



FUNCTIONAL
FITNESS
COACH
LEVEL 1

WELCOME TO THE FUNCTIONAL FITNESS COACH LEVEL 1 COURSE

Founders Ollie Marchon and Jenz Robinson are proud to release the most anticipated course within the fitness industry today.

This course will transform your thought processes, reignite your fire and allow you to stand head and shoulders above the rest.

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MODULE 1



THE
FOUNDATION



1.1

MODERN COACHING PROFESSIONALISM

Here at the PFCA, we're professionalising the career of the personal trainer.

With hard work and the right attitude, the modern coaching professional can look forward to a fulfilling job that's constantly challenging you to grow, a reliable income that allows you to live the lifestyle you're looking for and the freedom and integrity of being a successful small business owner.

In order to reap these benefits, ambitious coaches need to take the trade beyond the simple commodity of delivering sets and reps.

You need to be a well-rounded, highly motivated individual who values professionalism and your clients above all else.

You need to have more than technical mastery. You must be confident and proficient in delivering a full-service, end-to-end premium experience for your clients.

You need to see coaching as a career and a business, not just a 'job'.

You need to take a systematic and carefully thought-out approach to creating your business from the ground up, not just focus on the bits you prefer and leave the rest to chance.

You need to 'walk the talk', living the lifestyle that you want to role model to your clients.

And you need to embrace a mindset of growth and development, founded on core values that resonate with your reasons for choosing this path.

This attitude should play out and be evident in everything you do as a coach: the way you communicate, the way you present yourself and how you conduct yourself in your own life.

Being a coach is both an opportunity and a responsibility. You have a powerful ability to change people's lives.

Here are the PFCA's five key traits of a modern training professional:

Professionalism

You're on time, well turned out, communicate well, and conduct yourself in a way that shows you value your job and your clients.

Growth

You never stop learning, always realising that you can hone your craft and improve your service.

Care

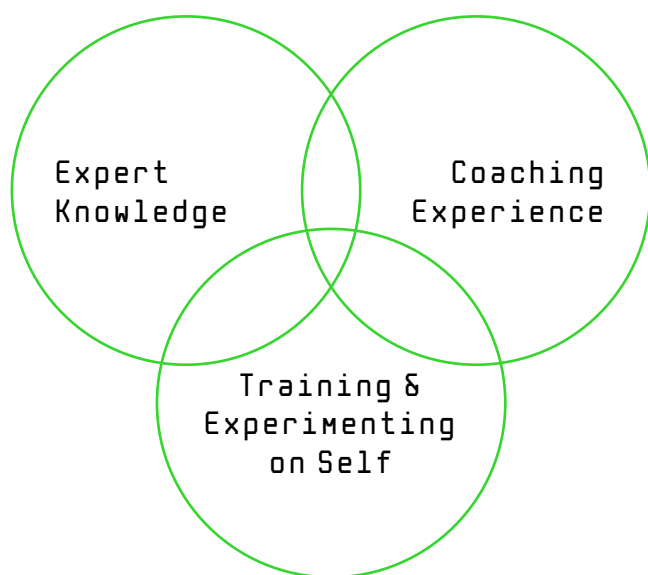
You're not just in it for the money. Clients' results and experiences mean something to you, and it shows.

Integrity

You have a vision of what's right in your mind, and you stick to it. You do what you say you'll do – when you say you'll do it.

Added value

You go the extra mile to do an outstanding job of whatever you put your mind to. Giving the client an outstanding experience is at the top of your to-do list, every day.



This course is designed to help you build the foundations of a successful PT business, covering each of these crucial areas to make you the well-rounded and confident coach you need to be.

Ready? Let's get started.

1.2

THE INDUSTRY

In the fitness industry, as in many lines of work, change is now the new normal.

The internet has made clients more knowledgeable and discerning than ever before. Basic knowledge that used to only be known by trainers is now accessible at the touch of a screen. Thousands of YouTube videos and Facebook groups, tens of thousands of instructional websites, thousands of books, downloads, online courses... the market is more crowded than it's ever been, putting the client in a position of both knowledge and power.

This means that if you want to cut through the noise, engage clients and keep them, being technically proficient isn't enough. The entire user experience needs to be outstanding.

Digitally fluent

The Coronavirus pandemic forced the fitness industry to adapt to an online model – or die out. Although the heart of the coaching trade lies with a physical approach, a successful PT needs to be comfortable coaching both on and offline, and in using both of these mediums to communicate with clients and drive their business.

Remember that taking your coaching online doesn't give you an easy ride – you still need to be technically solid. Your usual systems and processes will need to be tweaked to ensure that clients still get an outstanding experience, even from the comfort of their own homes.

Adaptable

In this fast-changing climate, a successful PT needs to be able to pivot and flex their offering as changes happen in the industry. This means you need to embrace a growth mindset that keeps you constantly innovating and challenging what you think you know. Learn from the best, stay informed, and keep striving to excel.

Diverse

More savvy and sophisticated clients mean that the modern coaching professional needs to be an expert in a far wider range of training modalities than before. People are coming in from many different backgrounds, they're more educated, and their range of goals and demands is far more exacting than it used to be. Coaches are coming from all sorts of different backgrounds too – people with a six-week online coaching course are working side by side with people who have master's degrees in strength and conditioning. Now more than ever, you need to be exceptional in all areas to make the grade.

Focused

The saturation of the market means that if you want to stand out, you need to know exactly how what you're offering differs from everyone else around you. You need to understand what your particular strengths are, and where you sit in the bigger picture of fitness offerings within your speciality. How is your value proposition different from the big box down the road, the online bikini warrior churning out cardio classes from a beach in Thailand, or the boutique yoga studio charging top whack and selling branded gear for hundreds of quid?

You need to be distinct, you need to be compelling, and you need to know the merit of what you do. You need to become a market of one.

The successful modern training professional needs to be able to straddle the digital and physical worlds comfortably. You need to be a well-rounded and confident leader of people. You need to forget the one-size-fits-all approach and have the depth of technical skill and interpersonal sensitivity to tailor your service to a range of different client needs.

1.3

WHAT MAKES A GREAT COACH?

Many can be good, but what does it take to be great? Greatness is often misconstrued as purely experience, knowledge or success.

These characteristics are important but there is so much more to coaching than these attributes.

Great coaching is the ability to adapt and connect to your clientele and provide guidance, support and encouragement for an improved state. None of this can be easily defined, nor measured because great coaching is about building great connections. Connecting the dots between clients' goals, wants, needs and the step-by-step processes required to achieve an improved new identity.

Here are a few characteristics of great coaches

1. Ability to apply knowledge
2. Professionalism
3. Passionate
4. Open-mindedness
5. Great communication skills
6. Role models
7. Patience
8. Adaptability
9. Honesty
10. Dedication and a solid work rate

1.4

YOU, YOUR VISION AND YOUR BRAND

You are your greatest resource. In order for you to reach the levels of success few achieve it is important to value yourself, your energy and your ability to find greater levels of work ethic with adequate recovery.

The coach who will likely make the biggest impact within their respective circles is one who has tremendous self-awareness.

How do you develop your levels of self-awareness?

Knowing your:

1. Drives
2. Motives
3. Coach's 'why'
4. Strengths
5. Weaknesses
6. Opportunities
7. Vision

Upon understanding the above, you can then determine your identity. The 'who' behind the person you wish to become, the coach you wish to be.

All this feeds your ability to truly identify what kind of human you get to be, what kind of coach you get to be and ultimately, lets you live a life that is equally challenging and fulfilling.

1.5

YOUR COACH'S 'WHY'

If you want to be a successful PT, you need to be in it for the long haul. True excellence isn't going to happen overnight: the things most worth doing are often the hardest.

But when your 5 a.m. alarm goes off for the third month in a row, you're going to need some serious vision backing up the day-to-day grind. You need some fuel to see you through the hard times and push you towards your goals, despite setbacks – the slow burn of conviction is based on something that's truly meaningful to you.

Your 'why' is the reason you get out of bed every morning. It's what pushes you to be the best you can be, even when things don't go as planned. It's the foundation of your passion: and it's also the key to sustainable success.

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. What are my greatest interests?
2. What gets me excited?
3. When do I feel the greatest sense of value?
4. What are my core skills and strengths?
5. What's the one thing I love to do above all others?
6. What do I read about?
7. What am I most talented at?

Through your answers to these questions, you'll see clear themes start to emerge.

Maybe you'll realise that your 'why' is helping others because it's really important and fulfilling to you. Maybe you love creating community, being at the heart of a positive, thriving group of people who are all united around your vision. Everyone's 'why' is slightly different, but you'll need to find yours to build the necessary vision and resilience to stick with the journey and come out the other side still smiling.

Knowing your 'why' is also a great way of steering your decisions as you progress through your career. When an opportunity presents itself or a fork appears in your path, reminding yourself of your 'why' will help you choose the path that has longevity and real meaning to you as an individual. It means you can be proactive, not reactive, making choices deliberately and consciously rather than being forced to act by circumstance.

Finding your 'why'

Finding your coach's 'why' will serve as the foundation your brand is built on.

With weak foundations come weak brands, weak structures and very little clarity as to how to navigate forward.

Your 'why' is the first step towards building your brand. You need to know who you are, how you help people, and what problems you're looking to solve.

It's also going to act as a kind of lighthouse, keeping your energy focused on what really matters to you. This will allow you to be proactive, not reactive, about the way you approach your business (and life).

It will also mean that your business ideas will hold water in the long term – if you can stick to your 'why' as a foundation for everything you do, you'll still feel passionate and motivated long into the future.

STICK TO YOUR 'WHY' AS A FOUNDATION FOR EVERYTHING YOU DO.

Exercise

Below is an exercise to help you find your coach's 'why'.

Some tips to keep in mind before completing this exercise:

- > Elaborate on and show depth in each answer
- > Be fully present and engaged
- > Smile, put some good music on and find flow in this exercise

Ask yourself...	Give honest and detailed answers
What do you love most about coaching?	
What is the one thing you love to do?	
What gets you excited?	
What do you read about?	
What gives you the greatest sense of value?	
What are your core strengths?	
What are you most talented at?	

1.6

CORE VALUES

These are your rules of engagement on how you will conduct yourself in business and in life. It starts with an understanding of who you are, what is meaningful for you and a chance to set a higher standard for yourself that is in reach, but also challenging.

These are your operating principles, your guidebook and your business morals. It will allow you to set the highest standards for yourself.

After reading and applying this section, you will have a greater understanding of:

- > Clarity around the direction you want to take your business in
- > Foundational elements to build your brand and marketing efforts
- > Improved self-awareness
- > What drives you forward as a coach and individual

**YOUR CORE VALUES ARE YOUR
RULES OF ENGAGEMENT
FOR BUSINESS - AND LIFE.**

Your core values

They are a series of simple statements and words that take your 'why' and break it down into actions.

They'll form the basis of your brand, and all your marketing efforts. But more importantly, they'll give you a clear steer on how to conduct yourself with focus, professionalism and integrity in every situation.

THEY'LL GIVE YOU A **CLEAR STEER**
ON HOW TO CONDUCT YOURSELF.

Exercises

Detailing your core values

Tips before completing these exercises...

- > Elaborate and show depth in each answer
- > Be fully present and engaged
- > Smile, put some good music on and find flow in this exercise

Exercise 1

Ask yourself...	Give honest and detailed answers
What is my 'why'?	
How would I want my clients to describe me?	
What are my unique characteristics?	
Where can I grow?	
What is achievable for me?	

Exercise 2 - Step 1

Below is a table full of common core values others may use when trying to find what best describes them.

Note down any/all that relate to you, then filter it down to **five** key values.

