only claim the work-related element.

Instant asset write-off

If you own your own fitness business (rather than being employed by somebody else), you can write off items of equipment costing up to \$150,000 each immediately (rather than writing off the cost over the expected life of the asset) if the equipment was purchased between 12 March 2020 and 30 June 2020. Before that date the limit was \$30,000 for equipment purchased between 1 July 2019 and 11 March 2020.

As well as fitness equipment, you can use the same tax break to write-off any other capital assets used in your business, including:

- TV sets and other equipment to build the ambience in your fitness area
- Furniture for break-out or rest areas
- Office furniture and equipment, like desks, chairs and cabinets
- Technology such as laptops, desktop computers, phones and tablets
- Motor vehicles.

Work-related training

You can claim expenses for university or TAFE fees to the extent that the course relates to your current employment and you're not being reimbursed. For example, a personal trainer could claim for the cost of doing a Bachelor of Exercise Science. You can also claim associated costs such as text books, travel to the educational institution and stationery.

As a fitness professional, you need to undertake ongoing professional development to keep up to date with the latest practices in fitness and health, such as completing CEC courses or attending events like FILEX - even if they have been online virtual events this year - so it's good to note that these costs will also be deductible to the extent they are linked to your current job.

You cannot, however, claim for a pre-vocational course, such as a Certificate III in Fitness.



Other deductions

They may not be as significant in dollar terms as some of the items listed above, but make sure you claim the following:

- Any work-related subscriptions or membership fees (including your subscription with Australian Fitness Network)
- Magazines, journals, books, apps or websites which are related to your work
- The cost of using your personal mobile phone for work-related purposes
- Equipment hire.



Working from home

As a result of COVID-19, you have probably had to relocate your working activity from business premises to your home. If so, you can claim a rate of 80 cents per work hour during the crisis, so you will need to keep a record of the number of hours you have

worked from home as a result of COVID-19. This will apply from 1 March 2020 until at least 30 June 2020. The ATO may extend this period depending on when work patterns start to return to normal, but any such extensions will be applicable to the following tax year.

If you use the 80 cents per hour method, you can make no other claims in relation to working from home. So, items like mobile phone and internet usage are included in the 80-cent rate.

Gym memberships

Your job is to help everybody else improve their physical fitness so surely it makes sense that you can claim the cost of boosting your own fitness? Sadly not. The ATO takes a hard line on gym memberships, saying that they are only claimable where the person claiming them needs to have a level of fitness well above normal. Professional sportspeople are quoted by the ATO as an example of who can make a claim, while personal trainers and fitness instructors are specifically ruled out.



Remember to keep records!

Even if you've incurred any of the above expenses, the golden rule is that you can't make a claim unless you can prove you spent the money (and also that you weren't reimbursed by your employer). So, make sure you keep all relevant receipts, invoices, bank statements and credit card statements. If you're not sure if you can make a claim, keep the receipt anyway and discuss it with your tax agent. **N**

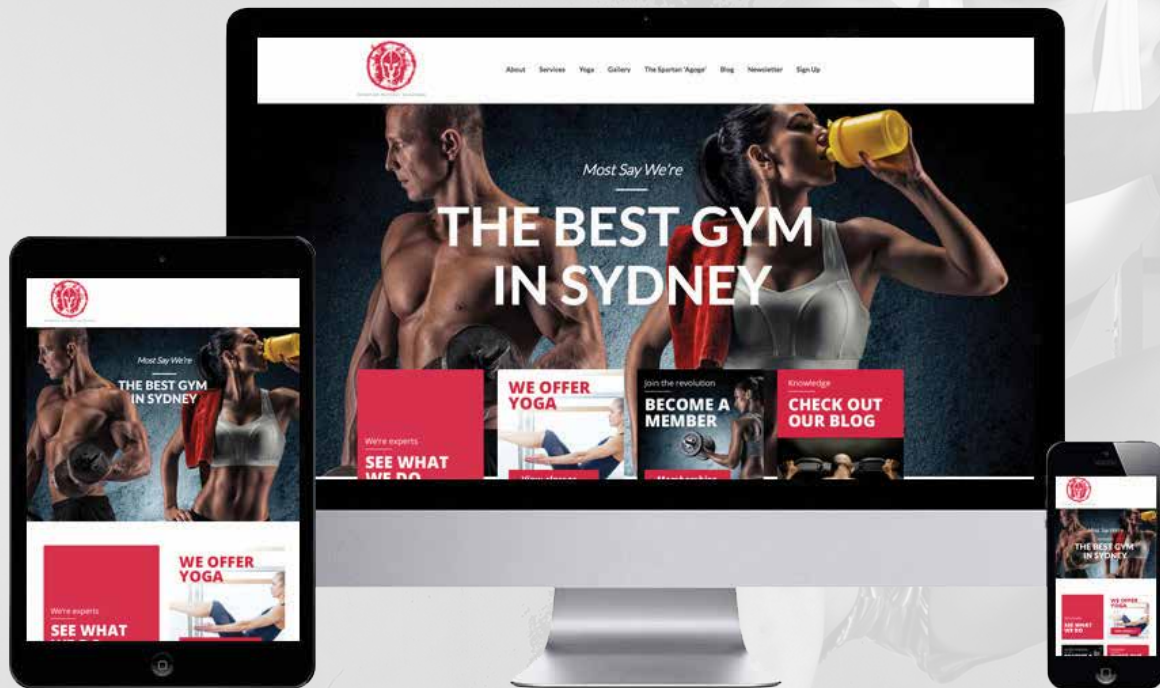


Mark Chapman

Mark is the Director of Tax Communications at H&R Block. A Chartered Accountant, CPA and Chartered Tax Adviser, he holds a Masters of Tax Law from the University of NSW. Mark also spent seven years as a Senior Director with the Australian Taxation Office.

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LOOKING AFTER PT'S MENTAL HEALTH DURING LOCKDOWN

As a species we are social beings and isolation is extremely detrimental to our mental health. PT and performance coach *Susy Natal* looks at four behaviours to help us stay on track.

The start of this decade has been a very difficult time. In Australia we had only just started breathing clear air after the bushfires before we were confronted with a global pandemic. COVID-19 has changed our lives in ways none of us have previously experienced, and could never have expected.

It's true what they say: we're all in this together. Everyone is impacted, albeit to varying degrees. So many people are without work and worried for the health of loved ones, particularly the elderly, as well as being concerned for their own wellbeing. While we are all affected in our own ways, it is becoming increasingly clear, as the weeks and months of 'business as unusual' wear

on, that we must address the issue of mental health.

As gyms closed, so did the doors to the 'happy place' for hundreds of thousands of Australians who don't just go to the gym because they need to work out, but because they love doing so. Social distancing has left many feeling that they have lost access to their support network. Many fitness professionals and clients alike are facing financial hardship and the very real concern of entire businesses going under.

Those who have successfully created, or already had, an online option for their clients may have been able to reduce the impact of losing the ability to train clients face-to-face. While they may be envied by

those not in such a position, they still face the daily challenge of supporting clients who are going through these same challenges, which is no easy task.

However you may have been personally impacted, you might want to consider the following points as you navigate the days, weeks and months ahead.

Routine

Routines are extremely comforting psychologically, but also create flow to our days. Having those guiding tracks kicked out from under your feet can create a great deal of overwhelm. It may seem counter-intuitive, but many people will find that,



THE QUICK READ

- Routines are psychologically comforting, so, when isolated at home, it can be helpful to create a daily schedule similar to the one you had when you were working in the gym or studio
- Just as you schedule work responsibilities, it is important to arrange regular times for calls, video calls and other forms of virtual interaction with family and loved ones
- There are a number of free and government-supported services available if you want to connect with a mental health professional
- If you are missing your usual sense of purpose, you may want to explore other ways in which you can contribute to the wellbeing of your local community
- To avoid emotional burnout, it is vital that you prioritise self-care.

despite having significantly more spare time than previously, they are struggling to achieve much. The ongoing feeling that you simply cannot get much done anymore can induce stress. This could be due, in part, to a lack of routine.

There is a limit to how many decisions we can make in a day before we start to experience fatigue, and making on-the-fly decisions about when to do each thing may be causing you a lot of mental strain.

Creating a schedule similar to the one you had when you were working in the gym or studio could be a saving grace here. Have a set time that you get up, eat meal times, do your workouts, check and send emails, make work-related calls, work on

programming and undertake any other responsibilities and duty of care to clients you currently have.

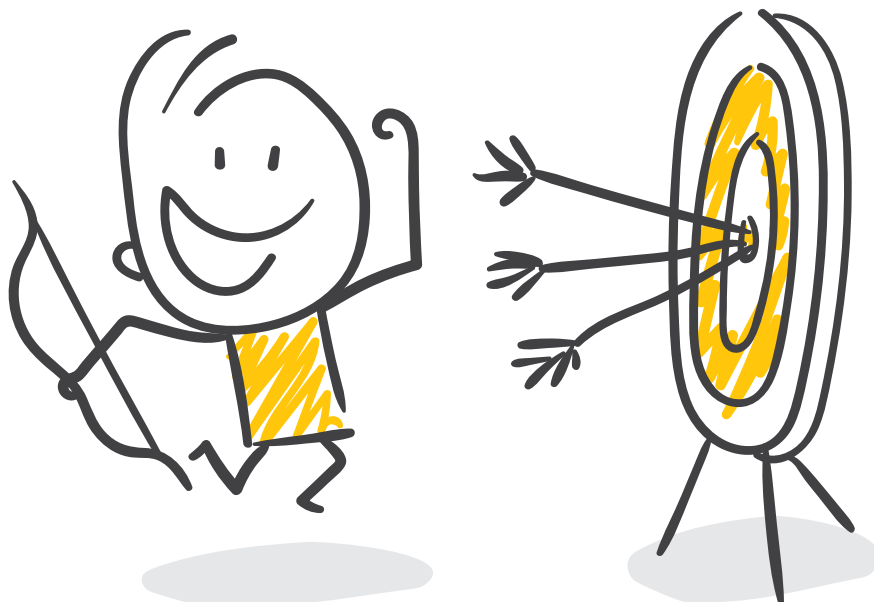
By doing this, you need only make the decision about when you dedicate time to these tasks once – when you set up your schedule. From that point on, allow it to tell you what is next in the flow of your day. This seemingly simple process can leave your mind fresher, so you can expend that mental energy on the actual tasks that you need to work on. Your schedule should not be limited to work, however: also schedule self-care activities such as meditation, time in the sun, baths or whatever helps you feel more relaxed and refreshed.



Connection

While we may not be able to go out and spend time with others in the way that we normally would, it is vital to find ways to remain connected to those who are important to you. While some people require more social interaction, and others less, as a species we are social beings and complete isolation is extremely detrimental to our mental health. Just as you might schedule your day-to-day work responsibilities (as per above), arrange regular times for calls, video calls and other forms of virtual interaction with your loved ones.

There may be instances where the connection you seek is with a mental health professional: such support is more important than ever and is still available to you. Many psychologists and other mental health professionals are currently offering socially distanced face-to-face appointments or virtual appointments for those who feel safer remaining at home. Importantly, virtual appointments may not fall under the Medicare mental health care plan, or your current financial situation might not lend itself to seeing a psychologist.





For fitness professionals, the purpose of getting up every day to help others is an enormous part of our identity, and something that has been stripped away.



These links provide more information about accessing free online and phone support.

lifeline.org.au / beyondblue.org.au / suicidecallbackservice.org.au / thesamaritans.org.au

Purpose

Everyone has days when they don't feel like working, studying or doing whatever life admin tasks are on their to-do lists. However tiresome our responsibilities might feel on such days, these are the things that bring our lives meaning. For fitness professionals, the purpose of getting up every day to help others is an enormous part of our identity, and something that has been stripped away. To have purpose taken away can greatly impact feelings of self-worth, with some rather serious knock-on effects to general mental health.

While for some it may be practical to move to an online business model and continue being of service to others in that way, for others



this is not a viable option. If this is you, and you miss the ability to help others, then it may be worth exploring other ways in which you can contribute in your wider community while you are unable to return to business as usual. This could mean helping older neighbours by doing their grocery runs for them, or organising phone calls with others who may be experiencing extreme isolation and need somebody to talk to. Many people have been dedicating their spare time to making fabric masks for members of their community who might otherwise not have access to them. If you are healthy, donating blood right now is more important than ever, as the need for it never stops, but supply is down with so many people staying home. You can find out more at donateblood.com.au

Boundaries

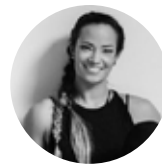
Emotional burnout is a very real state, and as people who work to support the wellbeing of others, it's something that we need to keep an eye out for in ourselves. While it is important to look after each other at a time when everybody is struggling, it is vital that you prioritise self-care to preserve your mental health.

In addition to the actions outlined above, this means setting healthy boundaries to ensure that you are not giving away so much of yourself that you are left feeling emotionally worn out. One way of doing this is to set specific times or protocols for making yourself available to your clients, so that you are not permanently on-call. You could make it clear that you are available to be contacted via phone between certain hours only, but that they may also contact you regarding non-urgent matters via email or messaging.

While we are well placed to assist clients in developing growth mindsets and help them focus on adopting positive behaviours, we must also know our limits: rather than stepping beyond our scope of practice we must recognise when to refer clients who are struggling most to mental health professionals. Attempting to solve the deeper mental challenges of others without possessing the qualifications and skills to do so will not do us or them any favours.

It is also important to set healthy boundaries around what and how much media you consume each day, particularly with regards news. While things are changing all the time, there is a limit to how beneficial it really is to find out every little detail. Beyond a certain point, it just becomes an onslaught of negative messages that can lead to feelings of fear, panic and overwhelm. Make clear decisions about how often and when you will consume this media, and prioritise the consumption of positive information and entertainment.

We are not just work machines – having some downtime, playtime, and regeneration time is going to be incredibly important to help us take the best possible care of our mental health and get through the next few months. **N**



Susy Natal

Susy is a Sydney-based performance coach, personal trainer, wellness writer and convention presenter. With a background in psychology and a focus on strength training for females, her integrated approach to training helps clients ranging from beginners to athletes achieve strength of body and mind.



