

# How to Profit from Online Fitness Training

Interview with Samuel Hirschberg, Director  
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## How did you get started in online fitness training?

It was an accident, really. I was trying to make a living playing tennis. I couldn't afford a strength and conditioning coach at the time, so I decided to learn what the best trainers know. That's how I found ISSA and got my certification. As I was studying my course I thought to myself, "There must be other tennis athletes in need of speed and strength training, like myself." So I decided to focus on helping tennis players do just that, become better athletes. That's when I created a periodized 12-week tennis-specific training routine, and sold the majority of them online.

## How do you deal with the legal issues training clients online?

I took several precautions to avoid as much legal stickiness as possible. First, I made it very clear that it is the customer's sole responsibility to get an M.D.'s ok before starting my program. I put that in all of my materials.

Second, because I was not physically present, I did not want to call myself their "personal" trainer. Instead I positioned myself as a specialist in tennis fitness training, stating that I could help them reach their goals of becoming a better tennis player as a result of my training routines.

Third, I made it very clear that if they do not know how to perform an exercise, to personally see a certified coach, trainer, or knowledgeable coach at a high school or college. This provided my clients with the additional services they might need and opened me up to other profit centers through referring clients to other certified trainers in my network. Since I couldn't show a client in San Antonio, TX how to perform a "good morning" from my gym in Santa Barbara, CA, I created business relationships with other trainers that I know and trusted, and negotiated a referral

fee. Fourth, I had my clients sign a release of liability waiver, and provide a goal list with a time line so everyone was clear on what was expected from one another.

Lastly, I always stuck to markets of people that typically were physically active already, had access to equipment and had access to knowledgeable fitness and athletic-minded people. It just seemed to make my job easier.

## For the trainers that just want to add an additional income, say \$500 or \$1000 a month to their current training business, what should they do?

Well, a couple things. First, start by looking at your current clients. Ask yourself two questions. 1) How can I increase the dollar amount they are investing with me? and 2) How can I keep them doing business with me longer? Keeping them with you longer is no different than giving yourself a raise. Your job is to make it as easy as possible for your clients to do business with you, ensuring you an active stream of income.

I would start by setting a price for your "online training" product, such as \$49 a month. Now start to treat it like an asset, no different than a \$49 medicine ball set that you use daily as a training device. As for current clients, I would offer this as a free bonus, kind of a "thank you" for doing business with you. This is the first step for them to be using your online training services when they no longer need to be with you in the gym. Second, for all your future clients, offer them a "training package", i.e., if you enroll with me for 12 weeks of training in the gym, get online training for just \$9.95 a month for 12 months. This is how you begin to build your business. And remember, you only need 21 clients paying you \$49 a month to earn over \$1000. There really are no rules, except, "How can I make training with me irresistible for my clients, and still realize a profit?"

## **If you had only one piece of advice to give to fitness trainers, what would it be?**

Remember, your clients are not excited about 30 minutes of aerobic training and they aren't all that excited about lifting weights, either. But, they are excited about the health benefits that 30 minutes of aerobic training can do for them, long term. They are excited about what their calves will look like after 4 weeks of seated calf raises 2 or 3 times a week. And, they are excited about how they will be able to hit the ball harder as a result of proper ab, lower back, and medicine ball training. So, my advice is to stay focused on what they are excited about, not what you are excited about. Huge difference. But, of course, keep it realistic, legal, moral, ethical. And by all means keep it attainable. Do not overpromise. I see way too many trainers do this. Bottom line: Make it a habit to underpromise while overdelivering, to everyone.

## **If you were to develop a brand new online fitness training business, where would you start?**

I am certainly into making it as easy as possible on myself, so I would most definitely start in locating a market of people that want to buy my service. Sounds pretty simple, but most business people fail out of the gates because they don't do this. It's much easier to sell to someone that is interested in your expertise, then to sell to someone that isn't. Do this by locating a group of people that are already interested in what you have to offer. For an easy, fast example, you could play off the success of the "Abs Diet" books. You already know what these people are interested in. Sell them a product that you create on how to realize stronger ab muscles. From there, you could easily integrate your online fitness training programs at any easy price point, say \$9.95. Position yourself as the "Abdominal Muscle Specialist", Certified Fitness Professional. Acquire 100 customers and you have your \$1000 a month. Now, it's time to make that grow. Keep your customers coming back by changing the

routine monthly. After you have them as a customer realizing your ab training workouts, you could now offer them a full body online training routine for \$29 a month. I would set my sights on having 200 to 300 paying customers at several different price points, from \$9.95 all the way up to several hundred dollars. Hopefully by now you are noticing that niche marketing really is the way to bring customers into your business.

## **How do you accept payment?**

I know that ISSA offers several options by calling them at 800-892-4772. Here's three. First option is getting set up with the hardware, where you manually process credit cards, either by physically swiping the card, or typing the numbers in yourself. I like this option, a lot. Very professional, and easy to carry with you and drop in your gym bag. Second, is a service where you can actually charge the card using your cell phone. It's called CellCharge. And third, there is a free program called PayPal.com, which you have probably seen online. They are a secure, third party money transfer service. They collect credit card payments and allow you to transfer money to and from your account digitally. If you want a totally automated operation, for you lazy trainers that have Internet skills, I would suggest a company called Charge.com. But, I wouldn't go there until you have a steady stream of orders bringing in sufficient cash flow.

## **How do I get started with online training?**

Go to [www.issaonline.com/onlinefitness](http://www.issaonline.com/onlinefitness) Everything you need to know is there. This is an incredibly easy-to-use online fitness training program that let's you train clients from virtually anywhere in the world, with no software to download! If you have any questions after you have started the program, feel free to drop me a line at [sam.hirschberg@issacentral.com](mailto:sam.hirschberg@issacentral.com)