Table Resource - Dr Russ Harris

Contribution: to contribute, help, assist, or make a positive difference to myself or others.	Fitness: to maintain or improve my fitness; to look after my physical and mental health and well-being.	Humility: to be humble or modest; let my achievements speak for themselves.
Industry: to be industrious, hard-working, dedicated.	Patience: to wait calmly for what I want.	Self-awareness: to be aware of my own thoughts, feelings and actions.
Independence: to be self-supporting and choose my own way of doing things.	Persistence: to continue resolutely, despite problems or difficulties.	Self-care: to look after my health and well-being and ensure my needs are met.
Intimacy: to open up, reveal and share myself (emotionally or physically) in my close, personal relationships.	Pleasure: to create and give pleasure to myself and others.	Self-development: to keep growing, advancing or improving in knowledge, skills, character or life experience.
Justice: to uphold justice and fairness.	Power: to strongly influence or wield authority over others e.g. taking charge, leading, organising.	Self-control: to act in accordance with my own ideals.
Kindness: to be kind, compassionate, nurturing or caring towards myself or others.	Reciprocity: to build relationships in which there is a fair balance of giving and taking.	Sensuality: to create, explore and enjoy experiences that stimulate the five senses.
Love: to act lovingly or affectionately towards myself or others.	Respect: to be respectful towards myself or others; to be polite, considerate and show positive regard.	Sexuality: to explore or express my sexuality.
Mindfulness: to be conscious of, open to and curious about my here-and-now experience.	Responsibility: to be responsible and accountable for my actions.	Spirituality: to connect with things bigger than myself.

Table continued on next page

<u>Order</u> : to be orderly and organised.	<u>Romance</u> : to be romantic; to display and express love or strong affection.	<u>Skilfulness</u> : to continually practice and improve my skills and apply myself fully when using them.
<u>Acceptance</u> : to be open to and accepting of myself, others, life etc.	<u>Conformity</u> : to be respectful and obedient of rules and obligations.	<u>Flexibility</u> : to adjust and adapt readily to changing circumstances.
<u>Adventure</u> : to be adventurous; to actively seek, create or explore novel or stimulating experiences.	<u>Cooperation</u> : to be cooperative and collaborative with others.	<u>Freedom</u> : to live freely; to choose how I live and behave, or help others to do likewise.
<u>Assertiveness</u> : to respectfully stand up for my rights and request what I want.	<u>Courage</u> : to be courageous or brave; to persist in the face of fear, threat or difficulty.	<u>Friendliness</u> : to be friendly, companionable or agreeable towards others.
<u>Authenticity</u> : to be authentic, genuine, real; to be true to myself.	<u>Creative</u> : to be creative or innovative.	<u>Forgiveness</u> : to be forgiving towards myself and others.
<u>Beauty</u> : to appreciate, create, nurture or cultivate beauty in myself, others, the environment etc.	<u>Curiosity</u> : to be curious, open-minded and interested; to explore and discover.	<u>Fun</u> : to be fun-loving; to seek, create and engage in fun-filled activities.
<u>Caring</u> : to be caring towards myself, others, the environment etc.	<u>Encouragement</u> : to encourage and reward behaviour that I value in myself and others.	<u>Generosity</u> : to be generous, sharing and giving to myself and others.
<u>Challenge</u> : to keep challenging myself to grow, learn and improve.	<u>Equality</u> : to treat others as equal to myself, and vice-versa.	<u>Gratitude</u> : to be grateful for and appreciative of positive aspects of myself, others and life.
<u>Compassion</u> : to act with kindness towards those who are suffering.	<u>Excitement</u> : to seek, create and engage in activities that are exciting, stimulating or thrilling.	<u>Honesty</u> : to be honest, truthful and sincere with myself and others.
<u>Connection</u> : to engage fully in whatever I am doing and be fully present with others.	<u>Fairness</u> : to be fair to myself or others.	<u>Humour</u> : to see and appreciate the humorous side of life.
<u>Open-mindedness</u> : to think things through, see things from other points of view and weigh evidence fairly.	<u>Safety</u> : to secure, protect or ensure safety of myself and others.	<u>Supportiveness</u> : to be supportive, helpful, encouraging and available to myself and others.
<u>Trust</u> : to be trustworthy; loyal, faithful, sincere and reliable.		

Exercise 2 - Step 2

Mind map each of those five key values and, in as much detail as possible, explain why that core value resonates with you.

Example

Curious: For me, staying curious feeds my willingness to always learn, stay the student and ask questions. It also relates to the way I'm always trying to ask more in-depth questions with clients to find out more about them, their mindset and how we can collectively find solutions. Curiosity feeds my desire to be a problem solver, but not necessarily through orthodox thinking, which is why I'm always curious.

Core Value 1
Core Value 2
Core Value 3
Core Value 4
Core Value 5

1.7

BUILDING YOUR BRAND

After reading and applying this section, you will have a greater understanding of:

- > The pillars that make up a GREAT brand
- > How to live, breathe and communicate your brand
- > Why your brand exists and what you are trying to achieve for yourself and your clients

Building a kick-ass brand

Your brand is how you come across to clients – how they feel about you and your services. It drives all your behaviour, habits, decisions, and actions, from what you wear, to your email sign-off and your coaching style.

AS A PT AND SMALL
BUSINESS OWNER
YOU ARE YOUR BRAND

Here are the pillars of a kick-ass brand:

Authenticity

Your brand should be your core values in the flesh. The best brands are rooted in a business founder's most fundamental drivers and attitudes.

Consistency

Your brand should be the common ground in every single thing you do in your business. Consistency is the basis for people to trust you, and the starting point for success in marketing, sales, and client retention.

Client-Centric

Your brand should revolve around your client. Doing the essential work found in module 1 will play a vital role in getting this right.

Focused

The scattergun approach doesn't work when it comes to branding. Instead of trying to cater to everyone and catering to no one, your brand should be clear on what it's trying to offer, and to whom.

Remarkable

Effective branding is about having the courage to step out of the box and break away from the crowd. Be striking, be extraordinary, stand out from the masses and be truly memorable.

Creating your brand

The best brands are based on a story – a narrative that combines your values and motivators with the client’s needs and desires.

Using your core values as a reference, write a short ‘About Me’ piece (this could be for your website or social media, if you like). Include why you do what you do, what makes you stand out from the crowd, why your approach is powerful, and what people can expect from you.

Looking at other bran’s ‘About Us’ pages can be useful, but remember to stay authentic and unique.

Exercise

Building a brand

The following exercise will help you determine your brand story.

It focuses on the four steps of building a successful brand:

1. Research and thinking
2. Brand purpose
3. Brand story
4. Your brand

**PEOPLE BUY INTO WHAT YOU BELIEVE
NOT WHAT YOU SELL**

Exercise - Step 1

Research & Thinking

Below is a list of questions to assist you in developing your brand.

Be as comprehensive as possible in your answers. The more research and depth you go into here, the more bulletproof your brand.

1. What do you coach?
2. What is the problem in the world?
3. How can you help solve the problem?
4. What makes you different?
5. What are the key characteristics that make you different?
6. How is the environment/service you create different?
7. What is your ideal client?
8. What are their biggest pain points/needs?
9. What are the biggest cultural shifts/trends happening in your world?
10. Who is 'best in class'?
11. Who are your peers and why?
12. Who are your competitors?
13. What are they doing well?
14. What are they doing poorly?
15. What about their brands can you adopt?
16. What gets you up in the morning?
17. How are you going to change the world?
18. How will your brand/service be special and different from others?
19. What are your unique skills, experiences, connections, resources and capabilities?

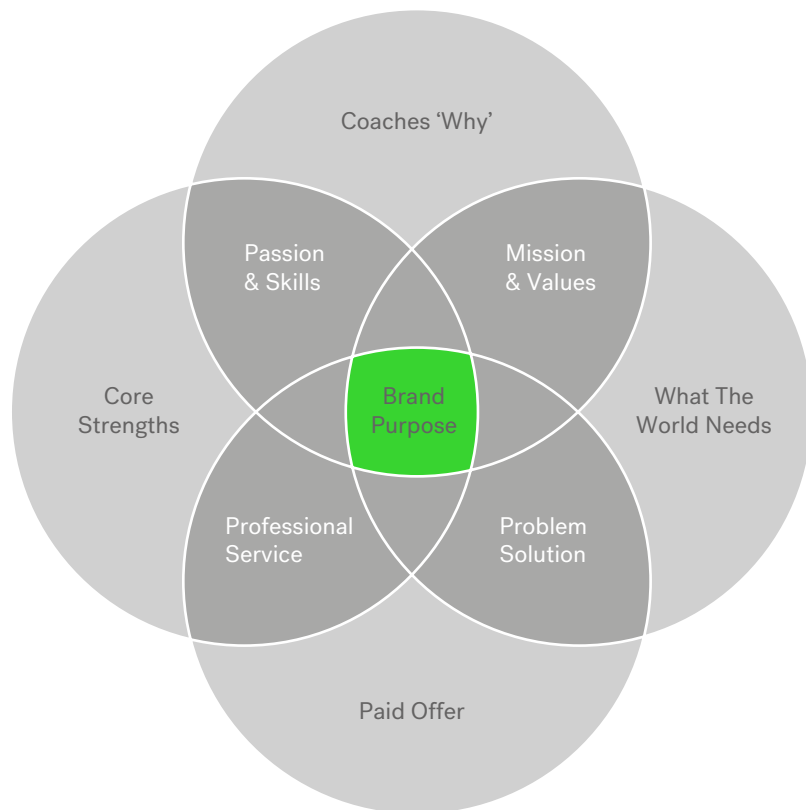
Exercise - Step 2

Brand Purpose

People buy what you believe not what you sell. Your brand is leveraging your beliefs about how you plan to solve problems in your world and your client's world. How you perceive health and fitness, the best route for success and your principles are all formed from your world view and inform your fitness beliefs.

The infographic below represents the level of depth you need to go into when trying to determine your coach's purpose.

You will need to have covered 'finding your coach's why' and 'core values' prior to completing this section.



Exercise - Step 2

Brand Purpose

Four key points to determine brand purpose

Now, let's filter down a level.

We encourage you to answer these questions in fewer words that have a lot of meaning.

Presence

1. What will your message be?
2. What will your brand look and feel like?
3. How will it inspire your potential clients?

Offer

1. What do you do?
2. What problems do you solve for people?
3. How is it relatable to your client avatar?
(See section 'Creating your client avatar')
4. Is it game-changing?

Culture

1. Who are you?
2. How do you behave and conduct yourself?
3. What are your core values?

Capability

1. What unique skills and strength do you have?
2. How are you different from anyone else?
3. How would your clients describe you?

Exercise - Step 3

Brand Story

Why is brand story important?

It is the backbone for:

- › Driving your service offering.
- › Sharing the experience you offer.
- › Shaping culture within your community.
- › Developing clear and specific messaging and a tone of voice.

Answer the questions below to start developing your personal brand story...

Context: Why now?

Purpose: Why we exist?

Proposition: How will it change your clients' lives?

Principles: What makes us different?

Exercise - Step 4

Your Fitness Brand

Define yourself in a sentence...

Brand/Business Name:

Elevator Pitch/Tagline:

Know your audience

As a modern coaching professional, you are your business, which means that you are also your brand.

The best brands are remarkable, unforgettable, authentic, and consistent. To build a good one from scratch you'll need to use your 'why' from the last section and create a solid structure to hang your business on.

This starts with knowing what you need – what your niche is, where your interests lie, where your work will have longevity and continue to be engaging for you as a basis for ongoing development.

Underlying an understanding of this is a very clear understanding of who your client is. This goes on to inform everything you do in your business. Every single decision, no matter how small, will always be framed as an answer to the question: what does my avatar want and need, and how can I deliver it as effectively as possible?

The best way to get this clarity from the outset is to create client avatars.

NOTE

Getting Visual: Armed with your brand, you can now think about the aesthetic aspect of your brand. We advise going to a designer and getting simple brand guidelines and a logo at a minimum, to get you started.

Living Your Brand: With you core values and brand established, you now need to ensure that all your systems, processes, and communications are aligned. This is the key to becoming known, trusted, and loved.

Creating your client avatar

After reading and applying this section, you will have a greater understanding of:

- › The people who are most likely to benefit and buy into your service
- › How best to tailor your marketing to communicate with them effectively
- › The type of people who you are not looking to target

The power of client avatars

Also known as a buyer or customer persona, a client avatar is a detailed description of the ideal client for your business.

Its purpose is to focus how you market, sell, and serve your client population.

Done right, it will help in the following ways...

Target

The people most likely to benefit from your service, who are also willing and able to pay for it; and are also likely to want to stick with it as a long-term lifestyle commitment.

Focus

Your marketing messaging, so that you are able to connect effectively with that specific population of people.

Insight

Into how to best sell your service to those people once you have their attention.

Exercise

Defining client avatars

The following exercise aims to help establish your client avatars

- › Step 1 - Defining negative avatars
- › Step 2 - Defining ideal avatars

Exercise - Step 1

Defining negative avatars

Creating a negative avatar can be as beneficial as creating your ideal client avatar.