MOVEMENT

FOR MENTAL HEALTH

A GUIDE TO TRAINING CLIENTS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

Learn how to coach clients that live with depression or anxiety and have been prescribed exercise by a mental health professional to help them on their journey to recovery.

This course has been designed to help fitness professionals confidently coach and guide clients to use exercise as a tool to reduce symptoms, reconnect to self, get to the heart of goal setting and move to feel better.

- Understand the signs, symptoms and different types of depression and anxiety
- Learn how to interpret referrals from, and create strong relationships with, mental health professionals
- Understand the benefits of exercise for clients living with depression and anxiety, to help them in their journey to recovery
- Learn how to identify risks, understand scope of practice and know when to refer a client
- Learn how to put together a creative program that empowers the client based on initial consultation

\$109

for Network Members

3

CECs/ CPDs

ENROL HERE!



ABOUT THE COURSE CREATOR



KYLIANNE TURTON

Kylianne is a counsellor, fitness industry educator and presenter, personal trainer, founder of The Movement Room and the Move for Mental Health Initiative. Her mission is to integrate different therapy strategies over movement and nature-based activities to overcome physical, emotional and mental challenges and boost mental wellbeing.



FUNCTIONAL AND UNSTABLE TRAINING REVISITED

With research findings contradicting initial assumptions, renowned strength coach *Tony Boutagy* questions the fitness industry's enthusiastic acceptance of functional training for strength development before it underwent scientific scrutiny.



unctional and unstable training became immensely popular in the fitness industry around the mid 1990's, due in large part to the work of Paul Chek. At its core, functional training proposes that the body knows movement and not muscles. The majority of gym equipment at that time was designed to train muscles in a manner in which, the proponents of functional training believed, they were never designed to work. To exercise effectively, so the argument goes, movements must mimic actions and activities encountered in everyday life.

Like most things in life, the enthusiastic acceptance in the fitness industry of functional training preceded scientific inquiry into the topic to confirm or refute the many claims made by those endorsing it. 'The earth is round; we should squat on a ball' and 'When in life do you lie on your stomach and pull your feet towards your butt? You don't, so don't do leg curls'. These were just some of the many early popular arguments that were made for abandoning traditional strength training and adopting a functional approach instead. It would be fair to say that the initial viewpoint was that functional training is a better way to exercise than traditional, stable methods and that destabilising strength exercises or mimicking movements from everyday life would lead to superior outcomes in functional strength gains and neuromuscular activation.

Questioning functional and unstable training

Prior to substantial research being conducted, two articles appeared in 2002 that questioned some of the central tenets of unstable and functional training. The first was written by me and published in this magazine¹, the second was written by the late Mel Siff² and was published several months later. We both argued that the term functional training was being largely confused with sports specific training, which few question the value of in a periodised program. The issue we raised was the universal recommendation of functional exercises to the exclusion of traditional strength exercises and the claim that they would lead to superior functional strength gains than traditional movements.

Periodisation experts dating back to the 1970's proposed that a training cycle should incorporate phases that emphasised the development of general motor capacities and strength (the GPP: General Physical Preparedness) and those that transform those abilities into sports specific qualities (the SPP: Specific Physical Preparedness). In other words, generalised theories of training that have formed the basis of our training knowledge encourage coaches to use both traditional strength training exercises and those that are sports specific – or in our language – functional (and not one or the other).

Defining function

In an attempt to clarify positions, defining functional and unstable training becomes critical, so arguments for and against functional or unstable training are fairly levelled. Santana notes that the term functional training is most commonly used for any training that is not bodybuilding³. Instability training can involve unstable conditions with body mass or external loads (kettlebells, dumbbells, barbells) as resistance. Instability can be induced with unstable foot pads, Swiss or BOSU balls. Reducing the base of support or performing unilateral exercises will also provide a challenge to the body's equilibrium. Another common way to apply instability is offloading a barbell, using bands or chains or attaching swinging bands with kettlebells to the ends of a barbell (the chaos method).

Proponents of functional exercise and unstable devices, such as Paul Chek, suggest that the higher instability demands may stress the neuromuscular system to a greater extent than traditional strength training. The rationale is that destabilising training environments may enhance neuromuscular adaptations and training specificity, while



THE QUICK READ

- The enthusiastic adoption of functional training by the fitness industry preceded scientific research into its efficacy
- Periodisation experts have long encouraged coaches to train athletes using both traditional strength training exercises and sports specific/functional ones
- The rationale behind unstable training is that destabilising training environments may enhance neuromuscular adaptations and training specificity, while providing a more varied and effective training stimulus
- 'Functional' training may be seen to apply to exercises that improve the function of the activity or to the function of muscle/capacity of the system it targets
- Studies showing the ability of machine resistance training (considered non-functional) to dramatically improve function, as well as evidence that instability training can result in decreased force and power output, highlight the problem of elevating functional and unstable training above traditional training methods.

providing a more varied and effective training stimulus.

Research examining the muscular activation levels during stable and unstable exercises reveals that no single exercise can challenge and develop all the motor aspects required for performance, muscle growth or health. Acknowledging this point allows us to examine each exercise choice and establish what that particular movement does well and when it should be used in a long-term training plan. To know this, the literature examining direct comparisons between stable and unstable training, functional and non-functional exercises must be explored.

In the past two decades, several well conducted studies have been published on unstable training, most notably by the Canadian David Behm. Professor Behm has been one of the most prolific researchers examining the difference between functional and traditional strength training on several parameters of muscular performance.

By way of definitions, function in science refers to the way in which an organism operates⁴. Functional training, then, refers to training methods or exercises that improves the way we operate in the world. The way we operate is specific to the environment in which we want to function. These might include functioning in a power or speed-based sport, a prolonged endurance endeavour, being self-sufficient in old age, returning to walking and running after a knee injury or improving glucose control in type 2 diabetes. The term functional



training is always context-dependent and merely deciding that an exercise is functional if you carry your centre of mass over your base of support, or you destabilise the movement, is an extraordinarily unhelpful and simplistic way of looking at exercise selections.

Practice the actual activity

Siff was one of the first to note that there is no such entity as a truly functional exercise, except for the actual sporting or daily movement that we are trying to enhance by training. Siff also argued that many of the tools (exercises, equipment and accessories) used in current functional training have long been employed in rehabilitation and conditioning programs and that, therefore, little is actually new.

Other experts, since Siff, have stated that the optimal method to promote increases in balance, proprioception and spinal stability for any given sport is to practice the skill itself on the same surface on which the skill is performed in competition. In his classic paper on power, Professor Schmidtbleicher stated that intermuscular coordination can only be developed by practising the movement for which coordination is sought⁵.

Function in action and in muscle

In line with the principle of training specificity, functional training or SPP exercises should reflect movement velocity, contraction types (i.e. concentric, eccentric, or isometric), and intensities (strength vs. endurance needs), joint angles, balance challenges, range of motion, and other applicable capacities. Any exercise can be categorised as functional if it develops strength, power, balance, motor coordination, endurance, or improves the ability of individuals to execute activities of daily living (ADLs), whether they be simpler tasks or more complex athletic manoeuvres.

Another way I have looked at the classification of functional is that any exercise can be deemed functional if it improves the function of muscle or the capacity of the system it targets. In support of this viewpoint are the majority of the early studies examining the effects of traditional strength training on activities of daily living in the elderly population. These studies have convincingly showed that machine-based resistance training dramatically improved strength, power, balance and muscle mass which transferred to the ability to carry bags, prevent falls, safely climb stairs and rise from a seated position. In other words, machine resistance training, which is by any definition non-functional, improved functional capacity in this population.

Destabilising – and decreasing

With respect to destabilising strength exercises, unstable exercise-based programs have been shown to decrease force and power output by around 30% compared with comparable traditional strength training⁶. This negative aspect makes unstable training more suitable for rehabilitation, as the instability-induced decrease in strength and power output provides a healthy stress on a recovering joint or muscle. For example, Cholewicki and McGill showed that the multifidus strength can be improved with training loads as low as 30 to 40% of maximal voluntary contraction⁷. These lower force outputs are suitable for back rehabilitation, while the increased trunk and limb muscle activation provide greater stabilisation. Behm and Colado reported a 47% increase in trunk stabiliser muscle activation with unstable resistance training⁸.

Behm has also conducted several studies on beginners to resistance training and showed similar gains in strength and muscle mass between stable and unstable exercises. These findings, similar to exercises used in rehabilitation, support the idea that beginners can develop appreciable muscle and strength at much lower levels



of muscle activation than well-trained individuals⁹. It appears that this is only effective during the early stages of training¹⁰, as losses in strength and power have been repeatedly reported when experienced lifters use unstable exercises, as there is a shift from prime mover activation to favour core and stabiliser muscle recruitment¹¹.

Professor Behm has also shown that programs comparing unstable training with traditional stable strength training did not provide balance advantages, irrespective of the age group considered. This is most likely due to the fact that traditional strength training provides moderate levels of instability, owing to the placement and movement of bars or dumbbells on the shoulders, overhead or in front of the body. Free weights place a disruptive force outside the centre of mass, challenging the neuromuscular system to maintain balance and equilibrium. Although the challenges to postural stability are normally much greater during unstable exercises, Behm demonstrated that this greater degree of balance challenge does not lead to greater systematic balance improvements¹². Other studies¹³ that have directly compared stable with unstable training on measures of strength and muscle activation generally conclude that there is 'little support for training with a lighter load using unstable loads or unstable surfaces.'

Metabolic impact

Similar findings have been replicated with respect to metabolic health. The ability to control glucose levels in the blood, lower blood pressure or improve other cardiovascular parameters is independent of the type of resistance training performed. Put another way, our blood glucose does not know if the muscle contraction came from leg presses (machine), squats (free weights) or squatting on an unstable surface (functional training). To metabolism, muscle contraction is muscle contraction.

An unstable argument for strength development

In the mid 1990's I had been heavily influenced by Paul Chek and his reasonings for adopting a functional approach to exercise selection. I had used many of these unstable exercises with clients, with varying degrees of success. My viewpoints began to change when my continuing education took me to Arizona at the beginning of the new millennium to study under the late renowned strength coach Charles Poliquin. He challenged the inclusion of a single-arm dumbbell press

and a single-leg Romanian deadlift in the many programs I had to write for him. His argument was simple: if you can bench press 100kg with two hands, you cannot dumbbell press close to half of that without flipping off the bench, so the exercise has 'limited value'¹⁴ for strength development.

Poliquin highlights the majority view of that time – in many instances of unstable training, the load able to be lifted is dramatically reduced such that the prime movers are not sufficiently overloaded. This has obvious implications if one has the training goal of strength, power and hypertrophy – as muscle motor unit (MU) recruitment is paramount for a training effect.

Numerous studies published over the years have supported this general claim. Research has shown that although neuromuscular activity remains similar between stable and unstable training, the MU recruitment of the prime movers is reduced and shifted towards the core and peripheral muscles (normally those muscle groups in contact with the stable surface, such as the floor).

Indeed, an early study by Professor Stuart McGill and colleagues showed that a standing single-arm cable chest press produced 65% less force production than a lying bench press¹⁵. Standing pressing exercises have been shown to be limited to 40% of the individual's bodyweight, and that is why strength coaches of elite shot putters, for example, use bench pressing exercises to develop upper body pushing strength, often in excess of 240kg. Furthermore, the study found that the bench press highly recruited the pectoral and deltoid muscles – much more so than the core. The standing single-arm press had internal oblique and latissimus dorsi activity levels similar to the pectorals and deltoids in the bench press. The researchers found that the limiting factor for the unstable exercise was maintaining whole-body stability together with joint stability. If the goal was upper body strength or muscle mass development of the chest and deltoids, clearly, the bench press derivatives would be the primary choice. If joint and muscle group stability or whole-body equilibrium was the goal, the destabilising traditional exercises would provide the advantage.

No advantage for strength or power

David Behm and colleagues recently conducted a meta-analysis on unstable training and reported that there was no advantage of unstable training for the development of maximal strength or power¹⁶. Behm concludes that 'the application of unstable training compared with traditional strength training has limited additional effects on measures of muscle strength, power and balance in healthy adolescents and young adults. Therefore, the use of unstable as compared with



At its core, functional training proposes that the body knows movement and not muscles



stable surfaces during strength training is only partially recommended'. This word 'partial', as a coach, is important. In certain instances, where you desire lower joint forces (rehabilitation) or higher stability or core activation (correcting imbalances or the GPP), then unstable exercise choices would be advisable.

This has a message to both sides in the strength industry. To those who feel that traditional strength exercises such as squats, deadlifts, presses and pulls are all that is needed to challenge all motor abilities, including core muscles and joint and muscle stabilizers, the data strongly argues against this viewpoint.

For those who feel that strength program design should be only functional, with all machines replaced by unstable, unilateral and functional derivatives, then the literature suggests that maximal strength, power and muscle hypertrophy will be compromised in favour of stabilising muscle groups.

Lessons for exercise selection

What conclusions can we draw on exercise selection from studies investigating muscle recruitment levels across various stable and unstable tasks? Here are my practical take-home messages for the strength coach and trainer:





- No one exercise can challenge both prime movers, stabilisers and core muscles equally.
- No one movement – with the exception of the actual sporting activity or the ‘activity of daily living’ – can replicate the unique demands of sports, so we can use the terms ‘functional’ or ‘sports specific’ with the big proviso that they are closer in some of the physical demands than others. I have sympathy to the view that functional training is a meaningless descriptor in practice.
- There is a continuum with which we should view strength exercises, and the precise choice depends on the training goals of that particular phase of training.
- As a rule, the more stable the exercise, the higher the prime mover muscle recruitment is, with stabiliser, core and peripheral activity being reduced. The more unstable an exercise becomes, the greater the neutral drive to the stabilising, core and peripheral muscles, typically those that are in contact with the ground.
- Exercise can be periodised in two primary ways: the first, in a classical manner commencing with exercises that demand higher stability levels and therefore a lower training load. As the programs progress, more stable and traditional exercise choices would be incorporated.

