

## Choosing the Right Fitness Coach

Having a personal fitness coach or personal trainer can do wonders for your workouts. He or she can be the difference between a fantastic workout and a mediocre one. Your fitness coach will motivate you, help you progress to higher levels, and make sure that your workouts are fun, effective, and do not cause injury. But how do you go about finding a good one? Following are some tips for choosing the right fitness coach.



If you already belong to a health club or fitness center, ask if there are personal fitness coaches on staff and ask others if they have an opinion about the coaches there. Word of mouth is one of the best ways to narrow down your field of candidates. A stellar coach will always come with good recommendations. Your physician and your friends are other good resources for referrals.

Once you have a few candidates in mind, take some time to determine what your goals are and how much money you have available to spend on a fitness coach. Private coaching usually costs anywhere from \$20 to \$100 for a one-hour session, with most charging between \$25 and \$50 an hour. Consider the frequency you would like as well. You may be able to arrange for a one-time consultation in which the fitness coach will assess your current level of training and develop a workout program you can follow to help meet your goals. Perhaps you can arrange for a follow-up session after a few months so he or she can gauge your progress and adjust your routine as necessary. Then again, you may like someone to work with you one-on-one during your workouts in order to get more hands-on training. Some fitness coaches offer discounts for multiple sessions, higher-frequency and group training programs.

You should be sure that your fitness coach is certified by an accredited training organization to ensure he or she is qualified to guide your training. It is also a plus if your fitness coach has first aid and CPR training, in case a health emergency should arise. If you have any health conditions or are pregnant, be sure to share this information with your fitness coach so that exercises can be appropriately tailored to your health needs. A good trainer will take an accurate medical history and will ask if you are currently taking any medications.

Understandably, coaches with more training and experience are usually better—and more expensive. If you are on a tight budget, recent graduates may charge less than more established coaches. Ask any fitness coach candidates for references from clients

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and professionals who are aware of his or her skills so you can get a better idea of the coach's level of expertise as well as his or her approach.

Your fitness coach should set healthy, realistic, attainable goals. Avoid any fitness coach that tells you, for example, that you will be able to lose 20 pounds in 20 days.

The last thing to consider—but possibly one of the most important things—is your coach's personality. He or she should motivate you by using positive reinforcement, and should never belittle you or make you feel inadequate. Remember that you will be working very closely with this person, so it is important that your personalities mesh.

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