A negative avatar is a generalised representation of the persona that you don't want as a client.

Having an understanding of who you don't want to serve as a client can sometimes make it easier to know who you do want to serve.

If you want to start here, which is a good idea, we suggest you think of one client who was a total nightmare to work with and document all the things that made the relationship unsuccessful.

The key here is to not focus on personal characteristics of why the individual was not easy to work with, but rather on the reasons why they weren't a good fit for your product or service - for example, high prices, the probability of increased churn or not being properly equipped for long-term success.

Exercise - Step 2

Defining ideal avatars

Demographic traits:

List out your avatar's demographic traits (eg. age, sex, education level, income level, marital status, occupation, religion, and average family size). This area is typically easy to define.

Psychographic traits:

These are a little more complicated and require a deeper understanding of your client avatar. They're based on values, attitudes, mindsets, interests, and lifestyle (eg. wanting a healthy lifestyle, valuing time with family, going for bike rides with friends, weekend 5k runs, OCR running).

Name your avatar:

Naming your avatar humanises the profile. If you are targeting both men and women, you'll want to create a male and female name.

Put a face to their name:

Find a picture online in stock photos that best represents what your avatar looks like visually.

Create a story:

Write one about your avatar. Imagine you are your avatar and are journaling about the discovery of your service. What were they thinking before they bought in? How were they feeling? Why were they feeling that way? What were they looking for? What were they hoping to solve or accomplish? How did they find you or hear about you? How did they feel once they purchased your service?

Walking the walk

The best coaches understand that to be excellent, they need to go above and beyond.

Getting clients reliable results, giving them an outstanding service experience, charging a premium price tag and living the life you want doesn't just happen at the drop of a hat.

If you want all the benefits of professionalising personal training as a career, then you need to act like a real professional. Coaching shouldn't just be a nine-to-five job that you check in and out of to fit around the other aspects of your life. It needs to be a vocation, a passion, and a dedication to constant self-fulfilment. You need to eat, sleep, and breathe being a coach. You need to be willing to work harder than everyone around you to reap the best rewards. In other words, you need to walk the walk – role model the behaviour that you're promoting to your clients.

As a business owner, you are your brand. What time you go to bed, what you put in your mouth, how you present yourself, your attitude in every aspect of your life – all of this needs to be in line with your vision of what you can give to your clients. We're not saying you should become a lifeless automaton (obviously we all need to have fun) but every weekend out on the tiles, a sloppy dress code, or a lacklustre attitude to customer service is going to betray your integrity as a professional in the long term.

The first impressions

Your commitment to personal training as a career shines through when you interact with clients, and nothing is more important than your first impression. This is a pivotal point in a client's decision to work with you – or not. This is your chance to 'wow' the client with your efficient and professional systems, your confident and knowledgeable manner, your professional attitude towards the relationship and your trade.

Your welcome package, your first email, your check-in text after your first session together – every one of these first points of contact is an opportunity to walk the walk and exude the professionalism of your operation – and convince the client of the quality of the product that they will receive.

The impact your coaching has extends far beyond the hour of their time spent at the gym. For a lot of people, their whole life has new purpose around their coaching relationship – so strive to cultivate a level of buy-in that means your client never wants to leave.

1.8

COACH FIRST, ATHLETE SECOND

Along with the principle of walking the walk it is very important to acknowledge where you stand as an athlete or business owner. For many, there needs to be a transition from athlete to coach.

Training is NOT your JOB, it is part of your brand and your core principles. Unless you're getting paid to train it should not take away from your energy or ability to coach well and run an effective business.

Training should rejuvenate you, ignite your fire and keep you grounded. It's important that you have a first-hand understanding of the training process, hardship, sustainability and what it feels like to fail and pick yourself up.

Your ability to understand the balance between you as the coach and the athlete will allow you to continually develop both areas of your life in a sustainable manner.

1.9

PERSONAL GOAL SETTING

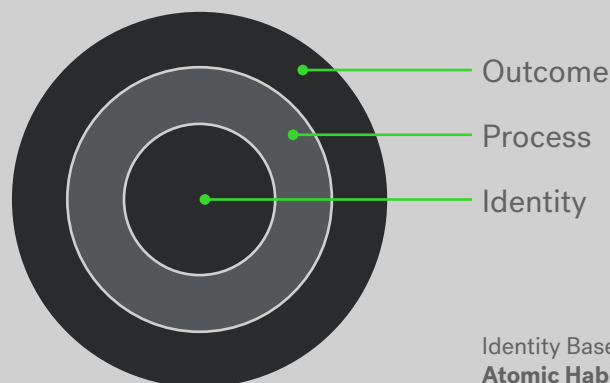
After reading and applying this section, you will have a greater understanding of:

- > The high-level view of what it is you are trying to achieve long-term.
- > The steps and process you will need to go through to achieve these goals.
- > The person you will NEED to be to achieve these goals.

Without a clear vision we are merely wandering through life. Many people struggle with the question, **‘What do you want to achieve in five years’ time?’** For many, the pathway for success in the industry is unclear.

Exercise

The following exercise will be useful for you to manifest and elaborate on three key areas of goal setting...



Identity Based Goal Setting
Atomic Habits by James Clear

Exercise - Step 1

Outcome

As always, complete this task in as much detail as possible.
Ensure you have zero distractions and time constraints.

Ask yourself...	Give honest and detailed answers
What is it you hope to achieve?	
What does it look like?	
How/whose lives would you like to make an impact on?	
Where can you grow?	
Describe the feeling, the service and the way you want people to describe you and your brand.	

Exercise - Step 2

Process

Reverse-engineering from the top down is one of the most critical skills for any coach.

Below is an exercise where we zoom out to 30,000 ft and take a bird's-eye view, before diving deeper into the small details of the processes you need to follow in order to achieve what you hope to achieve.

Ask yourself the following questions:

Step 1

What is the big goal and why?

Step 2: Macro

What are the yearly objectives/deliverables?

Step 3: Meso

What are the monthly objectives/deliverables?

Step 4: Micro

What are the weekly objectives/deliverables?

Step 5: Nano

What are the daily objectives/deliverables?

Exercise - Step 3 Identity

Who do YOU need to become in order for your goals to merely be a by-product of your processes?

Aim for a minimum of five points that look similar to this:



I get to be the person who will always go out of my way to make sure each and every one of my clients feel supported throughout every step of their journey...

Point 1
Point 2
Point 3
Point 4
Point 5



MODULE 2



THE
CLIENT



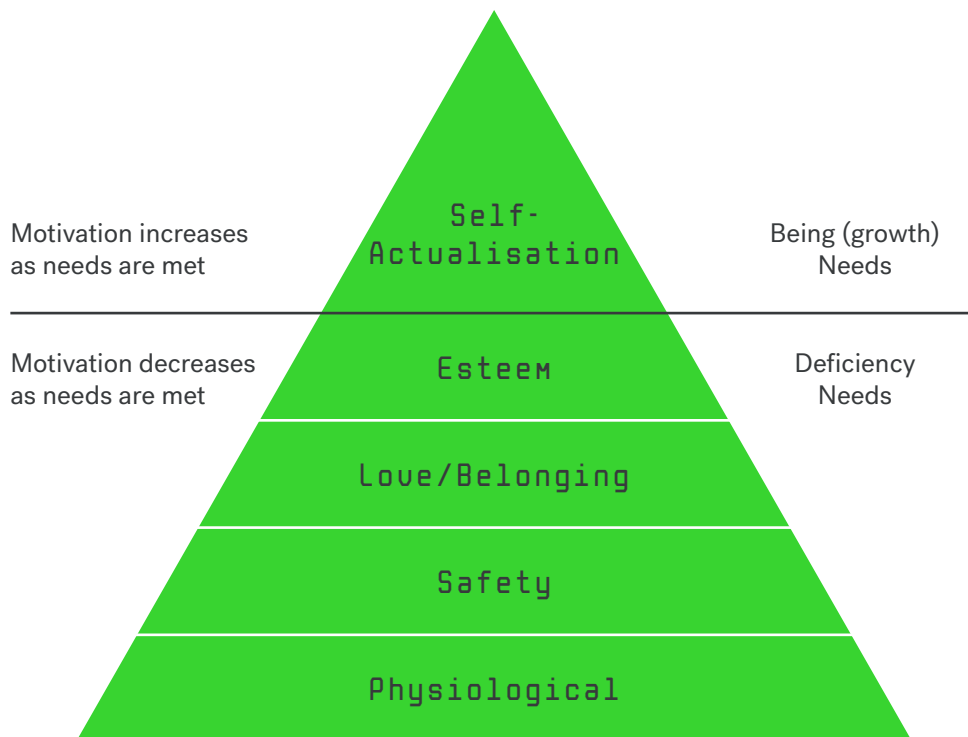
2.1

CLIENT-CENTRIC COACHING

Let's put the personal back in personal training. A professional coach shows a level of care that allows their respective clients to feel that they are safe, and they belong.

As the saying goes, 'Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care.'

The famous motivational psychology theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, is a great illustration of this principle.



The illustration resonates with a few of the key aspects that form a large basis of client-centric coaching.

1. Basic physiological – food, water, warmth and rest. In coaching terms, we can look at it as basic lifestyle guidelines like quality food, hydration, sleep, non-exercise activity thermogenesis (NEAT), rest etc.
2. Safety – security and safety. For coaching, this encourages us to reinforce a duty of care and assurance of our clients' safety. That you have their best interest at heart, and you will do your best to keep them safe from harm. This comes in the form of a simple PAR-Q and medical questionnaire that forms part of your due diligence.
3. Belonging – relationships, intimate/friendships etc. One of the most powerful statements any coach can say is, 'Welcome to your home away from home,' or, 'Welcome to training with X, you are now part of Y community.'

These three foundational thoughts, inspired by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, allow us to construct the perfect formula for safety and belonging upon which we can build any coaching relationship.

People are seeking a tribe, a place that breeds a higher standard for themselves because of the culture within.

Create the culture.

2.2

GOOD COMMUNICATION

Coaching is a people business, not a programming business. Your aim should be more in line with a partnership rather than a dictatorship. You need to aspire to continually improve your ability to connect, educate and encourage ownership for your clients.

Good communication is equal parts verbal and non-verbal. How you listen forms a large part of improving your ability to communicate better.

Here are our top tips for improved listening skills:

1. Listen with your eyes, ears and body
2. Be present
3. Show curiosity, excitement and acceptance
4. Give each client your undivided attention

Communication is important for any business, but as a PT, being able to connect with and engage your clients is a pivotal factor for success. All the technical knowledge in the world will get you nowhere if you can't communicate it effectively to the person standing in front of you.

Almost anyone can reach the technical level of proficiency required to become a coach. What really separates the wheat from the chaff is your ability to take that knowledge and make it a powerful force for good in the client's life.

To do that, you need to be an expert in selling your services to prospects; in forming trust-based relationships with your clients; and in delivering sessions that flow seamlessly and that ultimately give your clients the results they're looking for.

Know yourself

Communication is at the centre of all these skills. And at the heart of communication, there's one founding principle: know yourself.

It's only when you understand what you bring to the table, how you come across, and how you will be perceived that you can connect effectively with lots of different types of people in many different situations.

If you haven't already, do the exercises in module 1.5 and 1.6 to kick things off. Through this, you'll get a concrete idea of how other people see you. Armed with this insight, you can put the three-step communication process into action.

Connect, understand, influence

Good communication can be split into a three-step process.

1. Connect

Start by paying attention. Ask open-ended questions to get the other person to open up (open-ended questions are questions that don't have 'yes' or 'no' answers). Make eye contact and give them your full attention.

2. Understand

Once you've established good listening, demonstrate empathy. Find something in their words that resonates with your own experience and express this connection to create a shared understanding – a common ground.

3. Influence

Now that you've established trust, you can add some of your own material to the interchange. Waiting for this connection and understanding to be formed is crucial – if not, you're likely to come across as overbearing or uncaring.

The next time you have a significant interaction with someone, notice how you communicate. Do you follow the three steps of effective communication? If not, try putting them into practice. Does this have an effect on how people respond to you?

2.3

INTRO TO MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Motivational interviewing (MI) was originally developed by William R. Miller and Stephen Rollnick in the 1980s in order to aid people with substance abuse disorders.