The second approach, proposed by the late Yuri Verkhovanski and known as conjugate sequencing, would be to perform both stable and unstable exercises within one session. The sequencing of stable to unstable, or vice versa, would be made on the training goal. This utilises the concept that states we are only as strong as our weakest link¹⁷, with the advice to identify and strengthen ‘energy leaks’. Exercises must be viewed on a continuum – from highly unstable to highly stable – with each offering unique stressors. A wise coach or trainer will periodise all exercise types in the long-term development of their client and athlete. **N**

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Tony Boutagy PhD

Tony is a strength coach and personal trainer who has been providing educational resources in the fitness industry for over two decades. He holds a PhD in sports science and is accredited with ESSA as an exercise physiologist.



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OPTIMISING IMMUNITY

BUILDING DEFENCE AGAINST SICKNESS

Nutritionist *Zoe Dent* looks at how you can bolster your body's natural defence against illness to reduce your chances of getting sick.

Your immune system is your body's natural defence against illness – so it should be an ongoing goal to keep it as strong as possible. During these times, more and more people who have never previously spared it much thought will be realising the importance of improving their health. The keys to a balanced immune system and better overall health are optimising your diet, movement and sleep, while reducing stress.

Diet and gut health

When it comes to diet, a low-processed, antioxidant-rich whole foods diet can support the body's ability to repair itself and ensure optimal gut health.

Over 70% of the body's immune cells are located in the gut walls, which explains why good gut health is key to robust immunity. This can be achieved by consuming a

variety of pre and probiotics, and soluble and insoluble fibre, while avoiding toxins, pharmaceuticals and chemicals which can degrade our gut health.

Specific probiotic strains that have been studied in the prevention of colds and viruses have been shown to shorten the duration and severity of illness through their impact on the gut. A balanced microbiome provides the building blocks for our immune system and plays a regulatory role keeping it in check.

We also have immune cells located in the



THE QUICK READ

- The keys to a balanced immune system and better overall health are optimising your diet, movement and sleep, while reducing stress
- Movement can increase the circulation of white blood cells which can kill pathogens (germs) and can also positively affect mental health and sleep
- When we're stressed, the immune system becomes weaker and makes us more susceptible to infection
- When it comes to diet, a low-processed, antioxidant-rich whole foods diet can support the body's ability to repair itself and ensure optimal gut health.

lining of our digestive tract called GALT – gut associated lymphatic tissue. This is often referred to as ‘the immune system’s brain’. GALT is the largest area of lymphatic tissue (immune tissue) in our body, and helps control our immune response throughout the entire body, producing many of our immune cells. As 90% of pathogens enter the body via the gastrointestinal tract, it makes sense that the majority of our immune system is located there.

Supporting immune health requires that we look after the health of this immune barrier, and thus gut boosting foods such as Amazonia Raw Collagen Glow Protein, or antioxidant-rich foods such as berries, dark chocolate, artichoke, coffee, green tea, prunes, tomatoes, green leafy vegetables, super food Acai products and oily fish are all beneficial.

Other immune boosting nutrients

- **Vitamin A** is immune boosting and anti-infective, particularly against viruses. It helps strengthen mucous membranes (found in the nose, mouth, ears and respiratory tract) where nasty bugs often lurk. You can get more vitamin A through carrots, sweet potato, dried apricots, mango and kale.
- **Vitamin D**, also known as the sunshine vitamin, has been shown to inhibit respiratory inflammation. Deficiency is common in the winter months, so try to get outdoors on the sunny days. Cod liver oil contains both Vitamin A and D, as well as Omega 3, so is a great supplement to take regularly during winter.
- **Essential fatty acids** (EFAs) cannot be made by the body and must be obtained in the diet. Your cells are made up of fats and play an important role in immune regulation and inflammation and can keep the mucous membranes well lubricated. You can get EFAs from oily fish, soaked chia seeds, nuts, flaxseed and eggs.
- **Zinc** functions in the body as a co-factor for many immune-dependent responses, and is involved in over 100 enzymatic reactions in the body. Good animal-based sources of zinc include beef, lamb, fish and eggs, while plant-based sources include pepitas, sesame seeds and oats.
- **Herbal medicine.** Echinacea, elderberry, andrographis and schisandra are my favourite immune boosting herbs. Medicinal mushrooms, such as shiitake, reishi and cordyceps can also be effective at boosting immunity, though it is important to visit your local herbalist and choose practitioner-quality brands to ensure you are taking a therapeutic dosage that is right for you.
- **Fire Cider Master Tonic.** Taken as a daily shot, the centuries old powerhouse

mixture made by fermenting garlic, onion, turmeric, ginger and horseradish, is a powerful immune boosting mix, due to these anti-microbial, decongestant and circulatory boosting herbs and spices. *To make your own Fire Cider, see the Info Handout on the following page.*



Movement and sleep

As a fitness professional you, hopefully, have the movement part of the balanced health equation figured out. We know that movement can increase the circulation of white blood cells which can be mobilised to kill pathogens. Exercise also has a positive effect on both mental health and sleep – the latter of which is an often-overlooked key to enhancing immunity.

Research has shown that optimal sleep and a balanced circadian system improve the production of anti-inflammatory cytokines and killer cells, optimising the body’s ability to fight off infections. Much of today’s wearable tech can be used to not only track how long you slumber, but also monitor your sleep quality. This data can enable you to inform yourself about what your individual sleep barriers may be – from diet and alcohol, to light, heat and noise levels.

Stress and vagal tone

When we’re stressed, the immune system’s ability to fight off antigens is reduced so that we are more susceptible to infections. The stress hormone cortisol can suppress the effectiveness of the immune system, and impact our melatonin levels, further impacting our sleep cycle.

Prioritising rest, connecting to nature, meditation, listening to relaxing music and human connection can all work to reset our adrenal system. Your vagus nerve also plays a key part in helping to calm the body after a stressful situation. In fact, one of the vagus nerve’s jobs is to reset the immune system and switch off production of pro-inflammatory cytokines that fuel inflammation.

Not all vagus nerves are the same, however. Some people have stronger vagus activity, which means their bodies can relax faster after a stressor. Low vagal tone means this regulation is less effective and inflammation can become excessive. Simple hacks to stimulate vagal tone include cold water therapy, breath work and even gargling.

More people will be focusing on improving their health in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. By providing them with information and assistance in these areas we can help them enhance their natural defences against future viral infection. **N**



Zoe Dent, BHSc

A prominent nutritionist, Zoe is an ambassador for leading health foods brand Amazonia. With a holistic approach to health and wellbeing, she is passionate about wellness education. Practicing a form of restorative medicine, she combines the traditional use of medicinal plants with modern health science.



INFORMATION HANDOUT

MAKE YOUR OWN IMMUNITY BOOSTING FIRE CIDER MASTER TONIC

A daily dose of an ancient fermented tonic can give your immune system a shot in the arm, writes nutritionist *Zoe Dent*.

Isolation has turned us all into home bakers, so why not take it a step further and try your hand at making your own Fire Cider?

Taken as a daily shot, this centuries old powerhouse mixture – made by fermenting garlic, onion, turmeric, ginger and horseradish – is a potent immune boosting mix, due to its anti-microbial, decongestant and circulatory-boosting ingredients.

Makes approx 1 litre

Ingredients

Horseradish root
Ginger, large knob
Chillies, 2-3
Garlic, 1 head
Turmeric root, 1-2 pieces
Cloves, 5-10
Cinnamon stick, 1-2
Peppercorns, 1 dessert spoon
Lemongrass, 1 piece
Raw unfiltered honey, 1 tablespoon
Raw Apple Cider Vinegar (live, unfiltered, unbleached and non-distilled with the 'mother of vinegar' - strands of proteins, enzymes, and friendly bacteria - in it)
Amazonia Raw Vitamin C, 2 tablespoons

Method

1. Chop or coarsely grate all the ingredients and mix together. A food processor or highspeed blender makes this step very easy

– but be careful not to over-process as you want the ingredients chopped and not liquidised! Rubber gloves are handy here to avoid the turmeric stains.

2. Fill a jar to 3/4 full with the chopped/grated ingredients, then top up with Apple Cider Vinegar to 2-4cm below the rim, depending on the size of your batch.
3. Close firmly and shake to get rid of air bubbles, then top up if required with more Apple Cider Vinegar and close firmly.
5. Ferment on the kitchen bench in a cool, dark corner out of direct sunlight for two weeks. Wrap in a tea towel, if necessary, to keep sunlight out.
6. Stir occasionally or give the bottle a shake when you pass it on the kitchen bench.
7. Strain after 14 days, though it can be left up to 28 days. Strain through a coffee filter or through cotton to remove sediment. After straining, sediment will continue to sink to the bottom, which is quite normal.
8. Bottle, label/date and pop into the fridge.
9. Take a daily immune boost shot. **N**



Zoe Dent, BHSc

Zoe is a nutritionist and an ambassador for leading health foods brand Amazonia. With a holistic approach to health and wellbeing, she is passionate about wellness education. Practicing a form of restorative medicine, she combines the traditional use of medicinal plants with modern health science.





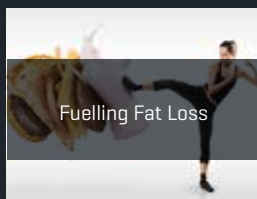
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GETTING YOUR PT BUSINESS ONLINE TO SURVIVE THE COVID ECONOMY

Taking your PT business online may help reduce your losses, diversify your offering and add a degree of protection against future challenges, writes online health and fitness coach *Scott Gooding*.

Over the past few months the world has turned upside down, with the new coronavirus plunging many countries and industries into various levels of lockdown. The health, fitness and wellbeing industries have been severely impacted by the government-mandated closure of gyms. I have started seven businesses within the industry during the last 20 years, including a holistic online health program based on fitness, nutrition and mindfulness (Reconditioned.Me), so I've experienced my fair share of ups and downs. Coronavirus could have really inhibited the business, had it not been for the fact that it was already online to begin with.

Reconditioned.Me was launched online in 2018, and if we fast forward two years, that digital focus has really helped the business mitigate the impact of the current challenge. In fact, when the restrictions were put in place, I immediately noticed a spike in demand for our services, as people sought ways to stay fit and healthy online, at home.

Many personal trainers and industry professionals are worried about their ability to survive the current climate for an extended period of time without access to the gyms and other facilities they

rely on to run their businesses. You may well be among them. I completely understand this fear, and it is not unwarranted: but if you take action to change the way you operate your PT business, you may be able to reduce your losses, diversify your offering and add a degree of protection against future challenges. Consider this key point: it's never too late to get your business online. I recently made the decision to bring forward the launch of another business, The Good Meals, by six months, and we managed to get it up and running online, in next-to-no-time.

The closure of gyms in Australia hasn't stopped people fulfilling their fitness needs, it's just changed how they're doing so. If you're trying to get your personal training or fitness business online in the wake of COVID-19, here are a few things to consider.

Create or refine an online presence

When getting my businesses online, I first had to register a domain – the online identity of a business and the url customers use to find you. Then, it was time to build a website to act as the hub for our online presence. While I'm an expert in my industry, I'm definitely not an expert in web development. Don't worry if you aren't either, it's actually very straightforward: we got our website together using GoDaddy tools and support pretty quickly and cost-effectively. While it requires commitment in the short-term, you don't have to be a digital wizard and your business could reap the rewards in the longer-term.

My websites contain everything our clients need to know about what we offer, including photos, videos, a blog page, contact details, customer testimonials, links to our social media pages and a way for people to sign-up and pay online. When you can't train people in the gym, you can use your website to deliver your services online, whether that's virtual fitness classes, one-on-one training or healthy meal plans. If you already have a website, but don't utilise it enough, now might be a great opportunity to spend some time refining it by updating contact information, posting a teaser video to an online class, training session or course, or adding information about how people can access your services during the current conditions.

Digital marketing

I realised pretty early on that great digital marketing skills can have a real impact on your business' success. Providing a great service and having an eye-catching website is one thing, but you need to find out where your customers are and how to put your website in front of them. Look online for creative, cost-effective ways to put your service in front of potential clients when your budget is tighter than usual. You don't have to be a master marketer, you can start off by putting a small budget towards promoting your site through social media or offering existing clients a discounted consultation or new meal planner, for example, if they refer a friend. Try a few things, determine what does and doesn't work for your business, and then focus your efforts on those that have generated leads and, hopefully, paying business.



You don't have to be a digital wizard and your business could reap the rewards in the longer-term



Be responsive and adaptable

It's more important than ever to be responsive and adaptable. The current situation is changing by the day, and even by the hour. What worked for your business last month might not do so now. Similarly, what works today may not have the same effect next month. It's vital, therefore, to stay up-to-date with any changes to restrictions in your state, to understand exactly how they might affect what you're doing, and to promptly communicate the changes to your service offerings with your clients. Fitness industry registration provider, Fitness Australia, is keeping the industry abreast of changes to restrictions at fitness.org.au.

Your clients are the most important part of your business, and your ability to succeed over the coming months may well depend on your ability to provide an efficient, friendly and genuinely useful service to them. It might be worth regularly seeking feedback through your website or via social media and asking how you can improve and adapt your service to suit their needs. This includes not only what your online service looks like, but also how much you charge for it. This is a learning curve for everyone, and nobody expects things to be perfect immediately. If you can be adaptable and responsive to their needs, however, you might find that they become, or remain, regular clients.

While the current climate is very concerning, it presents an opportunity to identify ways your business can evolve by increasing your online services. You might also decide that, even when things return to some form of 'normal', an online presence could remain an important part of your business strategy. By diversifying my services from face-to-face only and launching both Reconditioned.Me and The Good Meals online services, my time and reach are no longer limited only to those within my local community – or to those I am able to be in the same room with. **N**



Scott Gooding

Scott is an Australian chef, health coach, author and thought leader – encouraging and inspiring people to cook real food at home for themselves and their loved ones. Scott has launched seven businesses, including Reconditioned.Me and The Good Meals.





EARN YOUR **FREE** CEC OR CPD!

Every issue of *Network* magazine includes articles linked to a 1-CEC or CPD [NZ] course that is **FREE** to Network Members.

