

# **FitnessTalks!**

*Fitness...for the mind and body.*

## **Hiring A Personal Trainer**

*By David Martin*

Now that the holidays have passed and life returns to some normalcy, you may be thinking about improving your health. Now is the perfect time for action. Perhaps losing unwanted inches and fat, increasing your energy, and improving personal and professional growth. Starting a complete exercise program that consists of strength and cardiovascular training will be your best answer. Joining a health club will do wonders. If you are considering hiring a personal trainer, please consider a few things.

While in the health club observe the trainers that work in the club. How involved are they with the client? Are they standing there and counting repetitions and discussing today's headlines? Are they looking around the club, sometimes on their cell phones, having a continued conversation with the client during the training session, or with other people?

Personal trainers should offer three things to improve your health: a safe, effective and efficient total body conditioning program. Safety is the most important consideration. Lifting weights quickly (1-2 seconds a repetition) is not safe or effective. Moving a weight quickly increases the risk of injury. The body may be out of proper alignment or over extending a joint; which may tear a muscle, or cause discomfort in a joint. Additionally, moving the weight quickly, the muscle performs less work because gravity and momentum are assisting with the lift. The goal of strength training is to challenge the muscles. The harder they work, the larger and more tone the muscle. Thus, making the body look better and losing excess fat and inches.

Performing multiple sets and resting for varying minutes between sets is not an efficient use of your time. Performing 1-2 sets and about 12-20 reps—perform until you are unable to lift another rep with perfect form, for about 15 exercise with no more than 1 minute rest between exercises, will offer greater benefit towards achieving your goals in a shorter period of time. An effective and efficient full body workout including cardio should take no more than 50 minutes. This is about 20-30 minutes of cardio and performing about 12-15 different exercises that work the full body. What you may witness are some trainers walking around from machine to machine adding weight, the client then begins the movement, and the trainer counts to 10 or 12 and then the client stops. Did the trainer correct their form? Offer any suggestions about how to make the movement more effective? Ensure that the weight was lifted slow and in control. Did the client appear to be challenged?

Also, listen to the trainers. Are they talking about what they do all the time. A trainer who is hired should assist you with your workout during that time. If more of a conversation is desired, do it after your session or briefly during your rest between sets and exercises. Maximize your time at the club by challenging your muscles. You will see more dramatic improvement.

Does the trainer document the workout session using a workout card or log? Keeping accurate documentation of the exercise, reps performed, sets, and time

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between exercises, provides objectivity and charts your progress. More importantly, if a trainer is doing his/her keeping accurate records, they know when to safely add more weight or reps so you can maximize your strength. Doing the same weight and reps weekly does not provide enough challenge to the muscles, thus they do not work as hard and minimal improvement is the outcome.

So, what do you to look for before hiring a personal trainer? When you have selected a few potential trainers, conduct an interview. Does the trainer show up promptly and professionally? Do they have a college degree and certification? Do they have extensive experience in the field? Ask about their current clients and their successes. Just because a trainer may have a good physique and look in shape is not a valid criteria in hiring a trainer. Ask the trainer for a reference list. Is there a pre-fitness assessment measuring inches, body fat, and blood pressure?

Remember; this is your body, your time, and your money. Select a trainer with diligence and patience and you will make greater progress.

For more information on improving the quality of life, please visit [www.FitnessTalks.com](http://www.FitnessTalks.com).