It has since been used in many different contexts, as it pertains to behaviour change. As a coach looking to impact your clients' lives, you should aspire to improve your ability to effect change at core behaviour levels.

MI is a client-centred approach to connecting the dots between the inconsistency of what people value versus their actions.

After all, actions speak louder than words.

This phrase can apply to clients who say, "I want to get lean," but whose actions contradict that wish.

VALUES / ACTIONS

In this instance, your job is to encourage your clients to recognise their ambivalence and start to take ownership towards aligning their actions with their values.

You can use the RULE acronym as a guide to motivational interviewing:

- R – Resist the desire to dictate how they MUST change
- U – Understand their motivations and true drivers
- L – Listen with empathy
- E – Empower them

As journey-centric coaches you should aspire to continually develop your ability to ask better, open-ended questions that allow you to listen better and hear the true meaning, drivers or underlying values for your clients.

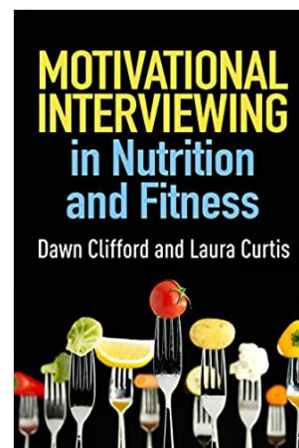
As you develop trust and rapport, your ability to understand your client is improved. You will continually develop this relationship over time and therefore improve your ability to connect the dots between actions and values.

It's your job to educate your client on the small steps required to move along their journey to reach their goals. It might turn out that the goal isn't even the goal, but merely the spark needed to get the fire started. Then you can help them move towards becoming the new version, the new identity.

To learn more about MI we highly recommend this book:

Motivational Interviewing in Nutrition and Fitness

by Dawn Clifford & Laura Curtis



2.4

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

The ultimate buzzword phrase in fitness coaching is **'behaviour change'**.

What does this even mean? What is the perception of the consumer when we suggest we are behaviour change specialists?

At the PFCA, we believe that behaviour change is essential in a successful coach/client relationship, but should always be carefully administered. Your intent as a coach should be more in line with the 'hiding vegetables in your kid's food' principle.

Behaviour is best described as 'subconscious predicted solutions to problems we routinely face'. And change in this context is best described as 'growth, suggesting more along the lines of betterment'.

Therefore, behaviour betterment is much more in line with the scope of a coach's role in the world of behaviour change.

It goes without saying, a client's behaviours need to change in order to achieve what they set out to achieve. However, going through a useful template might be a more diligent approach compared to a bulldozer attack on all aspects of the client's life.

In some cases, where the stakes are much higher, this bulldozer approach might work; for example, if a doctor has warned the client of potential health complications unless an aggressive lifestyle change occurs. But, for the most part, a long-term, growth-orientated, and sustainable approach is much more effective.

How to start?

Step 1 - Assessment

Your initial consult should give you a deeper insight into who your client is, what their lifestyle looks like and what the subtle changes might be that they can make to improve on their current lifestyle.

Step 2 - Vision

You need to determine what success may look like for your clients.

Ask them questions like:

- > What are your goals?
- > What does success look like for you?
- > Why is it important to you?
- > How will your life be better for achieving this?
- > How will it make you feel?

Step 3 - Understanding

You need to meet your clients where they are without judgement and fighting the urge to dictate what they NEED to do to change.

Step 4 - Shine the light

Be the mirror in which you highlight the narrative behind what the clients are suggesting, shining a light on the deep and meaningful aspects of their story.

Step 5 - Ownership

Encourage a relationship whereby you can highlight areas of the lack of ownership in your client's behaviours and encourage them to come up with a solution.

Example A - Dictatorship Coach

“

Your client says...

I need to lose weight. I am sick and tired of how I look!

”

Your response...

Well, you need to stop eating so much, track calories and move more, you need to train properly and you need to treat yourself with respect.

Example B - Collaborative Coach

“

Your client says...

I need to lose weight. I am sick and tired of how I look!

”

Your response...

Thank you for sharing that, I hear your frustration and I would love to help guide you along this journey. What do you believe would be the best steps to ensure we can achieve this for you?

‘What do you believe would be the best steps to ensure we can achieve this for you?’

This question suggests a sense of responsibility or ownership for the clients with the added support of your guidance and accountability. This breeds a relationship that feeds success.

This type of behaviour change is more in line with habit change and one of the best books on the matter for coaches to read, learn and understand is ***Atomic Habits***, by James Clear.

Within his book he talks about his system for habit change:

Cue:

Make it obvious

Craving:

Make it attractive

Response:

Make it easy

Reward:

Make it satisfying

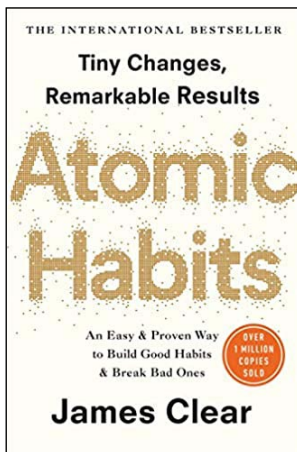
Your job as a coach is to figure out which of your client’s habits are performed daily at an unconscious level, then bring them to light and put them through the James Clear framework to bring about change.

How to use the framework (An example)

Your client would like to lose weight, be more active and put a stop to procrastination. The client intends to run each morning but as the days and weeks go by, hitting the snooze button has been the height of their activity each morning.

However, through your initial evaluation you learned that a morning run is definitely the most suitable workout time for your client due to his current work commitments.

So, how do you make it a lot easier for your client and more likely that they will see success?



To find out more about atomic habits purchase:

Atomic Habits
by James Clear

Cue: Alarm goes off and the alarm is placed at the opposite end of the room.

Craving: At the alarm, his running trainers and clothing are already laid out beside the bed.

Response: It's easy to now get dressed and begin the exercise endeavour.

Reward: Your client will be buzzed full of endorphins and a feeling of accomplishment for completing the task.

In most cases you need to reduce all friction between doing and not doing for your clients. With the above client, even just going for a walk rather than run each morning would be a successful achievement. Find ways to breed success and create a feedback loop that reinforces that your client CAN DO this with little effort.

2.5

GOAL SETTING

Every fitness coach will ask their client what their goals are and for most this is as far as this process goes. The best coaches in the game are able to ask relevant questions to peel back the layers when it comes to goals.

Why is this necessary?

You need to find the true story, the underlying narrative or perhaps the real reason as to why your client needs you, NOW.

This will allow you to not only build value and meaning to the journey ahead, but also provide a much more inspirational pull towards their specific goals.

MOTIVATION < INSPIRATION

You need to help build a story that inspires your clients to do better, be better and believe that they can achieve. Motivation is short-lived, temporary and unsustainable.

So, where do we start?

The PFCA has designed a goal setting framework that goes through three steps.

Step 1

The What/How/Why principle

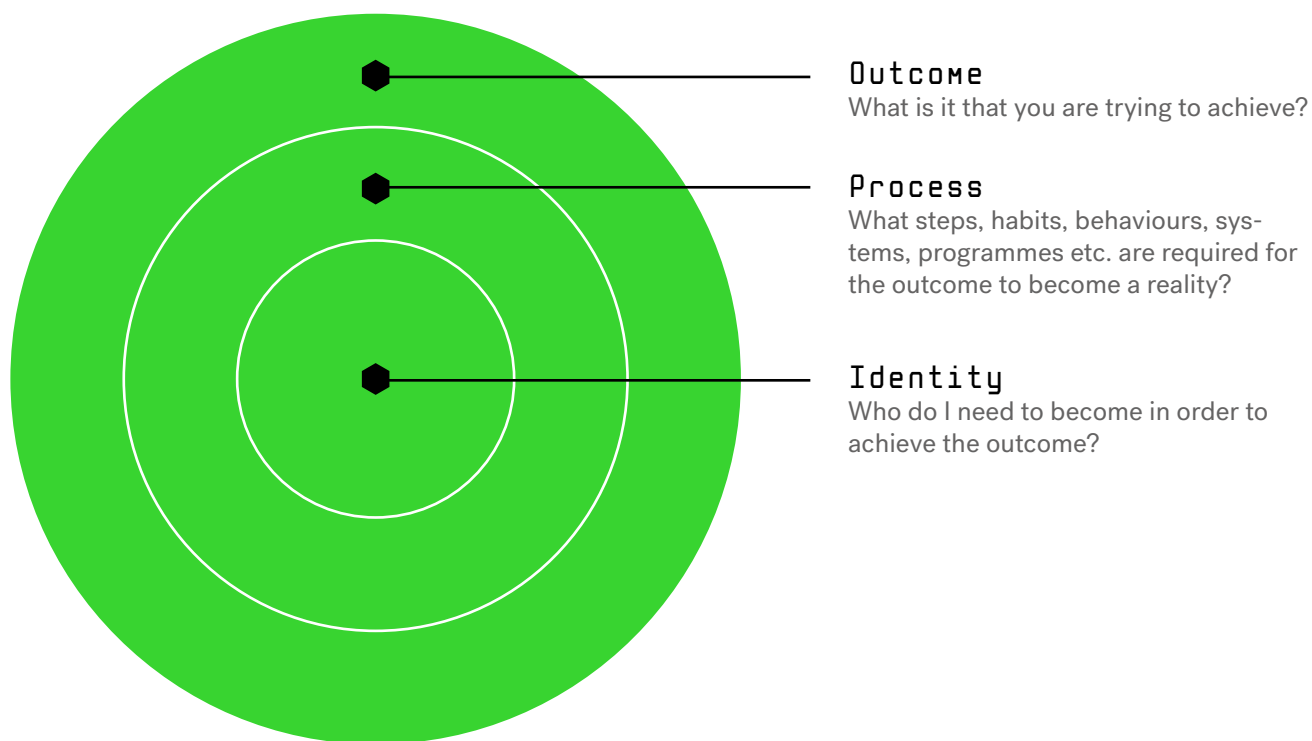


The above is an almost bulletproof approach to start the conversation.

1. **‘What** is the goal?’ is quite simple. We need to determine what it is they want to achieve.
2. **‘How** do you believe we get there?’ is one of the most underutilised questions during a consult. Here, you get insight into your client’s beliefs and world view on their understanding of the process required to achieve their goals.
3. **‘Why** is this important to you and why now?’ is where you get to truly connect to the real meaning or trigger for starting their fitness journey.

Step 2

Identity-based



“

I need to become the person that would do the daily processes, which means the outcome is merely a by-product of the work I repeatedly do in line with the person I now am.

As an example: a normal coach might say...

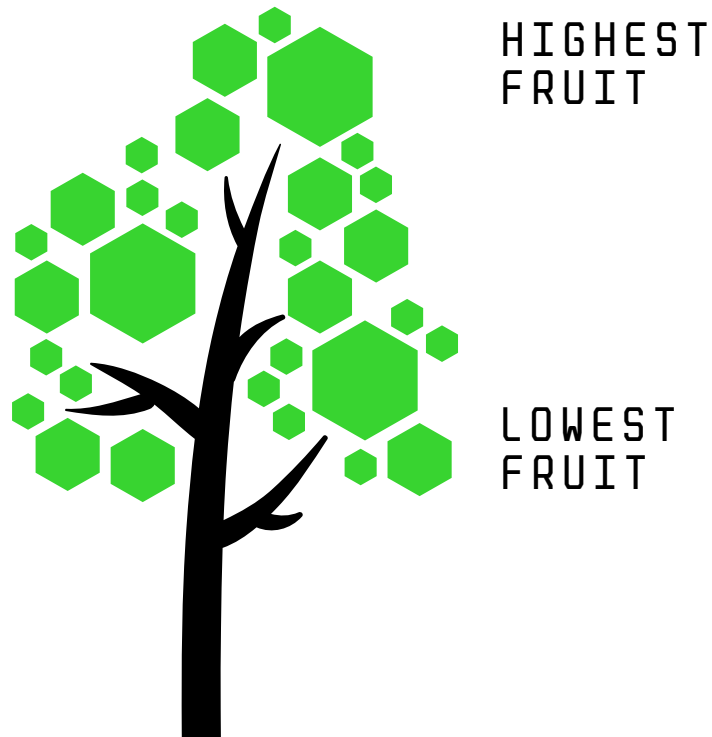
“You need to walk 10,000 steps a day to achieve your weight-loss goals.”