This quarter, the course is based on the following features:

- ▶ What can fitness professionals claim on tax this year? [11]
- ▶ Functional and unstable training revisited [18]
- ▶ Optimising immunity: Building defence against sickness [24]
- ▶ Returning to work as a PT after time away [37]
- ▶ Research Review: Efficacy of home-based suspension training [45]

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RISING TO THE CHALLENGE OF DELIVERING VIRTUAL FACE-TO-FACE INDUSTRY EDUCATION



CEO of Australian Institute of Fitness and Australian Fitness Network, *Steve Pettit*, recently provided some insights to Ian Gray from GYYMI, the PA app for PTs, on how COVID-19 had affected the operations of the country's largest provider of fitness industry qualifications.

What has been the biggest area the AIF has had to adapt to due to COVID-19?

The biggest area in which the AIF has had to adapt would be with the temporary halt to our popular face-to-face teaching and the subsequent launch of our Master Trainer Online Plus+ Program™. Although challenging, we were able to quickly innovate and launch a cutting-edge solution to cater for students who prefer a face-to-face learning environment, yet through virtual means. The other major change was moving to a work from home model: our team has been outstanding at embracing the move and it's given us the opportunity to consider what the best combination of working from home vs on campus will be when restrictions ease.

What has been the biggest impact of COVID-19 on AIF and your customers?

When the traditional fitness industry was switched off overnight that obviously had a significant impact on the AIF. We pride ourselves on providing qualifications that lead to careers in fitness. When it was unknown what a future in fitness would look like, or when gyms and fitness studios would reopen, it created some uncertainty in the

market. With the recent announcements that the fitness industry is once again open we have seen an increase in the number of students wanting to enter the industry as there are going to be a lot of opportunities. From a customer perspective, our face-to-face students quickly needed to adapt to an online mode of learning and we were very appreciative of their understanding and support.

There is a lot of talk in the business community surrounding the need for businesses to innovate to stay alive and remain relevant. How have you had to change the way you operate both in the short and long term?

Despite the COVID-19 period being a very difficult one, there will be a lot of learning and opportunities created. I don't think a business's need to innovate is anything new, the need has simply been intensified by recent events. We continue to look at ways of improving our student and team experience through the use of integrated systems that are underpinned by seamless integration. As long as businesses have their customers at the centre of their decision making, they will remain relevant and better prepared to innovate in the right direction.

Have you seen any positives that have come out of this shut down period for your business and indeed the industry itself?

For the AIF we have been able to swing to a full online business. It has given us the opportunity to reassess our strategy and ensure we are offering a balanced mix of online and face-to-face education. We were very happy to run the 'Upskill During Downtime' campaign through the AIF and Network, with the goal of positively impacting 10,000 fitness professionals by offering free education. It was a nice



There will be two groups of PTs: those that can't wait for the doors of their gyms to reopen, and those that have identified an alternate way of conducting sessions to service their clients.



way to give back to our industry and the passionate professionals within it. We have also had the ability to engage our expert coaches on some special projects with less on-campus delivery, and their input is creating some exciting developments in our key programs. For the fitness industry, it has forced a number of providers to look at complementary technology solutions to support their members: never before has there been such a high uptake of virtual fitness supported by a new wave of training options.

What major changes do you see happening with regards to the gym/trainer relationship, as gyms reopen their doors?

There will be two groups of PTs: those that can't wait for the doors of their gyms to reopen, and those that have identified an alternate way of conducting sessions to service their clients. A number of our partners are offering some great re-entry incentives to their PT teams to give them the opportunity to reestablish their client base within gyms and fitness studios. PTs have always been a really important group as they assist member retention through offering expert advice. It will be interesting to see what creative ways PT's and their gyms can come back together as they assist their members and clients to achieve their health and fitness goals.

Do you see any changes to the traditional pricing and membership models in which gyms and fitness studios have survived on up and until now?

Yes, however this isn't different to any other period. The fitness industry and gyms/fitness studios within it have remained viable through evolving their businesses to remain contemporary in the prevailing market conditions. As the fitness industry gets back to work, new trends will materialise, the use

of physical facilities versus virtual fitness will continue to adjust, and technology will continue to provide consumers with additional options. Gyms and fitness studios that have a balanced approach between onsite workouts and virtual workouts will be best placed to find the right mix for their members. What a member is prepared to pay will simply be an outcome of the value of the service offered.

At GYYMI we have developed an app that offers a new model of gym rental by the hour, with no lock-in contracts, to trainers and their clients. Do you think the industry is ready to adopt such a flexible model?

I believe the fitness industry is ready for innovation, as evidenced by some great technology that is complementing our traditional services. The importance of flexibility has been a huge theme during COVID-19 restrictions, and gyms and trainers have had to be flexible and adapt to the changing environment.

Do you think there is a chance that qualified trainers who have previously left the industry may be enticed back (even on a part-time basis) if they have a more flexible 'pay-by-the-hour' gym rental model?

As the fitness industry has evolved, we have seen a shift from fitness complementing a career, to fitness becoming a career. If a PT was looking for a more flexible approach to work with a gym, a 'pay as you go' type model could be appealing. This needs to be considered in the context of risk, ensuring that the gym or studio, as well as the PT and client, are covered from an insurance perspective.

What do you think the fitness industry will look like upon reopening and when do you believe it will get back to 'normal'?

It will never look the same as it did pre COVID-19. The phased reopening will test the fitness industry as costs are turned back on and members are phased back into gyms and fitness studios. More people than ever will be willing to invest in personal trainers with more trainers reaching more people in more contemporary ways. We have been reminded of how vital our health and wellbeing is, so I actually think the fitness industry will go from strength to strength.

The Australian Institute of Fitness (RTO ID: 121508) has delivered its Master Trainer Online Program™ for many years, aimed at those who want to study remotely and at their own pace. The Master Trainer Online Plus Program™, introduced in 2020, replicates the face-to-face classroom experience, delivering livestreamed lessons as well as group, student and coach interaction. [fitness.edu.au](https://www.fitness.edu.au)

GYYMI is a free personal assistant app for personal trainers. You can find out more and download it at [gyymi.com](https://www.gyymi.com) N

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FREE COURSES TO HELP NETWORK COMMUNITY UPSKILL AT NO COST

Many of us in the fitness industry have experienced a huge drop in client and teaching hours while undergoing enforced time away from our usual work due to COVID-19.

At a time when we can't spend as much time as we'd like working in our businesses, we can at least work on them. Professional development is a key part of this, so in addition to the online courses already included in your membership, Network is giving all members the opportunity to complete an extra 10 FREE online courses – many accredited for CECs/CPDs.

Covering topics ranging from functional training and nutrition coaching to mental health and fitness business marketing – and valued at over \$1,200 – this is a great opportunity to upskill at no cost.

In order to make this offer available, an additional free subscription option has been created that can temporarily run alongside your regular Network membership. To access the free courses, simply click [HERE](#) to set up your bonus subscription.

Plus, until the end of June, Network members have FREE access to the **ViPR Loaded Movement Training Level 1 & 2 course**. Accredited for 9 CECs, and usually costing \$299 for members, this offer is available until midnight 30 June. To receive the course for free, just log in to your Network Portal [HERE](#), add the course to your shopping cart and enter the promo code AIF9XSY63AQ at checkout.



THE SOCIAL NETWORK

Click to check out these recent posts from Network's socials.

Network was firmly on board with the fitness industry's message that **#gymsaresafe** and **#exerciseismedicine**.



Network member @healthbymack made the most of her downtime by upskilling herself with Network courses in the park



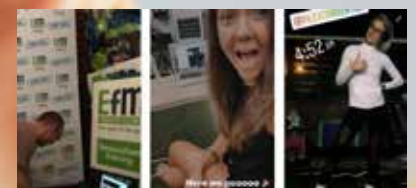
How many COVID-19 hospitalisations, ICU admissions, and deaths could be prevented through better diet and metabolic health?



If increased computer work at home is giving you neck and shoulder pain, these posture exercises can help.



The virtual FILEX Convention was warmly embraced by hundreds of housebound fitness professionals.





YOUR CHANCE TO WIN!

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Curve, from Apple tech accessory designers Twelve South, is an elegant aluminum stand designed for Macbooks, but which can also accommodate other laptops. By elevating your screen by 16.5cm, Curve enables you to create a more comfortable working environment. With more of us spending increased time working from home, the need for safe and ergonomic workspaces has never been greater.

With two slender arms that allow

maximum airflow (while also supporting today's ultra-light laptops) Curve keeps 70% of the computer's base exposed, enabling optimal cooling.

Crafted in matte-black aluminum, Curve has been designed to complements Apple's color palette.

For your chance to win one of three Curve laptop stands, email editor@fitnessnetwork.com.au telling us in no more than 50 words why you need to set yourself on the path to perfect posture while working from home.

twelvesouth.com



What nature teaches us about the science of healthy eating

Mixing a nutritionally balanced diet, with a precise ratio of protein to carbohydrate, seems daunting, but animals, from apes to cockroaches, manage it instinctively. It comes down to the essential role of appetite to communicate the body's needs to the brain. Humans have this ability too, but our appetites have been hijacked in the modern food environment, causing obesity and the serious diseases that come with it.

Through studying appetite in animals, David Raubenheimer and Stephen Simpson have been transforming the science of nutrition. In their book *Eat Like the Animals* they take us on a journey from jungle to laboratory and back to our own kitchens to look at how and why we eat, how appetites are fed and regulated, and how, in the end, it all comes back to protein.

For your chance to win 1 of 3 copies of *Eat like the Animals* email editor@fitnessnetwork.com.au and let us know in 50 words or less why you want to know more about the animal instincts of eating for optimum wellbeing.

booktopia.com.au/eat-like-the-animals

How to use isolation to look inward and accelerate potential

At a time when we're experiencing great uncertainty and stress, best-selling author and business mentor Janine Garner says we need to slow down and turn our focus inward.

In her new book, *Be Brilliant: How to lead a life of influence* (Wiley, \$29.95, 1 July 2020), Garner draws upon decades of experience working with major organisations and individuals to provide a practical guide to leading a successful and fulfilling life.

Unpacking what she calls the '4 Laws of Brilliance', Garner challenges us to take ownership of who we are and who we want to become, to rise above limitations, and unleash the brilliance within.

For your chance to win 1 of 3 copies of *Be Brilliant*, email editor@fitnessnetwork.com.au and let us know in 50 words or less why you're ready to rise above limitations and unleash the brilliance within.

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ONLINE COURSE

100 STEPS TO PLANK: BUILDING ABDOMINAL STRENGTH

Build your clients core fitness levels systematically, particularly when working with women who have experienced abdominal muscle wall changes following pregnancy and childbirth – all while protecting the pelvic floor, spine and pelvis.



About course creator, Dianne Edmonds

Dianne is a physiotherapist with over 20 years of experience with pregnancy, postnatal and pelvic floor education, treatment and fitness programs. She was the lead physiotherapist and project officer for the Pelvic Floor First project, run by the Continence Foundation of Australia and is a Pelvic Floor First Ambassador.

\$129 (NETWORK MEMBERS)

5 CECS/CPDS



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RETURNING TO WORK AS A PT AFTER TIME AWAY

With every challenge comes at least some element of opportunity. PT and exercise scientist **Brooke Turner** looks at how to be adaptive and use time away from exercise due to COVID-19, injury, illness or maternity leave, to your professional advantage.

2

2020 has been the most testing year the fitness industry has ever faced. As an industry that thrives off personal face-to-face, small and large group classes and connection, we have had to accept, adapt, and make the most of the uncharted territory.

From shifting to virtual or outdoor training, to losing clients, income and in some cases businesses, it has been an incredibly trying time. However, it has also provided an experience for growth and development. A chance to sit back and re-think your 'why'. Opportunities to innovate and adapt. If we fail to adapt, we fail to move forward – and it is this adaptability that makes for a fantastic fitness professional.

As gyms, studios and fitness businesses begin to gradually re-open, and you begin seeing your old clients and members (and hopefully some new ones too), it is important to consider how the period of downtime and,

for many, de-training has affected everyone.

Not only have our clients and members likely had time off of training or at least experienced a general decrease in physical activity due to social isolation measures, but so have many of us – their trainers and instructors.

It may sound a little crazy, but returning to exercise following time off of training can actually be a positive thing for fitness professionals to experience. Most personal trainers and group fitness instructors lead by example and have a higher level of fitness and strength than our non-trainer peers, yet we can take our health and physical fitness for granted, not realising how great fit feels until that base level of fitness has been lost. There really is no better feeling than that of being fit, strong and healthy.

In addition to the extraordinary circumstances we find ourselves in due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of other

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We can take our health and physical fitness for granted, not realising how great fit feels until that base level of fitness has been lost

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THE QUICK READ

- The huge challenge of COVID-19 has also provided an opportunity for fitness professionals to assess, adapt and innovate
- Having a forced period of rest or de-training followed by a return to fitness can be beneficial for both your career and your clients
- Injury, illness or pre/post-natal periods for trainers can compel you try new forms of exercise and put you in the shoes of clients by reminding you how a lower level of fitness feels
- Benefits include strengthened relationships with other health professionals, more effective programming and fresh ideas
- Use of RPE and fitness checks are beneficial in programming to better understand a client's exertion and training progress.

reasons may cause de-training and loss of physical strength and fitness throughout a trainer's career, including:

- injury, surgery and/or rehab relating to a given injury
- major illness
- pregnancy, post-natal recovery and transition to motherhood
- extended travel or time abroad.

As a trainer, while the training downtime caused by these situations may be frustrating and disheartening, the process of returning to training – both yourself and your clients or participants – can be beneficial to your career. Here's why:

BENEFIT 1: You get to feel what it's like to be 'new' to fitness

This can give you a better understanding of how a new client feels when starting their training journey. The shortness of breath, poor recovery between sets, feeling heavy on your feet, the lack of strength and endurance, the delayed onset muscle soreness that lasts for days and the mental battle that comes with it. All these things can



be forgotten or greatly lessened when you've become a well-adapted athlete. You should also be mindful of this in the coming months as you start seeing clients and members return – ease them into their sessions to help avoid injury and use the principle of progressive overload.

The benefit of returning to training after time away is that it can help you program more effectively and thoughtfully, because you have an increased awareness of how clients and members may be feeling physically during exercise.

