

8 Things You Should Know **Before** You Join a Gym or Hire A Personal Trainer

1. **Credentials Matter** - The Fitness Industry is one of the few industries that is not regulated, and also has a very low barrier to entry in that anyone can call themselves a "trainer" without any basis for that claim. Yet these are people who run neighborhood Bootcamps and work at low-cost gyms. These "trainers" can have you doing exercises that are ineffective and possibly dangerous if you don't have the ability or not taught the technique to perform them properly.

The American Council on Exercise (ACE), National Academy of Sport Medicine (NASM), American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and the National Strength & Conditioning Association (NSCA) are the **ONLY** credentials recognized and endorsed in academia as valid credentials for Fitness Professionals.

Additionally, the NSCA credentials are the **ONLY** credentials that require a Bachelor's degree and have the most challenging examination process (only 68% pass on first attempt).

So when you're looking for a Trainer or Coach, make sure they are certified by one (or more) of the following: **ACE; ACSM; NASM or the NCSA** plus a Bachelor's Degree.

2. **It's about YOUR Goals** - Next to having "legit" credentials, you want to make sure that the Gym or trainer you hire is **TRULY** interested in your goals **AND** can explain **HOW** you will achieve your goals and set a reasonable timeline for doing so.

Ideally your program should at least include these **3 main components**:

- Mobility and Flexibility – the better you can move the more you will get out of your training and significantly reduce your chances for injury
- Strength – regardless of your goals, building strength is vitally important, especially if you're 40+ years young.
- Nutritional Accountability – no matter how "awesome" your workouts, if you don't modify your eating habits, you will inevitably end up frustrated and not get the results you want.

3. **Insurance** – Hopefully this will be a non-issue. However, accidents can happen, so make sure that your gym or trainer has liability insurance. More than likely if they have invested in their education (see #1 again) and earned industry leading credentials, they will have Professional Liability coverage. On the other hand, if they don't have current or "legit" credentials, they probably don't have insurance either!

4. **Walking the Walk** - Do they look fit and healthy or not? Do they have minimal body fat? When choosing a Fitness Professional, make sure they practice what they preach. Anyone can say "do this, do that or eat this and not that", but do they FOLLOW their own advice?

5. **It's in the Details** - Did you know that most fitness related injuries happen because of bad form? Improper form can stem from muscular imbalances, lack of mobility or simply not being TAUGHT how to do certain exercises or movements properly and safely.

If you're new to exercising or trying a different type of workout – you definitely don't want a trainer or a coach that just says "Ready, Set, Go!" or "Come on, do it faster!" ...without teaching you HOW to perform the move safely and effectively.

6. **New and Cool Workouts** - Trends come and go in the Fitness Industry. Unfortunately many "trainers" and gyms offer the latest and/or newest trends to their clients without getting certified (or taking continuing education classes) to provide you adequate instruction and guidance.

For example, Kettlebells are quickly becoming a tool for rapid fat-loss, developing strength and improving mobility.

So now, you have gyms and trainers adding Kettlebells into their bag of tricks in order to stay current. Unfortunately, if not used properly, Kettlebells can be INEFFECTIVE (No results) AND Dangerous (Injuries).

There are thousands of Kettlebell workouts/videos on YouTube; unfortunately, countless trainers watch a few videos and think they can teach their clients how to exercise with Kettlebells (or do any exercise for that matter). **This is a secret trainers DO NOT WANT YOU to know!** I've witnessed this in both low-cost gyms AND hi-end health clubs as well!

Like Personal Training Certifications, there are only a limited number of legit Kettlebell Coaching Certifications – they're not cheap and they demand technical proficiency and teaching ability to earn these credentials. The global leaders in Kettlebell Training Certifications are **Strong First (SFG)** and the **Russian Kettlebell Challenge (RKC)**.

With a good RKC or SFG coach, amazing results are possible!

7. **Ethical Practices** – Every year thousands of consumers complain about “bait and switch” tactics gyms use to sell new memberships and personal training. It should be about YOUR results and NOT long-term memberships or pre-paying for dozens of Personal Training sessions in advance.

If you have to sign a “contract” or feel pressured to buy large personal training packages in advance – move on!

8. **Talk is cheap!** People join gyms and hire a Personal Trainers for mainly one reason: Measurable and visible results! When interviewing potential gyms or trainers, find out if they **Guarantee Your satisfaction AND their services**. If they won't stand behind their services, why bother doing business with them?

I hope you found this Consumer Report helpful. Making an informed decision on the best way to achieve your Health, Fitness and Weight Management goals can be confusing with so many false marketing claims and misinformation. It is my hope, this will help you get the RESULTS you want and deserve.

Remember, “You get what you pay for!”

Dedicated to your success,
David

David Jenkins, CSCS, RKC 2, NSCA-CPT
Owner & Head Coach, Motivational Fitness
Corporate Wellness Consultant