But a coach using identity-based coaching would say...

“Let’s help you become the person who chooses to walk whenever possible rather than drive. The person who chooses to park furthest in the supermarket car park. And the person who gets off one station early during their commute.”

Step 3

Plot the tree



Plotting the tree is a visual exercise whereby coaches can illustrate how the journey ahead looks for the client. Reverse-engineering the process is a skill that comes with exposure. However, understanding that there are many small, low-hanging fruits that are in reach for your clients will breed success and feed retention.

Every small win should be acknowledged and celebrated to build self-esteem and confidence in the journey-centric approach.

Merely saying 'trust the process' is just not good enough.

2.6

CLIENTS' CORE VALUES

Building your clients up, feeding confidence within themselves and belief in what they can achieve should be at the forefront of your coach's minds eye.

A simple exercise to be encouraged post-consult could be to get your clients to complete a 'my new core values' exercise.

They should be:

1. Exciting
2. Achievable
3. New identity-based
4. Setting a higher standard for themselves
5. Personal to them
6. Should contain themes of fitness, relationships and nutrition etc.

These will serve as an accountability tool for themselves and for your coach/client relationship. You are looking to set new operating principles, ones which serve as a filter to process any or all behaviours going forward.

This could then be further encouraged with a daily direction review exercise, where your client sets the intent ahead of their day. This should be in line with their core values.



Today I get to play in the park with my son.

This suggests:

- > **I get** – the privilege to play in the park with his son
- > **Play** – to have fun
- > **Play with son** – to build the relationship and bond, have fun
- > **Play in the park** – get active and moving

And finally, encourage your client to complete an AMWAP (As Many Wins As Possible) exercise at the end of each day, to reinforce the small wins from each day. These atomic wins will feed the perspective of being more present and in the moment.

Example:

‘I had so much fun being in the park with my son, laughing, being present and not thinking about stress.’

Ref: the above exercises are an excerpt from *Mindset Rx'd* by Tom Foxley

MODULE 3

FUNCTIONAL FITNESS: THE BASICS

3.1

WHAT IS FUNCTIONAL TRAINING?

The definition for functional training is largely what you make of it; it's based on your concepts, beliefs, philosophies and experience.

When typed into Google, Wikipedia pops this out:

'Functional training is a classification of exercise which involves training the body for the activities performed in daily life.'

The above definition is a good start. However, where this gets skewed is the association that heavy back squats are functional and standing on a bosu ball squatting is also functional.

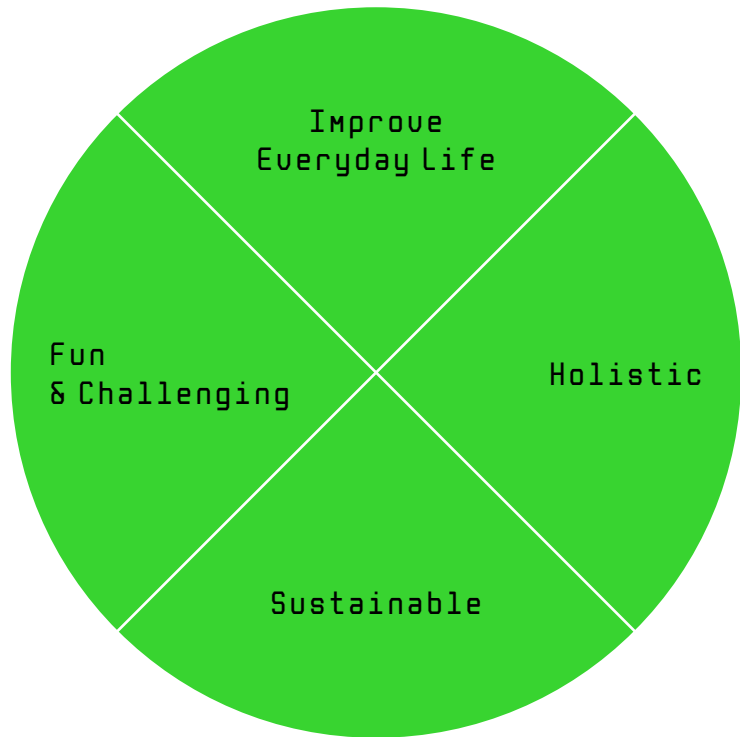
Squatting is functional, as is walking, breathing, running, lunging, carrying, pressing, pulling, striking, rotating and throwing.

In The PFCA's world of functional fitness, we believe that functional training should be a purposeful and individual approach to continued development across areas such as movement, strength and capacity. Each endeavour should transcend into daily life and contribute to a long-term, sustainable and healthy lifestyle.

You, as the coach, are required to do a thorough lifestyle and movement assessment to fully determine what might be deemed functional for your clients.

This will mean your approach is applicable and easily relatable to the client, their needs and wants. And the balance between the two is coaching 101.





3.2 APPLIED FUNCTIONAL FITNESS COACHING

The application of functional fitness is where you bring it all together.

Essentially both functional and fitness should mean the same thing. It's the pursuit of improving overall function. Improved fitness improves everything else.

As a coach, your ability to avoid stooping down to a reductionist approach is where you can separate yourself from the others.

‘Because it’s functional,’ is not something YOU would ever say. Neither is, **‘Here is the best functional exercise for X.’**

This approach is the reductionist nature that, as an industry leader, you need to move far away from. Your ability to coach the individual is key and specificity rules over all.

How do you make any and all that you do functional?

By making it specific and relatable to the client.

Below are four key points to consider:

1. How will it benefit the client now?
2. How does it feed the long-term vision?
3. Will my client be able to execute this correctly?
4. What is the overall intent for the exercise/cues/constraints?

Asking these four questions will ensure everything in your programme is functional.

The next aspect is your ability to not only understand auto-regulation but encourage your clients to understand it themselves. Their ability to know which version of themselves turns up each day is essential in developing a well-rounded human.

The readiness scale is an appropriate tool to encourage better conversations for your clients and be able to adapt the programming accordingly.

It is essential to understand that LIFE HAPPENS and marrying yourself and your clients to a programme might be your biggest downfall. Allowing honest discussions to take place between you and your clients will allow for variance to occur, while still feeding the long-term goal.

Your client might be on their final stage of intensification, looking for maximum weight on their barbell deadlifts... but the night before, they have three hours of sleep thanks to a sick toddler.

A bad coach will gas them up full of caffeine and ensure they get those numbers on the bar.

What would you do?

Here is a readiness scale for you to use with your client.

10	Ready to fight a lion head-on
8-9	Well rested and excited to go hard
5-7	Feel good, need to warm up
3-4	Where am I?
1-2	I'm staying in bed

You want to encourage your clients to become more aware of what their body is telling them. It also lets you see patterns. If your client is consistently between a 1 and 4 then a very different discussion ought to take place.

The key here is honesty. You are not encouraging your clients to become soft. You are encouraging them to see the whole picture, with more perspective.

Following this, you then have session management.

How well you manage each session is very significant. Everything from pre-framing the session and how much rest is allowed, to the culture within your gym and what you have cultivated as normal.

Key aspects to great session management include:

1. Clarity of KPIs for the session ahead.
2. Awareness of client readiness.
3. Pre-frame the session, the intent and the flow.
4. Using your words to encourage a present and focused mind.

Some clients talk too much and try to sneak in too much rest. For them, using time-based workouts like AMRAPs or EMOMs are a fantastic opportunity to reduce time in between sets. They don't have to be incredibly hard to allow a structure for work to take place.

A beginner EMOM could look like this:

EMOM 16

1. Goblet squat with a pause x 10 reps
2. 20 second side plank e/s
3. TRX bodyweight row x 15
4. Airbike x 30 sec @ conversational pace

Equally, some clients have no idea how to rest or why rest is necessary. In this instance, your job is to educate them about the importance of rest, and setting some time-based constraints can play a significant role in removing any lack of confidence in the system.

An intermediate EMOM, whereby hard work with adequate rest is the intent, might look like:

EMOM 16

1. Deadlift cluster 3.3.3
2. Incline DB bench press x heavy 8
3. Stir the pot x 12 e/s
4. Rest

And finally, delivering coaching cues.

This is largely based on two things:

1. You
2. Your client

You

Your experience, expertise and exposure to various cues, constraints, objectives and tools all form part of your ability to deliver coaching cues that are not only effective but also stick!

You are looking to feed autonomy, so making sure cues stick is essential. This is where your skills as a communicator become paramount.

Your client

The best cues will come from your clients. Not you. Via great dialogue, better questions and great demonstrations you and your client will come up with some of the best cues, that only they understand. These cues are the ones that most often stick.

So, ask better questions. Such as:

- > What did that feel like?
- > What does that look like to you?
- > How would you describe that?

3.3

TRAINING VALUES AND PHILOSOPHIES

Every personal trainer should have a signature approach which characterises all of the coaching they do. At the PFCA, we call this 'my training values'.

These are a clear set of guidelines, philosophies and operating principles to direct all of your programming and delivery efforts in getting your clients the best results in the long term.

Exercise

As an exercise, write down 10 values and elaborate on what you mean by each topic.

Here is one example:

Move: I will always encourage movement in my clients. I will continually assess my clients and ensure we are on the correct path for continued growth and success. I will build strong, healthy and resilient individuals who fall in love with their version of training so that it remains fun, challenging and moreover, sustainable.

Assessing your client

Without assessing you're guessing. It gives you an incredible opportunity to go from 'selling' fitness to 'prescribing' a solution to their problems that you have helped uncover.

5 key reasons why you assess:

1. Uncover movement restrictions or lack of understanding
2. Build direction as to how and what you'll programme
3. Build a reference point as to where they started
4. Build rapport and get your client moving
5. Show yourself as the authority, gain trust and demonstrate that you actually care about the client.

3.4 FFC MOVEMENT SCREEN

The FFC L1 assessment is our comprehensive but very easy-to-use movement screen, to give you a deeper insight into what is potentially going on and how you might best programme for success.

The level of depth you can go into from each movement will develop over time. The following pages list what you should look for when completing your movement screen.

Download your copy of the FFC L1 Movement Screen here:

thepfca.com/ffc/screening.pdf




MOVEMENT	GOOD	NEED IMP.	DETAILS	MOVEMENT	GOOD	NEED IMP.	DETAILS
OH SQUAT				SPLIT SQUAT			
FEET (F)				FEET (F)			
ANKLES (F/S)				ANKLES (F/S)			
KNEES (F)				KNEES (F/S)			
HIPS (S/B)				HIPS (S/B)			
PELVIS (S)				PELVIS (S)			
T-SPINE (S)				T-SPINE (S)			
SCAPULA (F/B)							
SHOULDERS (F/S)							

MOVEMENT	GOOD	NEED IMP.	DETAILS	MOVEMENT	GOOD	NEED IMP.	DETAILS
3 POINT HINGE				HIGH PLANK BEAR			
ANKLES (S)				PELVIS (S/B)			
KNEES (F/S)				T-SPINE (S)			
HIPS (S/B)				SCAPULA (B)			
PELVIS (S)				SHOULDERS (S/B)			
T-SPINE (S)							

NAME	
DATE	
PREVIOUS INJURIES	
NOTES	



OH BW squat

Assessment

What to look for? Look up the kinetic chain from the foot all the way to the shoulder, including signs of instability or imbalance.

Here is a list of common things to look for:

- > Tripod foot
- > Feet pointed straight forward
- > Ankles neutral and not pronating
- > Heels staying in contact with the floor
- > Knees tracking over toes
- > No knee valgus
- > Symmetry of both knees
- > Depth of hips during squat
- > Any lateral hip shift
- > Ability to maintain neutral throughout movement
- > Limited forward lean
- > Both arms in-line or passed ears
- > Arms fully extended
- > Symmetry across scapula
- > Regression – prisoner squat or box/chair squat



Three-Point Hinge Assessment

What to look for? Look up the kinetic chain from foot all the way to the neck, including signs of instability or imbalance.

Here is a list of common things to look for:

- > Tripod foot
- > Feet pointed straight forward
- > Ankles neutral and not pronating
- > Heels staying in contact with the floor
- > Vertical shins
- > No knee valgus
- > Ability to transfer hips back
- > Lumbar posture stays neutral
- > No weight shift either side
- > T-spine remains extended and neutral
- > Cervical spine remains in neutral
- > Regression – toe touch



Split Squat Assessment

What to look for? Look up the kinetic chain from foot all the way up the spine, including signs of instability or imbalance.