Your programming can be improved by:

- appropriate use of progressive overload and planning of periodisation: ensure you apply this to all clients and members coming back from COVID closures.
- starting simpler and smarter: focusing on building sound foundational movement patterns, before progressing to more advanced moves that take strength and control to safely execute, lighter loads, more rest and offering more suitable modifications specific to your client that you may not have previously prescribed.
- better monitoring of your client's rate of perceived exertion to gauge if you need to modify their sessions, increase rest or make them work a little harder. I recommend using a combination of a heart rate monitor if they have one, as well as the Rate of Perceived Exertion (Borg scale) – check what their number is a couple of times each session.

BENEFIT 2: You're likely to experience different forms of exercise

Whether your experience has been due to COVID, pregnancy, injury, or travel, it is likely that your training has altered. If you're a trainer who has experienced an injury, rehabilitation programs may see you spending more time in the pool swimming or water walking, cycling instead of running or focusing more on mobility and flexibility rather than strength. If you've gone through pregnancy and your own subsequent post-natal return to exercise, you'll be aware of the need

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Excuses can become stronger than effort, and enjoyment from exercise may diminish.

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to reduce impact and load during exercise as pregnancy progresses, as well as the modifications needed when resuming training. This may see you participate in a different group fitness class such as water fitness, adopting an amended lower-impact training style like Pilates, or using equipment that you would not usually use, such as resistance bands and cardio equipment.

The benefit of this is that you have the first-hand experience to recommend other forms of exercise to compliment and vary your client's programming and help them maximise their results.

BENEFIT 3: You build relationships with other health professionals

Depending on your reason for having time away from work, your period of downtime may involve seeing other health and wellness professionals such as physiotherapists, psychologists, naturopaths, nutritionists or others.

The benefit of this is that you can expand your professional network and lay the foundations for future collaboration with individuals that you have gained trust in through first-hand experience of their services. This enables you to confidently refer clients to them when necessary – and vice versa. For example, if you are a trainer working with pre- and post-natal women, having an established relationship with a women's health physiotherapist (what all post-natal women should see prior to returning to exercise) or a nutritionist can benefit all parties.

BENEFIT 4: You strengthen your mental grit

The more days you have off from training, the harder it is to get back into your routine. Excuses can become stronger than effort and enjoyment from exercise may diminish. COVID-19, injury or reduced fitness levels following pregnancy challenge you to not only adapt to your environment, but also strengthen your mental grit and mindset and find how moving helps to manage and improve your mental health.





Consider your inner dialogue during training and get your client to become more aware of theirs.



The benefit of this is that you can consciously factor in your clients' mental fitness in the training you deliver them. You know how tough it is not only physically, but mentally, to push through fitness barriers. Consider your inner dialogue during training and get your client to become more aware of theirs.

Those who don't live and breathe a healthy lifestyle often see movement as a chore, something they have to do rather than want to do. Offer ways to put a more constructive or positive spin on exercise to help them find it enjoyable rather than a chore. You will be all too



familiar with the excuses for avoiding training – too sore, too tired, don't have time... Chances are, you used some of them as you battled your way back to finding your fitness and love of movement. Use this to your advantage, and if your clients are coming up with them, offer practical solutions based on your own experience (without making it all about you, of course).

BENEFIT 5: You up your skill set!

From learning how to deliver effective virtual training, or developing a greater understanding of anatomy, stretching and nutrition, to increasing your first-hand awareness of mobility movements and recovery strategies, your time away from the gym or studio provides the opportunity to add more strings to your bow. Sometimes this is through choice, and sometimes through necessity: regardless, it increases your skillset and the value you can provide clients. Your unique experience won't necessarily make you an expert, but it will teach you lessons that you can transfer to your clients' programming.

Australian psychologist Fred Emery said 'Instead of constantly adapting to change, why not change to be adaptive?'. By continually learning new skills and experiencing new ways of training, communicating and operating, we can do precisely that. The more we do so, the more resilient we become – able to handle whatever the world throws at us.

As trainers, it is our job to help others move to a mindset of enjoying exercise and movement. Starting from scratch on a strength or fitness journey is always challenging, but finding ourselves in this position due to a significant period of de-training provides us with valuable learnings that can help make us better, more empathetic trainers. **N**



Brooke Turner

Brooke is a nutritionist, exercise scientist, personal trainer, writer, presenter and mother of two with over ten years' experience in the health and fitness industry. Brooke's programs include her six-week STRIVE program and Happy, Healthy Pregnancy eGuides. Brooke is a believer in striving for a balanced approach to health and fitness and aims to inspire and empower others to see that healthy active living need not be a hindrance, but a habit.

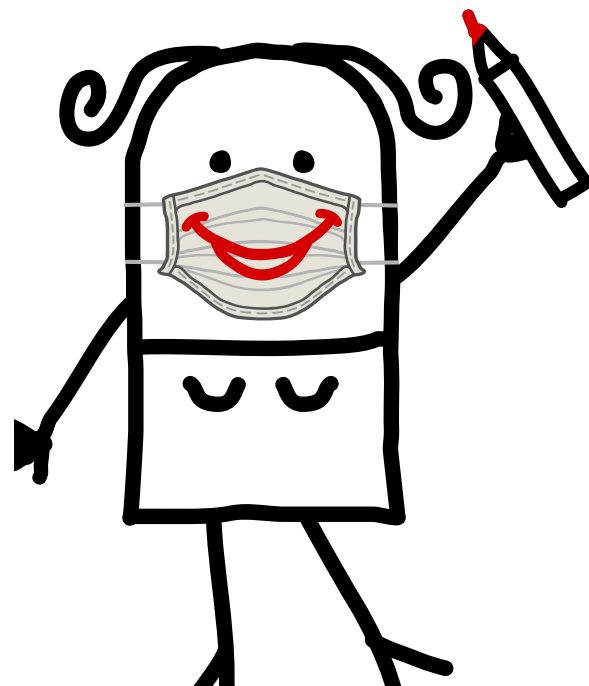


Where's your next Group Training superstar
going to come from?

BASE GX



MY SECRET TO STAYING POSITIVE



Though it requires as much attention as our physical wellbeing, most of us neglect our mental health. Group fitness guru *Marietta Mehanni* shares four practical actions to maintain a positive outlook, even in tough times.

During the recent pandemic lockdown, I received an email asking what my secret to positivity was. Through the tough times, how did I stay positive and show up with a smile on Facebook Live every day? I knew instantly what my answer was: I actively look after my mental wellbeing. The email, however, prompted me to consider the various contributing factors and to write them down. Here, I'll share those with you, in the hope that something that works for me may also be of some help to you.

With regards our physical health, we make sure that our bodies get good nutrition and rest and move regularly. In our industry, we also focus on improving specific aspects of fitness such as strength, balance, flexibility, endurance (muscle and cardio) and range of motion. However, it is also about having balance, so that our lives do not become entirely consumed by nutrition or training. The aim is to keep a good sense of perspective.

I strongly believe that mental health requires just as much attention and concentrated effort as physical health. The problem is, most people pay very little attention to this aspect of their being. As with physical health, this neglect will catch up with us eventually, especially in a crisis.

So, what is my 'secret'? Here are four things I do to try and keep my mind as healthy and resilient as my body.



1. Meditation

Every day I meditate for approximately 20 minutes. I started meditating 12 years ago, and it took some time to get to a point where I could do it for this long, and on a daily basis, but it was worth the perseverance. Lately, I have also added a second meditation in the middle of the day.

The immediate effect of meditation is an almost instantly more relaxed mind, as well as the ability to concentrate and focus better.

The longer-term effect is that I feel detached. This is something that most people do not understand until they experience it. It doesn't mean that I don't have empathy or experience a range of emotions. What it means is that I don't experience despair, depression or fear, and I enjoy an underlying feeling that everything will be OK. Trust me, I did not used to feel this way, and every day was an emotional roller coaster, which was incredibly draining.

Detachment provides the mental space to view the world, and then have a conscious mind that can make a decision separate from what is happening around you. This is called being 'unconditional', and means that, even when confronted with pessimism and negative tension, I don't react, but instead maintain a state of being relaxed and satisfied. I know, deep down, that everything is going to be alright. This long-term effect of meditation is profound.



2. Journaling

Every day I journal about what makes me happy and the things that are going well in my life. This is an important muscle in our minds that we often fail to strengthen. I have been doing this for nine years and it has really helped me to maintain perspective when dramas occur. When I have drama, it is often short lived. Focusing on drama brings more drama.

The instant that I can switch my thoughts to something that makes me laugh, I can feel my energy shift. Sure enough, if I am frustrated with something, then my computer doesn't work, and I burn my dinner and I accidentally hit myself on a shelf... and on it goes. Then the words 'nothing is going right' come out of my mouth. No, I created all of that. The key is to recognise when my thoughts are changing to negative ones, and to find a way to shift them. This doesn't stop me from losing my temper sometimes: that still happens, but when it does, I notice and actively shift the energy rather than wallow in it and exacerbate the problem. Journaling definitely helps with this. Yes, we have bad things happen, but most of us also have a heck of a lot of good in our lives.



3. Read and listen to things that feed my mind

This is like nutrition for the brain. Being around people who have lower energy, listening to the news, reading the paper, or even reading a rant on social media is like junk food. A little bit once in a while is OK, but it should not be your daily diet. I listen to awesome audio books about self-improvement, listen to CD's in my car about personal development and spend some time every day reading a book that will help me grow. The only junk food I feed my mind is some TV, and even then I try to choose shows that will relax rather than agitate me. I consciously ignore rants on social media: they really are only people's opinions (to which they are entitled), and I don't have to buy into them or agree.

4. Counselling

I attend a counselling session every two weeks. Oddly, sharing with your family and close friends is not always healthy because



they will give you an answer that serves them. It is natural – we all do it. Counselling is different because you are sitting in front of someone who has no personal vested interest in you, and who has been trained to listen and ask questions that make you really think and see things differently.

It is not the counsellor's job to provide you with answers: you come up with your own solutions, but you need to be guided. It is like a group fitness instructor or personal trainer: someone who has more knowledge and experience in the field can guide you to a mental shift. Talking about personal 'stuff' in front of someone who is paid to listen is very different to bombarding a friend, who has their own stuff going on too. I always used to feel guilty about dumping my problems on acquaintances, because even though it might have felt good to get things off my chest in the moment, it never did later on. My counsellor is someone I trust and who has helped me navigate through some tricky times with authenticity, integrity and honesty.

These four key behaviours have trained me to recognise thoughts as being just that – thoughts. If I focus on them long enough, they become beliefs and then my life follows what I believe. I have written down what I would like my life to be – happy. I have also written down what happy looks and feels like. I can now say, having suffered from depression and eating disorders for most of my life, that I am happy, even now in these testing times. But it took training – lots and lots of training. This isn't to say that you can't start reaping the benefits sooner though: although it didn't happen overnight, I experienced a positive change after just one week of meditation.

All of this has trained my mental resilience. When a crisis hits, I can fall off the rails for a little bit, but then I see opportunities. They usually come to me during my meditations. And then there is the wow moment. Holy Cow! This is such a great opportunity to... and away I go. **N**



Marietta Mehanni

Marietta is a multi-award-winning presenter with over 30 years' teaching experience in both land and water-based group fitness. She is also an instructor mentor, World Master Trainer and education coordinator for Gymstick International, co-founder of MyGroupMove and co-creator of mSwing Education.





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RESEARCH REVIEW

NOT QUITE CIRQUE DU SOLEIL: SUSPENSION TRAINING UPDATE

Timely research studies the efficacy of home-based and supervised suspension training.

Review by *Dr Mike Climstein PhD & Dr Joe Walsh PhD*

“

I had never even seen a regular iron cross in gymnastics before, let alone an inverted one, but I was an elite lifter, so how hard could it really be?

”

Title: Efficacy of whole-body suspension training on enhancing functional movement abilities following a supervised or home-based training program

Authors: Dr.'s Kullman and colleagues Department of Health and Human Performance, Cleveland State University.)

Source: Journal of Sports Medicine Physical Fitness (2020). 60 (2): 244-250.

Introduction: I am traditional and old school, no doubt about it. From training in a traditional style of karate, to traditional strength and conditioning. Sure, I'm well read on the developments in these areas, but old school works – and that's why it's still around.

Having said this, there is always room for new and improved. In universities in the US, athletes in similar disciplines are typically housed together, to enhance the concept of the team as one big, living, breathing organism. As Olympic lifters at university, my teammates and I were few in number, so were housed with other athletes, one of whom was my good friend Paul, a gymnast whose forte was the high bar and rings. Paul used to come into the gym after training and 'workout', as he called it, with us. For Olympic lifters, Paul's training appeared to be a waste of time, as all he did was many, many exhaustive reps and sets of V sit ups, pulls ups, push ups and decline hyperextensions. Why bother?

The men's gymnastics training facility was on the second floor of the building, and therefore required stairs to be climbed in order to access it. It's fair to say that I never ventured up there, as I had



THE QUICK READ

- Healthy male and female volunteers undertook a suspension training program, either alone at home or supervised
- Each group completed eight weeks of nine suspension training exercises, twice weekly, which targeted all of the major muscle groups
- Body composition was assessed via BodPod and functional movement was assessed via the functional movement screen (FMS)
- Both groups increased their lean mass by similar amounts (i.e., +0.9 kg) over the course of the 8 weeks and although both groups improved their FMS scores, only the supervised exercise group did so significantly.

to conserve leg strength – no point fatiguing them climbing stairs (even after a workout, as recovery started as soon as the last rep was completed!).

Now, despite having a very muscular upper body, Paul had no leg mass, so we bagged the hell out of him about his lack of strength. Eventually, his patience grew thin and he invited us up to his domain for a demonstration. Suffice to say, it was a very steep learning curve. To this day, no lie, I remember him showing me an inverted iron cross on the rings (click here to check out what this is if you aren't familiar with it). I had never even seen a regular iron cross in gymnastics before, let alone an inverted one, but hey, I was an elite lifter and a heck of a lot stronger (this is being very modest) than Paul, so how hard could it really be? Feeling confident, I gave it a go... Fool be me!

On the plus side, I quickly realised that bodyweight training did significantly benefit muscular strength and endurance. As a side point, Paul also showed me how to do 'high bar giants' (again, click here to check out what this is if you aren't familiar with it). I peeled off the high bar in the blink of an eye and hit the mat full force on my back. Yes, it was karma (and I'm lucky I didn't damage my spine.)