Here is a list of common things to look for:

- > Tripod foot
- > Feet pointed straight forward
- > Ankles neutral and not pronating
- > Heels staying in contact with the floor
- > Vertical shins
- > No knee valgus
- > Vertical line through back knee, hips and spine
- > No weight shift side to side
- > No excessive anterior pelvic tilt
- > Upright torso
- > Level of stability



High Plank To Reach Assessment

What to look for? Look up the kinetic chain from legs all the way up the spine, including signs of instability or imbalance.

Here is a list of common things to look for:

- > Legs staying straight
- > Glutei engaged
- > Neutral lumbar spine
(no excessive anterior pelvic tilt)
- > No excessive weight shift
- > T-spine stays neutral
- > Arm reaches ear level
- > Level of stability

MODULE 4

THE FOUNDATIONS OF CORRECTIVE EXERCISE

4.1

FOUNDATIONS OF CORRECTIVE EXERCISE

Corrective exercise is a thoughtful prescription and integration of exercises that improve the overall position, tension, awareness and function.

It's important to understand that corrective exercise is NOT a physio session. As personal trainers, coaches and soon to be Functional Fitness Coaches, your intent should be to get your clients to exercise correctly.

STRENGTH TRAINING IS CORRECTIVE
AND CORRECTIVE EXERCISE IS
STRENGTH TRAINING

This statement above is a powerful and really important mindset as you move into the world of corrective exercise. Your job as coaches is to build your clients up, get them to move and encourage them to feeling strong and capable.

What this means is the ability to connect the dots between the movement screen, their goals and your ability to help your clients' efforts in the gym transcend the walls of the gym into everyday life.

This is corrective exercise. This is coaching.

You need to subtly prescribe corrective exercise techniques to build a more robust and durable individual. The previous narrative we mentioned of ‘hiding vegetables in your food’ should be at the forefront of your prescription of corrective exercise.

If you are simply looking to build your clients up, you need to consider the following:

1. What can you improve for the client today?
2. How does it feed the long-term approach?
3. What is the intent behind the exercise?
4. Do you have the correct levels of tension required in these positions?

Simply labelling your clients as ‘broken’ or saying ‘something is wrong’ is the opposite of building your client up. Don’t feed your ego by breaking people down.

How many correctives are needed if your client has an inability to move/load/perform movements will depend on how significant their issues are and at this point working hand in hand with a clinical professional would be the most suitable approach. But, if the client is able to move then there are few modifications that you should prescribe.

At the PFCA we often discuss how a coach’s prescription of corrective exercises is either their own ego or their lack of understanding of good exercise prescription.

At first glance you have two considerations that need to be addressed before prescribing:

1. Immediate opportunity for change
2. Long-term integration

Immediate

What are the low-hanging fruit that you can prescribe, which will likely have an immediate positive impact on the session ahead?

For the stressed-out city worker who had a long day, getting them to dial in to their breathing might be the best way to improve general movement, as you have increased their level of presence.

Others might need to 'switch on' their core, or glutes during their warm up to feel confident in their body and their ability to feel the right muscles working.

You have a wealth of knowledge, but you need to understand the client and play each card until you have the right recipe for that individual. You are trying to feed the long-term mindset of overall improvements across the board.

Long-term Integration

This is your ability to have some themes that override all that you do, say and programme. It's whatever you uncovered in the assessment that may take a long time to improve but once improvements occur, the overall health, function and happiness of your client will be greatly increased.

What does this look like?

That client with stiff ankles? You are certainly not going to fix ankle mobility in one session. But you can most certainly include exercises in each session that feed the intent for better mobility or stability at the ankle. This will constantly feed strength in new end ranges.

Another example is a client with a really tight T-spine and poor breathing mechanics. The long-term fix might be constantly adding various breathing drills or challenges, especially during exercises when loading the T-spine. As with anything, adding variation and progressive overload is both possible and necessary.

These are small examples of issues that most certainly will not be fixed in one session, but the client will benefit a great deal if gradual improvements are made over time.

Remove your ego from the situation

The NEEDS:WANTS ratio plays a pivotal role in getting the dose right with your client's level of buy-in and adherence.

For example, imagine that a client comes in with goals largely relating to weight loss. This client might not respond well to a full mobility workout in their first few sessions, given their expectation might be to do more energy-based exercises.

In this case, it could be more beneficial to prescribe a session that gets the client moving well, expending energy and contributing toward their overriding goal of weight loss. Then, slowly integrate exercises into the sessions that will contribute to necessary mobility improvements over time.

This is the subtle, yet powerful approach of marrying the NEEDS:WANTS ratio.

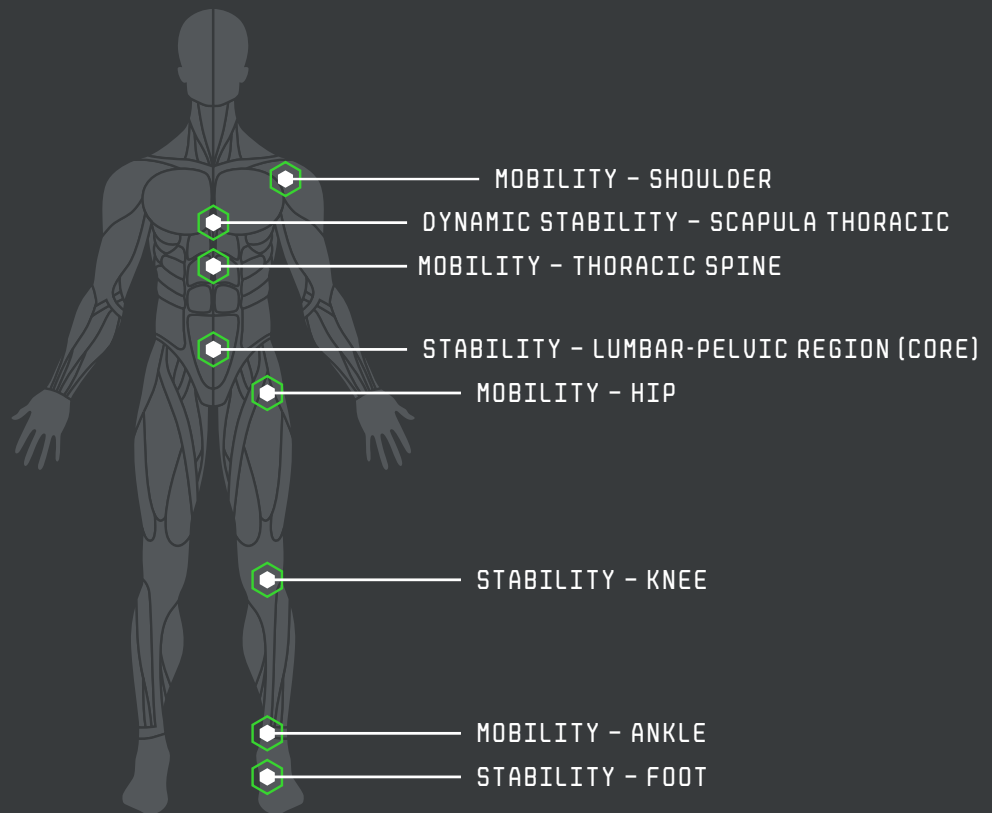
4.2

JOINT-BY-JOINT THEORY

A big building block of your mindset towards corrective exercise is understanding the *Joint-by-Joint theory*.

Developed by Mike Boyle & Gray Cook, this framework allows you to troubleshoot potential links to areas where clients might not be performing at their best. It's based on the understanding that the kinetic chain of the body represented by joints or joint segments from the feet up have a very specific relationship between stability and mobility.

The illustration below highlights which areas may need mobility and which areas may need stability. Within the corrective exercise video, you will see a detailed description of how you can use the framework to make assumptions about what might be low-hanging fruit that you could easily tackle first.



If something is ‘mobile’ where it should be stable, you can assume you are lacking in stability at this joint or joint segment. Therefore, looking to develop stability, strength and capacity here is a good first step.

Similarly, if something is ‘stable’ where it should be mobile, you can assume you should look to improve available range.

This, like any tool, should be in your toolbox but is by no means the holy grail. It is up to you to consistently test all the options, until your understanding of what each of these tools may highlight helps you to be the best coach possible.

4.3

INTRO TO OBLIQUE SLINGS

There are four sub-systems that play a role in stability and assisting in creating stiffness and power. Ultimately, they create elasticity or even better, tensegrity.

TENSEGRITY = TENSION + INTEGRITY

The sub-systems are:

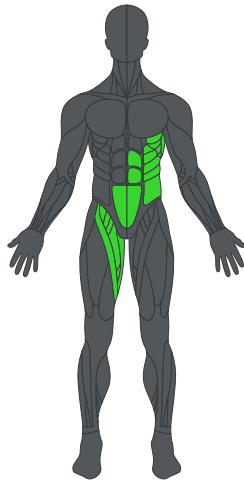
- > Anterior oblique sling
- > Posterior oblique sling
- > Lateral sub-system
- > Deep longitudinal sub-system

We often refer to the functional movement patterns being squat, hinge, lunge, push, pull and carry.

But what about walking? Running? Throwing? Breathing? All are 'functional'.

The following are a set of key breakdowns of each sub-system/sling including an action or exercise relating to the sub-system/sling.

Anterior Oblique Sling

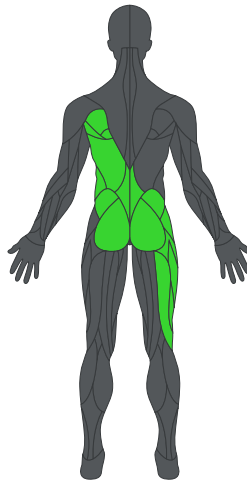


Internal obliques
 External obliques
 Abdominal fascia
 Adductors
 (Also including pec major
 & serratus anterior)

Exercises/Actions Include:

Walking
 Throwing
 Kicking
 Deadbug Variations

Posterior Oblique Sling

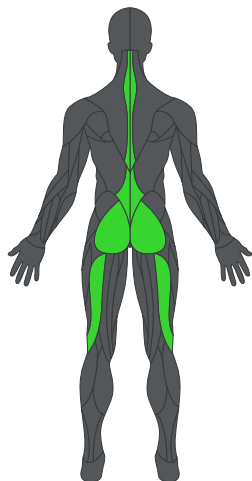


Lats
 Thoracolumbar fascia
 Glute max
 Biceps femoris

Exercises/Actions Include:

Compound posterior chain work
 Contralateral loaded hinge patterns
 Single-leg glute bridge variations

Deep Longitudinal Sub-system

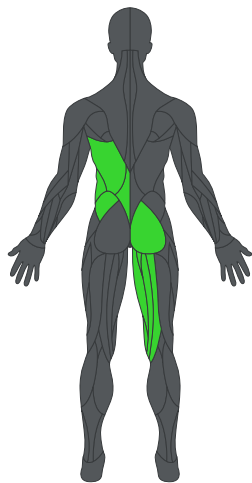


Erector spinae
 Thoracolumbar fascia
 Sacrotuberous ligament
 Biceps femoris

Exercises/Actions Include:

Deadlift
 Hinge patterns
 Spinal flexion

Lateral Sub-system



Quadratus lumborum
 Glute med
 Adductors

Exercises include:

Ipsilateral loading
 Suitcase carries
 Frontal plane exercises

As mentioned before, all of these are tools that can be added into your toolbox. We want to encourage you to start challenging yourself and your thought processes around exercise selection.

You need to have a great level of understanding of each joint, muscle and their respective actions and functions. This is best done by constantly referring back to anatomy apps, textbooks or notes when testing exercises on yourself before you do so with clients.

Utilising slings can be really fun and challenging. Correct execution of the intent will have a huge impact of the level of tensegrity displayed during the movement.

Many sling exercises have been shown to help with SI joint stability and overall athleticism

Stay tuned for more to follow on slings in FFC L2.

4.4

INTEGRATED CORRECTIVE TECHNIQUES

The following pages present troubleshooting guides as an entry level into some corrections that could be made in order to improve awareness, stability or intent.

Your goal should be to move clients along the following stages.

1. Mobility

Create mobility where a lack of mobility is limiting your client's ability to execute the movement correctly or is causing pain.