Suspension training has been around for a very long time, with documented evidence dating back to at least the 1800s. The modern style of suspension training, familiar to most personal trainers, was popularised in the mid 2000's, when total resistance exercise (referred to as TRX) started, invented by a US Navy Seal. (Click here to listen to an episode of The Fitness Industry

Podcast in which Fraser Quelch chats about the origins and evolution of TRX).

TRX was a type of suspension training equipment that used only body weight to develop muscular strength and muscular endurance. The TRX principle of training is simple, utilising gravity from body weight to develop resistance using only non-elastic bands. It is a great principle, and convenient too, as suspension training requires very little space and the suspension straps are relatively cost effective at \$100 to \$200 a set for good quality heavy duty equipment (cheaper versions for \$20 or so should probably be avoided due to the potential for injury in case of equipment failure).

Due to its portability and small footprint, suspension equipment can be used in gyms, studios, exercise classes and CrossFit facilities, as well as outside or – aptly in these times of increased home workouts – inside the home, garage, basement or balcony. Best of all, there are almost limitless exercises that you can complete with suspension training: upper body, lower body, back, abs/core...

Long term readers of Network may recall us previously reviewing a research article that measured heart rate, blood pressure and blood lactate during suspension training. There is limited research relevant to the fitness or strength and conditioning fields investigating the effectiveness (i.e. efficacy) of suspension training on body composition and functional movement, making Dr Kullman and colleagues' paper of particular interest.

In this study, healthy male and female volunteers with no history of resistance training were randomised to either a home-based or supervised training group. Each group completed eight weeks of nine suspension training exercises (3 sets x 10 to 30 reps), two times per week, which targeted all of the major muscle groups. The home-based group did receive two supervised sessions initially to become familiar with the exercises and to learn how to use good technique. The exercises included row, hack squat, bicep curl, chest press, tricep extension, Y-fly, lunge, hamstring curl and side plank.

Body composition was assessed via BodPod and functional movement was assessed via the functional movement screen (FMS). The FMS is designed to identify any imbalances or asymmetries in either mobility or stability during movement patterns, which includes a deep squat, hurdle





step, in-line lunge, active straight-leg raise, trunk stability push-up, rotary stability and shoulder mobility in a wide range of clients and patients (young, middle-aged, athletes, military, firefighters). The FMS uses a points system (scores are 0 to 3) and a total score of less than 14 indicates greater likelihood of sustaining an injury.

Results: A total of 17 healthy individuals (8 males; 9 females, aged 18 to 32 years) completed the eight-week training study. Compliance in both groups was quite high, with both exercise groups only missing approximately one day of training over the eight weeks. There was no difference in the gains in lean mass between the home versus supervised exercise groups, with both increasing their lean mass by similar amounts (i.e., +0.9 kg) over the course of the 8 weeks. Both groups improved their FMS scores, though only the supervised exercise group did so significantly.

The authors concluded that suspension training is a valuable and effective means of home-based training which can be used to improve lean mass and functional ability.

Pros: This is a good, practical study, which lends support for both home and gym-based suspension training for maintaining or improving lean mass. Given the recent gym closures and ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, this is a positive finding.

Engel and colleagues (2019) in Germany conducted a similar study in young, healthy adults using functional high-intensity suspension training over eight weeks. They reported a significant increase in leg press, chest press and trunk strength, but no improvement in aerobic capacity.

In a related study, Gaedtke and Morat (2015) found mature-aged (i.e. mean age 66 years, range 60 to 73 years) individuals completing 12 weeks of suspension training self-reported increasing their strength and balance, and Jimenez-Garcia et al (2019) found that 12 weeks of high intensity interval suspension exercise was beneficial on body mass index, gait speed and quality of life in older adults. Therefore, suspension training may have wide applicability for all ages.

Cons: The study would be more informative if fat mass percentage or measures of muscular strength or muscular endurance were also reported. The study does not have a large sample size, so it would have been preferable to not further split the participants into two groups (supervised and unsupervised training). This small sample may have contributed to some effects not registering as statistically significant. Additionally, the FMS tool is limited in terms of its sensitivity due to its low granularity. This would further reduce capability to test for changes due to the intervention. **N**

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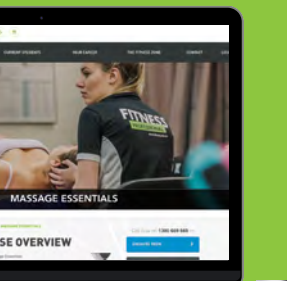
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INFORMATION HANDOUT

HOW TO SNACK SMARTER IN ISOLATION



More time at home, stress and a loss of regular routine can combine to increase grazing on handy but unhealthy snacks. Here are some tips for managing – and reducing – impulsive eating when spending more time than usual at home.

The recent home isolation period has highlighted just how easy it is to fall into the constant snack trap when largely housebound and in constant proximity to the kitchen.

Doctoral Researcher at University College London, Alex Ruani, says 'We're seeing many people reporting boredom-eating during the lockdown. But overeating is risky. Good nutrition is needed more than ever, when our immune system may need to fight back.'

The worst foods to snack on are those which provide 'empty calories' – foods that are micronutrient-poor and very low in essential vitamins and minerals – usually sugary and processed fatty foods like cakes, biscuits, chips, milk chocolate, ice cream and pastries.

Foods for better snacking

It's preferable to give your digestive system a rest between meals by not continually ingesting small amounts of food, but if you are going to snack between meals, some of the better things to graze on are:

- Foods with a high-water content, which makes them more filling as they delay gastric emptying (e.g. fresh fruit like grapes, apples, kiwi, melons; low-salt broth soup; homemade 'thicker' smoothies; corn cobs; mixed salad bowl).
- Probiotic-rich foods which are shown to have beneficial effects on the regulation of hunger-suppressing hormones GLP-1 and PYY (e.g. fat-free yogurt, kefir, cottage cheese or soft cheese; vegan and lactose-free options are tempeh, miso, sourdough bread, fermented cabbage or pickles).
- Fibre-rich foods which are not only physically filling but also help produce

hunger-suppressing short-chain fatty acids like butyrate and propionate in the gut (e.g. raw vegetable crudités, baby carrots, cucumber slices with hummus and porridge oat flakes).

- Protein-rich foods shown in countless satiation experiments to reduce our desire to continue eating (e.g. boiled eggs, fat-free yogurt, fat-free cottage cheese; vegan and lactose-free options include tofu dices, beans mix, hemp seeds, wholegrain rice cakes and dairy-free coconut yogurt).

These snack options are also low-glycaemic, so they cause a slow sugar release into your bloodstream, which helps maintain energy and focus, as opposed to making you feel lethargic or sleepy in the middle of the day.

Tips to reduce unnecessary snacking

For most of us, snacking between meals is not necessary and is often done out of boredom. It's a good idea, therefore, to actively try and reduce it.

- Make a plan. Be strategic about your purchases and use your fresh foods and those with a shorter shelf life first.
- Hydrate first. Sipping water instead of sugary drinks is the simplest way to limit unnecessary snacking and excess calories. Research shows that drinking water before each meal, ideally a couple of 250ml glasses, results in fewer calories consumed.
- Prioritise home-cooked meals. Main meals are the most important. Snacking is secondary and, in many cases, unnecessary. Turn increased home-time into an opportunity to experiment with

cooking nutritious meals and improve your skills in the kitchen.

Heather Rosa, Dean of the Institute for Optimum Nutrition, says that lockdown is actually the ideal time to break the snacking habit: 'Our approach is to reduce and eliminate snacking. To do this we would focus on the main meals of the day, ensuring they are nutrient-dense and low in sugar to prevent the triggers for snacking. Ensure protein at each meal along with some healthy fats for satiety and fat-soluble vitamins A, E and D. e.g. butter, cold-pressed extra virgin oil, beef dripping, goose fat and coconut oil. Plenty of colourful veggies and salad.'

Most snack foods are an unholy mix of sugar or refined carbohydrates and fats often highly processed and damaged. This mix of refined carbohydrates, fats and salt rarely occur in nature. They trigger an addictive type of behaviour, leaving you wanting more and able to eat more, yet not feeling full. If it is within reach (even at the top of the highest cupboard) you will eventually eat it if bored!'

Sometimes the drive for a snack can be derailed by a glass of water or hot beverage (not hot chocolate!) Break the snacking habit, your body will thank you!' **N**



Alex Ruani & Heather Rosa

Alex is UCL Doctoral Researcher and Chief Science Educator at The Health Sciences Academy.



Heather is Dean of the Institute for Optimum Nutrition. Alex and Heather's contribution to research into eating habits during isolation was commissioned by flawless.org

PROTEIN PANCAKES & SMASHED CAULI SOUP

Teresa Cutter, The Healthy Chef, shares her recipes for a power-packed pancake brekkie and a comforting soup that's delicious flavour is matched by its anti-inflammatory credentials.

3 ingredient protein pancakes

These delicious pancakes are high in protein and essential amino acids to sustain lean muscle and nourish a healthy immune system. They are simply made with smashed ripe banana, organic eggs and a serve of protein. Delicious drizzled with a little maple syrup and a squeeze of fresh lemon. Enjoy!

Ingredients

- 1 medium ripe banana
- 2 organic eggs
- 2 tablespoons of your choice of protein powder or Healthy Chef Organic Pea Protein

Method

1. Smash banana with a fork in a small mixing bowl.
2. Add the eggs and mix through until combined.
3. Add protein and mix to combine.
4. Heat a non-stick pan over a low heat with a little butter or olive oil and spoon in the pancake mix, 2 tablespoons of mix per pancake.
5. Cook over a low heat so that it cooks through.
6. Flip over and cook the other side.
7. Serve and enjoy.

Notes and inspiration: Use 100g smashed roasted pumpkin in place of the banana.





Smashed cauliflower & turmeric soup

If you're like me and enjoy a big bowl of nourishing, warming soup when the weather gets chilly, you'll absolutely love this perfect winter warmer. This delicious recipe is from my plant-based, award-winning cookbook *Earth To Table*.

Cauliflower is rich in sulphur, necessary for the synthesis of certain key proteins in the body. Sulphur is also needed for the synthesis of glutathione, which acts as a potent antioxidant, protecting your cells from damage. Turmeric is a powerhouse natural anti-inflammatory, that is also high in antioxidants. Enjoy this nourishing soup on its own or served with steamed jasmine or basmati rice.

Ingredients

2 cloves garlic, smashed
1 onion, finely chopped
10cm knob fresh grated turmeric or 1 teaspoon powdered turmeric
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil or ghee
750ml (3 cups) hot water or vegetable stock (see notes)
1 small cauliflower, finely chopped
1 x 400g tin chickpeas, washed and drained
sea salt and white pepper to taste
125ml (½ cup) coconut milk or oat milk

Method

1. Cook garlic, onion and turmeric with the olive oil on a low heat for 5 minutes.
2. Add the cauliflower and water, then partially cover the pot and simmer for 10 minutes until cauliflower is tender.
3. Gently smash the soup using a potato masher until the cauliflower pieces are broken up.
4. Add the chickpeas and coconut milk then season to taste. Add extra water if required.
5. Serve and enjoy.

Notes and inspiration: Add 2 tablespoons nutritional yeast to boost flavour. Serve alone or with a side of steamed Jasmine or Basmati rice.

These recipes are from Teresa Cutter's new plant-based cookbook *Earth To Table* (\$49.95).



Teresa Cutter

Founder of *The Healthy Chef*, Teresa is an author, nutritionist and classically trained chef. You can find more recipes, tips and products on her website, *Healthy Recipes App*, eBooks, Facebook and Instagram.



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is available for purchase at thehealthychef.com



10 TIPS FOR TEACHING BETTER VIRTUAL CLASSES

Power Music's Lead Group Fitness Advisor *Alee Baytan* shares her tips for teaching the best virtual class possible.

Gyms are reopening and we can even host up to 20 participants in each class, but lockdown has opened our eyes to the possibilities of delivering live virtual group sessions. While we all dearly hope that we won't face another situation like the one we've all experienced in early 2020, the fact is that the occasion may arise in future where classes are unable to be delivered in-person at the facility where you instruct. If virtual delivery ever forms part of your instructing schedule, you want to ensure you're making as good a job of it as you can.

Here are some tips to help you teach the very best virtual class possible.

1. Keep a sharpie and paper, or a dry erase board, close by so you can write cues on it should your mic stop working. This way, you'll still have a visible and clear way to communicate with your participants.

2. If you're using a platform that requires you to 'mirror' your movement, wear a wristband on one hand to help remind you of your right and left lead.

3. Write out the names of the people attending your class before it starts, so you can give them a shout out during your live stream.

4. Make sure your device operating systems and the app(s) you are using are updated to the latest version before you begin your live stream. Also, consider removing unnecessary apps, photos and music from your device to clear up space. This can help prevent your app/device from crashing midstream.

5. Remember to bring the energy to your virtual class! Your energy needs to be ten times bigger to come across on camera.

6. Be sharp and clean with your movements and always offer modifications.

7. Use your arms to make big motions in order to indicate directions with your cues, for example, 'Go right' while motioning to the right.

8. Cue early – at least 4 counts before the move – so that participants process the information and consider lag time. You may not be able to see your participants, so you want to cue them even earlier than you normally would, for example: '1,2,3,4 – side lunge to your right'

9. When cueing, cut down excess words. Keep it simple and enunciate!

10. Most importantly, have fun! As with your face-to-face delivery, make your class an experience that will make participants want to come back. **N**



FREE GUIDE TO TEACHING VIRTUAL CLASSES

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EAT LIKE THE ANIMALS

THE PROBLEM WITH TOO MUCH PROTEIN

In this abridged extract from their book *Eat like the Animals*, scientists David Raubenheimer and Stephen Simpson look at how and why we eat, how appetites are fed and regulated, and how, in the end, it all comes back to protein.

Matthew is twenty-five years old. He moved away from home after finishing university a year ago and is working full-time in an office in a new city. The hours are long, and he's expected to be there late most evenings. Cooking has never been his thing, and online deliveries are so easy. In his late teens, Matthew was a talented footie player and trained hard to build bulk. Over three years he beefed up from a gangly beanpole to a muscular 85 kilograms. He drove his parents to distraction with his blended protein shakes and eggs and multipacks of chicken breasts that cluttered the family refrigerator, but those days have gone. His football days are also over, and with them his intense training regime.

During his life as an athlete, Matthew was eating around 135 grams of protein each day, which he needed to build and maintain his ample muscle mass. He was also expending 3,550 kcal of energy daily, needed to fuel his high level of physical activity. Now, he sits in front of a computer screen all day at work

and is burning only 2,550 kcal each day. His muscle mass is starting to waste away without football and weight training – if you don't use it, you lose it – but it's still making its demands felt through his protein appetite.

At the end of his athletic career, Matthew could hit the bull's-eye for both protein and energy if he stuck to a 15% protein diet (eating 135 grams of protein would mean eating 3,600 kcal). The problem today is that he now needs 1,000 fewer calories a day. To eat that amount on a 15% protein diet would provide Matthew with just 95 grams of protein per day. His protein target, still for now set high, courtesy of his sporting days, will remain unsatisfied, urging him to keep eating.

It will take time for Matthew's protein target to reset to a lower level more suited to his new sedentary lifestyle. How long, we don't know. The science remains to be done, but by then Matthew's waistline will be showing the effects of the accumulated excess calories he will have eaten chasing a high-protein target set during athletic

“
A common rookie error is to look at the health benefits of a higher-protein diet and credit protein itself.
”



THE QUICK READ

- High protein, low-carb diets such as Atkins, paleo and ketogenic will almost certainly stimulate weight loss – but they are unsustainable for most people in the longer term
- If you persist on a low-carb (or any extreme) diet, against all the urges to do otherwise, your body will eventually adapt to it
- The more you restrict your nutrient choices, however, the more you risk losing metabolic flexibility and will find it difficult to shift to a different dietary pattern
- A high-protein, low-carb, high-fat diet poses a potential risk in terms of longevity
- The longest-lived, healthiest populations on the planet are those who consume a lower-protein, high-carb whole-food diet.

training. Matthew will be following a trend seen among many fit young people as they enter their twenties and thirties, planting the seeds for chronic health problems in his forties and fifties.

What should Matthew do? To avoid weight gain, he needs to limit his calorie intake to 2,550 kcal, while also satisfying his ravenous protein appetite, with its higher-than-necessary demand for 135 grams of protein each day. To do that, he'll simply need to increase the percentage of protein in his diet from 15 to 21%. That way, he'll hit his protein target (135 grams) and his energy needs (2,550 kcal) at the same time. Cutting out ultra-processed foods and upping fibre intake are simple ways to help concentrate protein in his diet up to 21%, but increasing the portion sizes of protein-rich foods to add an extra 20 to 30grams of protein each day to his diet would also help him get there. Simple.

It has hardly been true for most of the time our species has existed, but today, losing a bit of weight is a goal many of us share. Losing it is tough enough, but keeping it off is harder still. The yo-yo effect is all too common – lose weight by going on the latest fad diet, bounce back to the previous weight, or even worse, put on more. It's a terrific business model for the weight-loss industry, and the combination of our biology and modern food environment makes it near inevitable.

Working with protein leverage can help. There is evidence from large-scale clinical trials, such as the European DIOGENES study, that a higher-protein diet (25%) coupled with lots of healthy, slowly digested carbs helps keep weight off after a period on a low-calorie diet (800 kcal per day for 8 weeks in the case of that particular study).

However, a common rookie error is to look at the health benefits of a higher-protein diet and credit protein itself. Here's how the flawed logic goes: you lose weight on a high-protein diet; upon losing weight, your health improves; therefore, protein improves our health. But protein isn't a medicine for fixing diabetes, heart disease, and the other complications of obesity. As we now know, eating a diet with a high concentration of protein simply provides a limit on total calorie intake. Many benefits follow from that alone.

But today, there is a fad diet community that believes 'if some protein is good, more must be better.' Another common error of logic. It's as false as saying that more of any good thing should be better than precisely the right amount. There are plenty of beneficial substances – salt, water, vitamins – that are toxic at too-high levels. The same is true for protein, as well as carbohydrates and fats.

The high-protein dietary philosophy has been in vogue for some time now. It was popularised in the works of Robert Atkins, who recommended a low-carb, high-fat, high-protein diet to achieve weight loss. He was right, and now we all know why – on such a diet, you eat less overall because you have focused on fulfilling the protein appetite. In the wake of Atkins came the popularity of paleo, ketogenic, carnivory, other low-carb and even zero-carb diets that advise eating nothing but meat, fish, eggs, butter (and maybe a little fiber among the more cautious) for effortless weight control and robust, animal good health.

Without fail, these will all stimulate weight loss. Added to the hunger-busting effects of protein, the very low-carb keto regimen (on which you'd eat less than 20 grams of carbs – the equivalent of an apple a day) causes the body to burn ketones, which are breakdown products of fat, as the main cellular fuel, rather than glucose. Ketones also seem to help curb calorie intake, even when protein levels are modest.

Low-protein (9%), very high-fat (90%) keto diets are therapeutic in certain circumstances, such as for the treatment of epilepsy in children; and very low-carb, low-energy diets can help reverse the symptoms of type 2 diabetes; but neither is sustainable nor desirable for most of us as a regular diet. Even somewhat less extreme low-carb, high-fat diets have low compliance – most of us soon drift back to a more balanced mixture of macronutrients.

The reason is simple – if you remove most carbs from the diet, you activate the carbohydrate appetite, which will make starchy and sweet foods fabulously desirable. Try cutting carbs for a few days and see. If your diet is also low in protein, then you will get the double whammy of protein and carb cravings, along with the increasing desire never to see fat again, as your appetite for that nutrient tells you to stop eating it. Your appetites are simply doing what they have evolved to do – trying their best to guide you to a balanced diet.

If you persist on a low-carb (or any extreme) diet, against all the urges to do otherwise, your body will eventually adapt to it. We are an extraordinarily flexible creature when it comes to diet. It's been a hallmark of our success as a species that we've been able to adapt to diets as unpromising as those of the traditional Inuit (based on fish and the meat and blubber of mammals), the Masai of Kenya (milk and blood), or the Okinawans' low-protein, sweet potato-based fare.

There is a downside, however – the more you restrict your nutrient choices, the more you risk losing metabolic flexibility and will find it difficult to shift to a different dietary pattern. This is because our



biology evolved to expect a variety of foods across the seasons, to fast overnight, and to experience times of feasting and famine. Physiologically, we are like athletes who need to stretch their muscles and tendons to maintain the ability to respond flexibly to whatever challenge is thrown at them. Unless we keep our physiology 'stretched', we will gradually lose the ability to enjoy a healthy variety of diets.

Now, there is no doubt that weight loss can be a good thing for health and lifespan – if you are above a healthy weight and especially when there are signs of diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Its benefits for improving all manner of markers of poor health associated with obesity are legion. But knowing what we now know about the molecular mechanisms of longevity, a high-protein, low-carb, high-fat diet poses a potential risk of its own. Our experiments with insects and mice, supported by research by other scientists around the world, show that such diets activate ancient and universal biochemical pathways that stimulate growth and reproduction. But at the same time, they switch off the repair and maintenance pathways that help support a long and healthy life.

Is there evidence that such risks are real in humans? There is a growing body of evidence, but studies have yet to run long enough to say for sure. For obvious reasons, we can't run highly controlled lifelong experiments on human nutrition the way we can with insects and rodents. Interpreting the results from short-term dietary trials in humans and from nutritional surveys is fraught with difficulties. Conclusions are often disputed by the proponents of different dietary camps, who usually have a

single-nutrient focus, commonly squabbling over the relative roles of fats versus carbs.

Still, it's undeniable that we humans share the same basic molecular biology as yeast, worms, flies, mice, and monkeys when it comes to the longevity and growth pathways. This leaves us with a question: What are the odds that our species is a rare exception to the rule that long-term exposure to a high-protein, low-carb diet is life-shortening? Pretty low, we think. Vanishingly so. Especially when you consider that the longest-lived, healthiest populations on the planet are those who consume a lower-protein, high-carb whole-food diet. **N**



David Raubenheimer

David is the Leonard P. Ullman Professor of Nutritional Ecology in the School of Life and Environmental Sciences, and Nutrition Theme Leader in the Charles Perkins Centre at the University of Sydney. He previously spent ten years as a Research Fellow and departmental Lecturer at Oxford.



Stephen James Simpson AC FRS FAA

Stephen is the executive director of Obesity Australia and the academic director of the Charles Perkins Centre. Born in Australia, he graduated with a BSc from the University of Queensland in 1978, and completed his PhD at King's College London in 1982 on locust feeding physiology.



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A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO MASTERING THE HANDSTAND

Handstands are fast becoming one of the most popular bodyweight exercises around, so we've teamed up with gymnastics coach and FILEX presenter, Farkas Pungur, to create a Step-by-step Guide to Mastering the Handstand.

This course has been designed for fitness professionals who want to learn, design and include handstands in their client's training program (or just teach themselves!) The teaching steps will help you minimise the risk of injury and maximise the performance of your clients.

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ABOUT THE COURSE CREATOR



Farkas Pungur

Farkas has been in gymnastics for over 40 years as a competitor, international performer and international level gymnastics coach. He has a Masters degree in Physical Education and a Bachelors in Gymnastics/Sport Coaching, as well as a Diploma in Fitness. Currently working with Gymnastics QLD, you might also recognise Farkas as a competitor on Australian Ninja Warrior.



WHEN SHOULD YOU POST TOPICAL CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA? (AND WHEN SHOULDN'T YOU...?)

When posting about current events on your professional social media, your stance should align with your business values and benefit your audience, writes digital marketer *Nicola Moras*.

In usual times, most business owners are aware of what's going on in the world, even if they don't habitually watch mainstream news channels. It's disseminated through our social media newsfeeds so we all know what's going on locally, nationally and globally most of the time. In unusual times, such as these, every business owner knows what's going on.

Recently, we've seen the very fast spread and rapid increase in frequency of people talking about COVID-19. With around one in five posts being about COVID-19, it's something that businesses just can't ignore. People like sharing and engaging in issues that are topical.

That doesn't mean that you, as a business owner, should always talk about these things, however. Many of your audience are looking to you for leadership and inspiration, but how do you choose when and if to talk about events such as these on social media? There are five main questions to ask yourself when deciding.

1. Do you want to talk about it, or do you feel like you have to talk about it?

There will be times as a business owner when you'll feel like you have to talk about something that's going on in the world or that's in the news. At other times, it will be more a case of 'I want to talk about it'. For example, we have seen schools release statements about how they're dealing with school closures and staggered re-openings across the country. This is not something they want to talk about, it's something they have had to talk about.

2. Why do you want to talk about it, or why do you not want to talk about it?

If you don't want to talk about something that is going on in the media, then don't. It seems obvious, doesn't it? This point calls for you to have a good conversation with yourself about why you do (or don't) want to talk about something.

When something happens and you decide you either want to talk about it or feel like you have to talk about, it's crucial you determine why you feel this way. Is it to educate your audience? Is it to inspire or motivate them? Is it designed to share the values of your business through what you're discussing?



Is it helping your audience solve a problem? Is it helping them to trust you more?



If it's more of a personal opinion that doesn't align with your business objectives, however, then you should pause. For instance, if you have a strong opinion about a COVID-19-related matter, but upon reflection you decide that expressing it publicly may polarise your community of personal training clients or gym members and potentially instigate negative interactions between them (which you definitely do not want to do), then don't post it. It's your choice.

3. Is it going to be helpful to your audience? (and the 'Don't be a tool' rule)

When it comes to sharing your opinions on topical matters, it's important to determine if what you want to share is going to be helpful to your audience. Is it helping them to solve a problem? Is it helping them to trust you more?

If you are posting about a topic because you want to get something off your chest, and it's actually not helpful for your audience, avoid it.

For example, if you have realised over time that the most responsive members of your online community are prone to anxiety about a particular issue, and you have an opinion or link to an article or video that will inflame that anxiety, then don't share it. This is when you want to put in place the 'Don't be a tool' rule! Yes, you may generate discussion and engagement, but if it's negative and simply makes your people feel angry or sad, why do it? Only share things that will be beneficial to your audience.

4. Is it something you stand for or stand against?

Every entrepreneur, business owner and organisation has a set of values. If there is something happening that speaks directly to what you stand for or against, my recommendation is to talk about it. This shows your audience what you and your business is like at the core. If the matter truly is a core value that your business has openly operated by, then expressing views that support this value should not polarise or alienate members of your community.

For example, if your club overtly promotes and practices a policy of safety first and always for members and staff, then posting opinions

supporting the tough club shutdown measures enforced by government during COVID-19 will serve to reinforce your values.

5. Are you willing to share your opinion on what's going on and back it up?

It can feel like you're opening yourself up for both support and criticism when it comes to sharing an opinion on a current event.

Feel free to share it, but make sure you have the data and the numbers to support your opinion. Share these, along with the critical thinking that has informed your opinion.

Many people look for the evidence when they're deciding whether your opinions are worth listening to or not. If you can't back up your own stance with facts and reason, reconsider whether it is wise to share it in a professional forum that exists to strengthen and grow your business. **N**



Nicola Moras

Nicola is an online visibility expert and author of Visible, a guide for business owners on how to generate financial results from social media and digital marketing. Nicola helps clients around the world achieve online visibility, impact and profits.



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The beauty of striving for perfect technique

with Hays Daewoud

Martial arts coach and educator Hays Daewoud trained fighters to win international titles before switching his focus to boxing-for-fitness. Here, he talks about bringing the focus back to boxing skills; the importance of evidence-based practice; and aiming for perfection in technique, even when you're boxing-for-fitness, not competition.

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How to gain, train and retain the best PT team

with Kate Allott

Kate Allott, the Head of Fitness for Anytime Fitness Australia, oversees the recruitment of hundreds of PTs nationwide. Here, she discusses casting a narrow net when recruiting trainers, setting role expectations with new trainers, measuring metrics and stemming PT attrition rates.

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Strengthen willpower with consistency over intensity

with Dr Morwenna Kirwan

Exercise scientist Dr Morwenna Kirwan is passionate about helping people live healthier lives through motivation and behavioural health psychology. Here, she chats about short term and long-term mindsets, setting boundaries around use of technology, strengthening self-control through small daily acts rather than grand gestures, and why PTs should take an afternoon nap...