2. Stability

Before you look to create strength, you should aim to increase stability in these various positions with correct tension.

3. Strength

Now that you are able to resist force and own positions, you can look to load these positions and develop strength and capacity.

Core Troubleshooting Guide

Level 1

- > Pelvic + ribcage + postural + tension awareness
i.e. pelvic rock in cat/cow or supine
- > Hemibridge holds with breathing
- > RKC plank

Level 2

- > Dead bug ISO variations
- > Half hollow variations
- > Side plank variations
- > Bird dog
- > Static suitcase holds

Level 3

- > Dynamic resisted dead bugs variation
- > Hollow body variations
- > High-plank anti-rotation variations
- > Suitcase carry
- > Farmer's carry
- > Copenhagen plank

Level 4

- > Deadlift variations
- > Squat variations
- > Lunge variations
- > SA row variations
- > Carry variations S/B /yoke/pressing/pulling variations
- > Hollow pull-up

Tight T-Spine Troubleshooting Guide

Pre-Phase 1

- > Supine breathing drills



Mobility

Phase 1

- > Foam roll T-spine + flexion/extension drills
[keep ribcage down]

Phase 2

- > T-spine cat/cow variation
- > T-spine rotations & reach in spider lunge
- > Seated T-spine rotation + lateral flexion drills

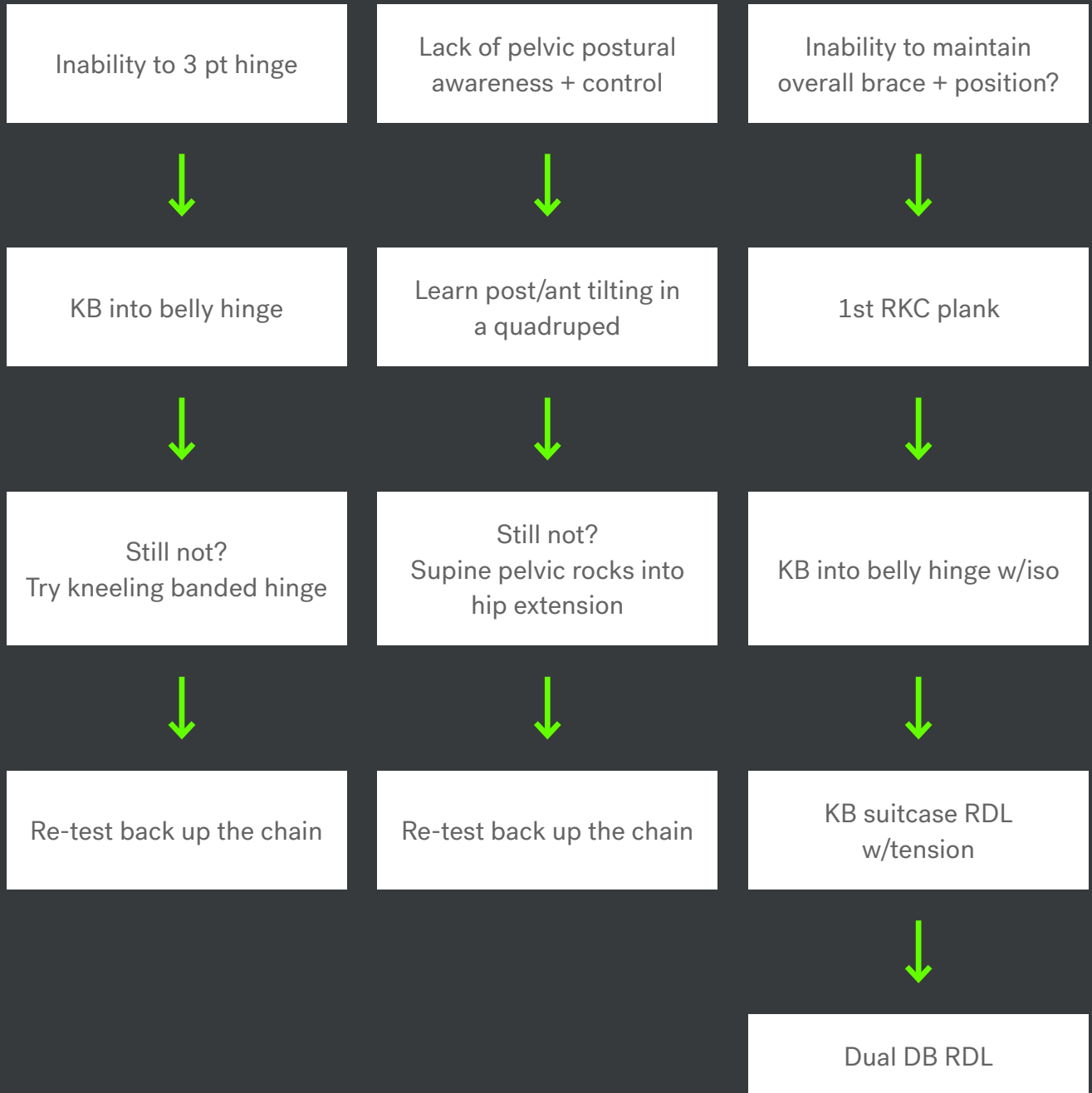
Phase 3

- > Hemibridge pullovers
- > Hollow passive hangs

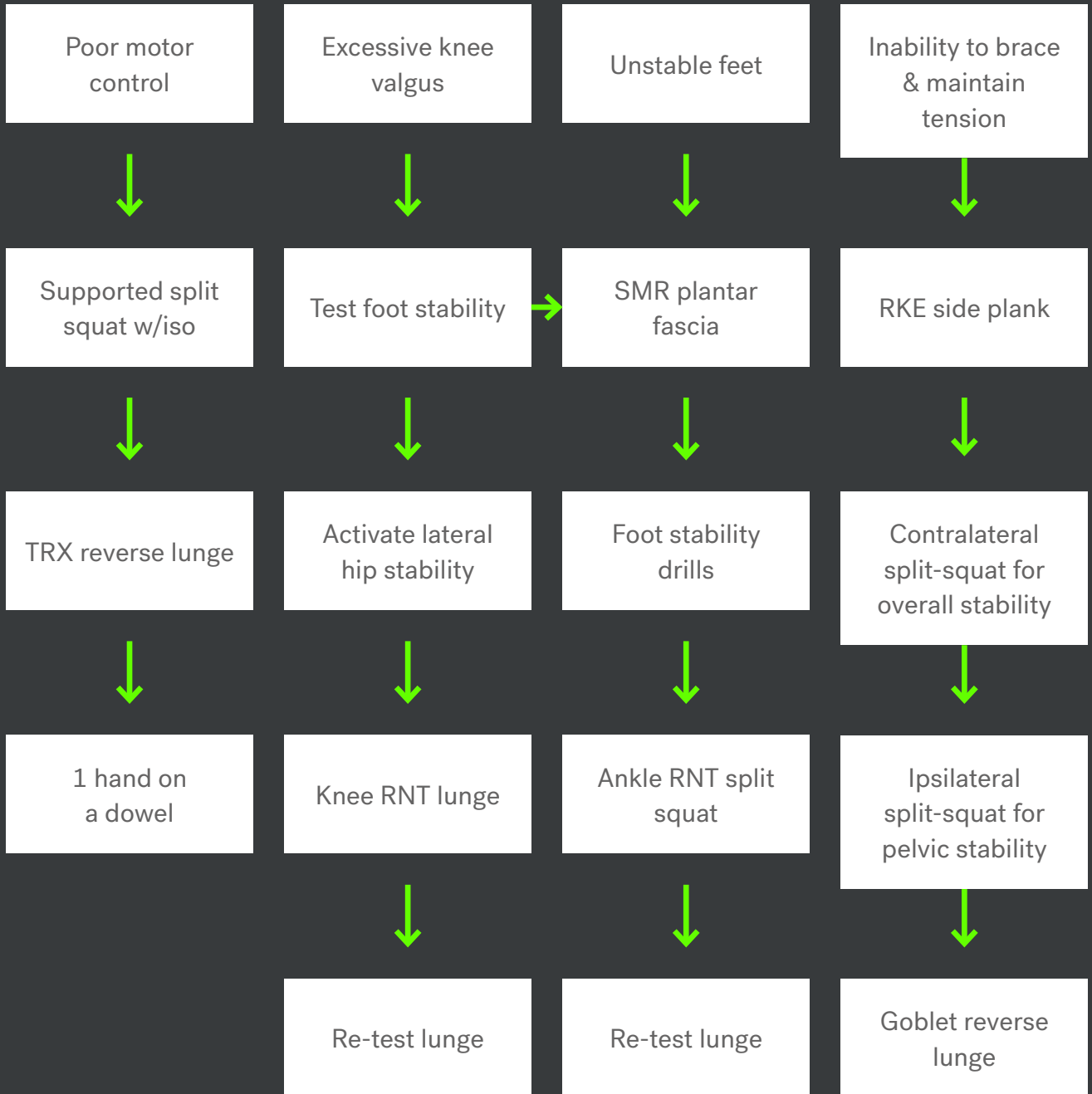
Phase 4

- > SA DB row with reach
- > Functional chest supported row
- > Windmills
- > Bent presses

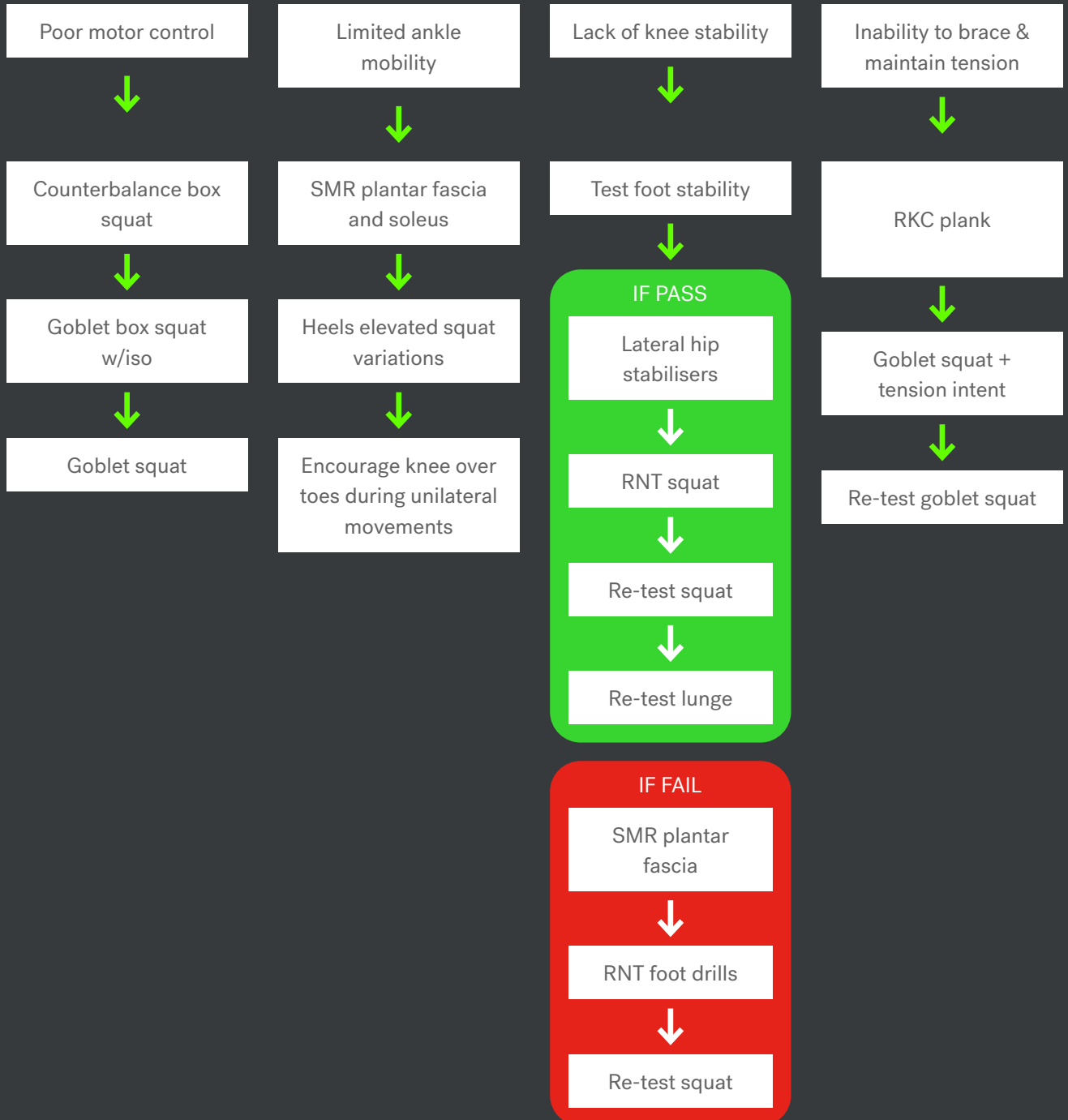
Hinge Troubleshooting Guide



Lunge Troubleshooting Guide



Squat Troubleshooting Guide





MODULE 8



PROGRAMME
DESIGN
PRINCIPLES



Once you've done the due diligence to understand what your client needs, then like an artist, you're ready to put pen to paper and create a programme that is customised just for them.