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Fasting, food choices and future health directions

with Professor Grant Schofield

A Professor of Public Health, Grant Schofield is well-known for his work around low carb and ketogenic eating. Here, he talks about fasting, nutritional ketosis and autophagy; resisting junk food promotions; and the huge impact that switching 10% of the nation's health budget from treatment to prevention could have.

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Match your client's training to their genes

with Kyle Riley

Health coach and epigenetics educator Kyle Riley advocates for PTs delivering holistic and highly personalised experiences. Here, he chats about how people respond differently to the same stimulus, matching a client's environment and training style to their genes and personality types, and how personalised health can help clients get results by working smarter rather than harder.

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Motion, emotion and nerve stimulation

with Dr Emily Splichal

Functional podiatrist and human movement specialist, Dr Emily Splichal has spent her career studying barefoot science and foot-to-core integration. Here, she discusses 'from-the-ground-up' training, barefoot feedback and two-point discrimination, the powerful link between motion and emotion, and the simple 'balance hack' of getting clients to push their fingertips together...

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INJURY & REHAB

SHOULD CLIENTS USE ICE OR HEAT TO TREAT PAIN AND INJURIES?

Cold and heat can both have roles to play in treating injury. Physiotherapist *Tim Keeley* looks at which to use, and at what stage of recovery.



THE QUICK READ

- When an injury is first incurred and there is tissue damage, acute pain and swelling, ice, rather than heat, should always be used for the first few days
- Three days after the injury has been sustained, ice treatments can be alternated with heat treatments to speed up recovery
- Recurring pain from old injuries is still best treated with ice
- For pain and muscle spasms in the neck and shoulders, heat is usually the best treatment
- Prior to training or playing sport, very tight muscles or problem areas may benefit from heat treatment in conjunction with stretching and, ideally, massage and a light active warm up.

Physiotherapists are continually asked by patients whether they should use ice or heat to treat their injuries – and for how long it should be applied. There's no 'one treatment fits all injuries' answer, but there are some established approaches to follow at different stages of recovery. Here are some of the most common questions I get asked, and my responses.

What should I use if I've just suffered an injury?

When you first suffer an injury, where there is tissue damage, acute pain and swelling, always use ice, not heat.

During the onset of injury, the body swells the area quickly to immobilise the damaged area so it can repair – and stop you using it! There may also be bleeding if the injury is to muscle, ligament and tendon. The body tends to go a little overboard most of the time, and the swelling is excessive. The more tissue damage, the more the swelling and bleeding.

The best way to limit the amount of swelling (and therefore speed up your rehabilitation time) is to apply the R.I.C.E (Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation) principle as soon as possible. Acute injuries need to be treated in this way for between 24 and 72 hours.

R.I.C.E is still the best form of controlling post-injury swelling. The ice component rapidly cools and contracts the tissues, which markedly reduces the pain in the area. The compression element is the most essential for controlling excessive swelling. You do actually want the inflammatory process to start as it helps the healing phase to begin afterwards, you just don't want a lot of swelling.

Compression, in combination with the ice, helps compress the tissues, even out the pressure in the area and prevent the swelling expanding. Think of holding a cut on your finger tight, it stops the bleeding and swelling. Always combine ice and compression by using an elasticated compression stocking, such as Tubigrip, or compression support over the ice. If you were to use heat in this instance, like a

hot pack or hot shower, this would expand the tissues, increase the blood flow and increase bleeding and swelling in the area – the opposite of what you want to happen!

The same principle applies with regard to massaging an injury: do not get an injured area massaged in the first 24 to 48 hours, as this will have the same effect as heat and increase the problem. Apply the ice for at least 25-30 minutes at a time and repeat every two to three hours for between one and three days, as directed by your physio. Do not leave the ice on for more than 45 minutes at a time.

The use of anti-inflammatories in the first three days is also to be avoided: you should only use normal painkillers, as you need the inflammation process. However, after the first three days anti-inflammatories can be used if the inflammation is not reducing of its own accord and the swelling is still causing pain.

It's been a few days since my injury, and the pain is less. Can I use heat now?

Yes. However, the best way to do this is use heat and ice alternately. When you go from ice to heat and then back again, it helps 'flush' the tissues, remove waste products from the injury and promote healing. Think of squeezing a sponge and letting it fill up with water, then squeezing it again and repeating this process. Professional athletes use this idea to help improve their recovery rate. After 72 hours, the swelling and bleeding process will have stopped, so you won't increase the damage with heat.

After the alternating ice treatments, wait until the tissues warm up to normal body temperature before applying the heat for the same amount of time. Let the tissues cool down naturally. Then repeat the ice/heat process as many times as you can.



During the onset of injury, the body swells the area quickly to immobilise the damaged area so it can repair – and stop you using it!



Using ice and heat effectively can be very time consuming, so not many people – apart from professional athletes – do it.

After exercising I feel pain from an old injury. What should I use?

As tempting as the idea of applying heat is, the best treatment in this instance is actually ice. If you suffer recurrent pain (not just muscle fatigue) after exercise, it's usually a sign of inflammation and aggravation of the tissues. Ice is still the better option here because, even though inflammation is an essential part of the recovery and repair process by the body, you don't want to increase it with more heat and blood flow than you need. Ice in this case would be the best at controlling pain levels and help desensitise the area. Apply the ice for at least 25 to 30 minutes at a time and repeat every two to three hours if possible.

I have pain and muscle spasm in my neck and shoulders, and a headache. Is heat the best?

In this case heat, in the form of a wheat bag or a microwavable hot pack, is the best option as it increases blood flow to the area, helping reduce tight muscles and activate trigger points in the muscles in the neck, trapezius and spine. The hot shower option (with which many of us are familiar) is also very relieving. The same applies for the lower

back and mid back (thoracic). Using heat on these areas helps soothe muscle pain and neural tension in the spine, and relaxes muscle spasm and tightness. Massage therapists use hot stones on the back and spinal muscles for this very reason. Massage therapy works in the same way as heat, so if you can get to a massage therapist or physiotherapist you will get even more relief (and the problem addressed as well).

I get really tight muscles in my legs and lower back from time to time. Should I use heat before I train or play sport?

If you do a proper warm up, heat is not usually necessary, as the blood flow and neural activity generated by the active warm up does the trick. However, for very tight muscles or problem areas (from old injuries) that need extra warming up, heat is the best option here, as the goal is to reduce the muscle tension and increase your blood flow so the tissues are more easily stretched. You don't want to stretch cold muscles before exercise. Apply the heat pack or wheat bag for 25 to 30 minutes before the active warm up, then make sure you stretch the tight muscles.

Using only heat before training is a 'passive' warm up and not as effective as an 'active' one. However, doing a passive warm up of heat and massage, then an active warm up or a light jog or cycle before stretching, is the most effective option before training or sport. This is the principle that professional sports-people use before their games: heat, massage, warm up, stretch, perform! **N**



Tim Keeley, B.Phty, Cred.MDT, APAM

With over 20 years' experience in physiotherapy and the fitness industry, Tim is Principal Physiotherapist and Director of Physio

Fitness, a clinic based in Sydney's Bondi Junction. An internationally credentialed McKenzie Credentialed Spinal Physiotherapist, he specialises in sports, fitness and training injuries.



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ABOUT THE COURSE CREATOR



KIRSTY NIELD

Over the past 20 years Kirsty has established herself as one of Australia's leading group fitness instructors and educators, creating and delivering challenging and dynamic group fitness classes. A GFM since 2009 and fitness presenter since 2012, she is passionate about mentoring and educating fellow fitness professionals.



TIPS TO PREVENT 'WORKING FROM HOME OFFICE' INJURIES

With more of us doing screen-based work in non-professional settings, physiotherapist *Clare Dingle* shares some tips for creating a safe and comfortable workspace.

For most fitness professionals, being deskbound is not usually a problem. These have not been usual times however, and many trainers and instructors have been finding themselves spending hours crouched over laptop screens on their sofas or kitchen tables. Cue sore necks, shoulders and upper backs.

While gyms are reopening and clients and members returning, this period has highlighted the need to have home-based workspaces that do not negatively impact us physically.

Here are some top tips to create a more ergonomic workstation that makes any time spent working from home a little less uncomfortable.

1. Keep all angles at 90 degrees

If you have a height-adjustable desk and desk chair, make sure you adjust them to a 90-degree angle to avoid slouching. Your knees, hips, and back should also be of utmost priority.

2. Flat feet

Whether you put them on the ground or use a footrest, you should keep your feet flat. This will help to maintain the 90-degree angle.

3. Neutral positioning

If you're working between two screens, make sure that you are positioned to face the middle where they connect, maintaining your head in a straight and neutral position.

4. Posture

Avoid forward head and neck posture: tuck your chin in, lengthen your neck and bring your head back into alignment with your shoulders. Imagine a helium balloon pulling you up.

5. Ergonomic height

Set your computer so that you are at eye level with the top third of the screen. A laptop stand, such as Twelve South's HiRise



This period has highlighted the need to have home-based workspaces that do not negatively impact us physically





Stretches should involve anything opposing the position you were sitting in: this includes elbow extensions, knee extensions, neck stretches and wrist rotations.



or Curve for MacBook, can position your device at an appropriate height, ensuring that you're not straining your neck by looking up or down.

6. Mouse and keyboard

Try keeping these close to the body so that you aren't reaching out to use them. If possible, use a separate keyboard, monitor and mouse.

7. Movement

Keeping a cup of water beside you rather than a large drink bottle will encourage you to get up for a refill and thereby have a quick bout of incidental activity! Aim to get up and move around the room every 20 to 30 minutes to avoid joint stiffness.

8. Stretch

Stretches should involve anything opposing the position you were sitting in. This includes elbow extensions, knee extensions, neck stretches and wrist rotations.

9. Handheld devices

Use earphones instead of holding the phone to the ear. It becomes increasingly difficult

to multi-task, so ensure that you're keeping the phone on the table, allowing you to type and eliminating the habit of bending your neck.

10. Exercise

As a fitness professional, you know how important this is for every aspect of life, but in terms of desk-based work, you specifically need good general strength and flexibility in your neck, shoulders, back, and abdominal muscles to support good posture.

11. Breathing exercises

To avoid tension building in your neck and upper shoulder muscles, take three deep breaths down into your diaphragm and belly every 20 to 30 minutes, soften your shoulders and draw your shoulder blades back and down.

12. Routine

Maintaining a consistent routine needs to be a priority. Balance your daily schedule by factoring in breaks for eating and getting fresh air. **N**



Clare Dingle, BSC (HONS) Physio

Clare is a passionate and experienced Women's Health and Musculoskeletal Physiotherapist with Women in Focus Physiotherapy based in Sydney. She is also an occupational therapist for Twelve South, which designs accessories to help people create safe, ergonomic and stylish working environments.



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NZ NEWS



News and views from the New Zealand fitness industry.

ExerciseNZ guides government on post-COVID reopening



New Zealand is now at Level 1 for its COVID-19 response, which means gyms and exercise providers can be open, with almost no restrictions. Contact tracing is now only 'recommended' by government, and the now well established CV-19 hygiene recommendations (sneezing into elbow etc) and 'stay at home if unwell' remain the main rule for all businesses.

While New Zealand is held up by many as a model for others to follow, from a gym industry perspective there were major challenges throughout lockdown and reopening. A good deal of this stemmed from the vacuum of information from government regarding the rules for the various levels, often until the day before, and sometimes the day of, any changes. As one government liaison told us 'We are building the plane as we are flying it', which made planning ahead extremely challenging.

Businesses need certainty, so ExerciseNZ took what some regarded as an unusual step of developing industry guidelines for reopening before the government released theirs. As the lead time for development of a comprehensive framework is many weeks, even with this fast-tracked, it meant we had to be 100% sure that our framework was not only going to meet the (then as yet undisclosed) needs of government, but also that it was safe, evidence-based, and met the needs of the exercise industry. The good news is, this worked. Having a framework before the government had developed one meant the industry got significant positive media exposure at a time that everyone was asking for clarity. Moreover, we were invited to present the framework to Parliament's CV-19 committee. At that submission we again went against the trend, and instead of asking for money and exceptions, focused on the effect that gyms being closed would have on the immediate mental health and long-term physical health of the three-quarters of a million Kiwis that exercised pre-pandemic. We presented evidence of how to keep people safe (our framework), provided statistics on the major impact on Kiwis' wellness if exercise providers were to fail, and backed it up with information on the budgetary impact for taxpayers if fewer people are active.

We went above and beyond government guidelines in our framework, and as a result proved that our industry could take the lead on what is safe. Multiple government departments and agencies now look at our framework as the model to follow. By doing this, we were able to provide certainty to our industry on what to expect, how to plan, and above all, the new rules of operating.

The process wasn't easy and we faced many challenges, including one government agency saying gyms and classes had a maximum of 10 attendees when level 2 started and that the 100-maximum applied to large facilities, even though this wasn't the case. We knew that the 10 limit would cripple gyms when they opened, so went back to our framework, engaged with the government

safety agency (WorkSafe) and through countless hours of Zoom meetings, phone calls and emails to everyone from the Minister of Health to expert virologists and protocol designers, were successful in having the restrictions clarified as not applying to our industry.

We were prepared to fight for our industry, but by doing our homework and front-footing the issues with both the media and the government, we found that we didn't need to battle them: instead, they turned to us for guidance.

The challenges related to COVID-19 are far from over for our industry. Throughout the lockdown we have been providing tools and guidelines for everything from membership contracts and employment issues, to consumer research. Right now, we are planning for future potential challenges: what happens if we go back into some sort of lockdown, and how can we position our industry as safe? We are also very aware that the full economic effects of the economic downturn are yet to be felt and that there may be further facility closures (at the time of writing it is less than 1% of the industry).

So, what have we learnt from all of this? We need to be confident that what we advocate is right, and supported by science and statistics. We need to let the government and the media know that as an industry, safety is our priority. We also need to communicate clearly to the entire exercise industry. Finally, we support gyms, studios, recreation centres, PTs, yoga teachers, group fitness instructors and gym floor staff. Be very clear: we are here for you – we will get through this.

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