This is the part where, as a coach, you get to showcase your expertise, your professionalism and your dedication to the client. And as a professional coach, you should endeavour to continuously improve your programming skills across these four pillars.

1. Being client-centric

There's a reason why you don't just tear out the workout printed in the latest edition of *Men's Health* magazine, clip it to your clipboard and apply it to every client. It's because it's not client-centric. A generic workout is just a recommendation and is not specific to a client.

If someone wants a generic workout, they can go and buy said magazine. But you, as the professional coach, can give people what they need to reach their goals. You have the tools to uncover so much necessary information, which will influence your programme design efforts. These include things such as:

- > Goals
- > Lifestyle
- > Medical history
- > Movement screen
- > Needs
- > Wants
- > Training age
- > Likes vs dislikes
- > Facility
- > Convenience
- > Behaviours
- > Social groups
- > Community

... to name a few.

When applying all the above (and more) into your algorithm of programme design, you will create something that is not only client-centric, it is also relatable and more likely to be successful.

2. Developing efficiency

In order to grow and scale your business to a level where it will serve you both financially and offer you more time, it is essential to become more efficient. This is a skill that requires a dedication to mastery – it doesn't happen overnight. But 'the juice is worth the squeeze', and as you develop into an efficient artist of programme design, you'll earn the right to scale and grow.

Using your own principles and training philosophies will feed into your coaching bias. The more you can recognise patterns, the more likely you are to come up with templates for multiples types of individuals with similar goals. This will feed into the systems which will build your business or programme design task.

Using these templates as a spine will help, but it does not and should not take away from being both client-centric and effective.

Achieving both relies on your ability to communicate how the programme relates to your client and their goals, as well as allowing room for change should you need to adapt on the spot.

3. Working effectively

A wise man once said, 'You are only as good as your last session.'

This relates to the fact that we are in the business of results. Without results you will not succeed in this industry. But not all results look the same and this is where understanding your brand and audience is crucial.

Results for a corrective exercise specialist could be getting someone out of chronic knee pain.

Results for a strength coach could be having 12 athletes competing on the world stage that season.

Results for a transformation coach could be helping a client drop three dress sizes and lose 12 kilos during a certain period.

Results for your business might be that you help people break bad habits and fall in love with fitness; that you help people feel better than ever before.

The language we use, the results we highlight and what we always place the biggest emphasis on, will be what your business gets measured by. So, be very clear on what that looks like.

Effectiveness is an all-encompassing word that relates to the programme, the session and the feeling clients have when they are with you. It's the way they feel when they leave and the overriding results that they get from working with you. That is effectiveness.

4. Needs vs Wants ratio

This ratio is the fine balance between what the client thinks they need and what you know they need. After a thorough assessment protocol, you will have an inclination as to the direction you would like to lean toward and the intent overall.

What this might mean:

A young aspiring football player might be fully bought into a programme that is purely dedicated to improving his athleticism. So, his programme might look something like this...

Needs	Wants
90	10

A 25-year-old male might be looking for bigger arms. However, through your assessment you uncovered that he needs to go on a steady fat-loss journey, lifestyle change and focus on T-spine mobility. His programme might be more like this...

Needs	Wants
70	30

That 30% would be the gun show at the end of each session to give him the sensation that his arms are getting worked on and he can feel the pump. There is hidden correctives in your exercise selection to improve overall function but above all else, he feels like he is getting closer to his goals. This is the needs vs wants ratio.

A 38-year-old female might be looking to get more toned and develop her bum to look better naked. Her assessment uncovered no restrictions to move well and she has an athletic background from her high school and university days. Her programme might be a mix of general strength training protocols, with loads of glute work at fully lengthened positions such as squats and lunges. But you might also add various pump work exercises like banded hip thrusts till failure, to get that novel burning sensation of getting somewhere. Her ratio might look like this...

Needs	Wants
80	20

8.1

PROGRAMME DESIGN

The perfect programme looks like this;

BUY IN

+

ADHERENCE

+

EFFORT

=

SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMME DESIGN

You can have written the most incredible programme but if you don't have buy-in and there's no adherence, it's null and void. There are multiple elements that make up good programme design, as illustrated in the table opposite. Underneath each one is space to make your own notes, so jot down how you believe each point affects your programme design efforts.

The Goal

Individual Considerations

Your Principles

Long-term Planning

Logistics

Frequency

Volume & Intensity

KPIs - Key Performance Indicators

Exercise Selection

Rest periods

Effectiveness

But most importantly, you should live and die by one golden rule:

The PFCA rule of three.

As a coach you need to be able to give three reasons to justify why you've programmed the way you have – that are directly relatable to your client.

This should be simple enough that it can be scrawled on the back of a napkin, but still builds buy-in, adherence and effort.

Communication is key

Constantly telling your client why you're doing something and how it feeds their goals is so important. Get them to communicate back to you how what they're doing makes them feel and use that to inform your future programme design.

As a coach, you'll put so much value on programming and what you find valuable. But it isn't always as obvious for your clients, which is where your ability to educate and communicate the link between the programme, the intent and how it relates to them is essential.

Programme Design Template

Download this for your own use to design your clients' programmes:

thepfca.com/ffc/programming.pdf

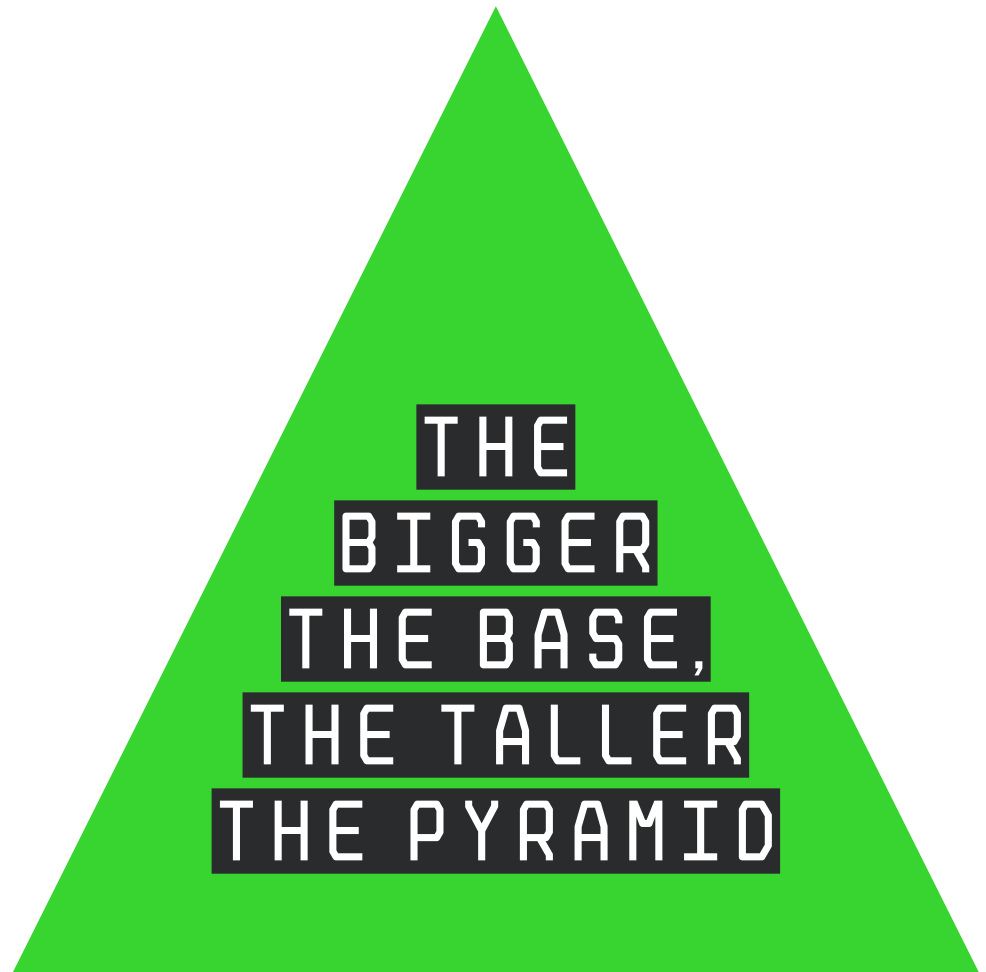
The image shows a digital form for a fitness programme design template. At the top left is the PFCA logo, which consists of a green hexagon with a white geometric pattern inside, followed by the text 'PFCA'. To the right of the logo is a white rectangular box labeled 'NAME'. Below the header, the form is divided into four main sections, each with a green horizontal bar at the top containing the section title in white uppercase letters. The sections are: 'MOBILITY & WARM UP', 'RECOVERY & OPTIMIZATION', 'STRENGTH BLOCK #1', and 'STRENGTH BLOCK #2'. Each section has a large white rectangular area below the header for text entry.

8.2

WHAT IS STRENGTH?

As a functional fitness coach, developing strength is the foundation of what you do.

Seek to build strong, robust, resilient, anti-fragile individuals.



GAP - General Athletic Population

If strength is the foundation of what you do, then it is essential to understand the frameworks behind what parts of the body you want to make stronger. In the general athletic population (GAP), clientele strength is largely akin to helping them acquire the skills they need to then see strength gains themselves.

It is important to remember the key movement patterns as a checklist for overall function.

Remember, what is functional is purely individual and the specificity of the prescription will differ from person to person. However, the squat, hinge, lunge, push, pull, carry, walk and breathe movements all have the potential to be improved upon, whether that is through skill acquisition, strength development and/or increased overall capacity.

Some key concepts you will use going forward are periodisation and progressive overload.

Periodisation

Periodisation or long-term development programming is the ability to reverse-engineer a programme from the end goal, back to the beginning. This can be broken into various seasons or times, where your client needs to peak. Within different sports, specific programming periodisation is vital if an athlete is looking to peak for a certain competition or season.

For example, a client may be looking to complete an Iron Man, with a two-year preparation window. You need to reverse-engineer from the day of the Iron Man all the way back to now. You need to plan each training block, each milestone, the total volume, nutrition, body composition, fitness tests, strength tests and more all need to be considered.

In another example, you may have a client who plays competitive netball across a season that runs from September to January. You know that in netball there is a huge demand for agility, coordination, speed and a vast aerobic base. Through an assessment you uncover the need for more agility work, a bigger base of strength and aerobic conditioning and you have six months to get her ready for the September kick-off game. You now have to reverse-engineer the best-case scenario version of this athlete and break the training programme down into small achievable goals that you can help them work towards. You also need to factor in your client's planned holidays, work commitments, training availability, training recoverability, menstrual cycles, deload weeks, peak weeks etc.

Lastly, for most GAP – whether it's your mum, your best mate or your local hairdresser – there is no competition season. Just life. So, how do you periodise for such clients?

This is where time of the year and seasons come into play.

A client might look to 'peak' for a summer holiday, a big occasion like a birthday or a Christmas season of parties. This is where understanding your client's goals and wants are essential.

NOTE

Life happens! Sometimes your clients will go through stressful or demanding periods outside of the gym, which will have an impact on your overall programme. In this situation, you need to be open to adapting your programme and pivot so you can still reach the end game. Regardless, you can still look to progressively develop athleticism and plans peaks at the ends of various strength blocks.

Planning your peaks and deloads

If, for example, you're nearing the end of a 6-week deadlift cycle and you want to see a peak of a heavy 5 before you add another element, skill demand or phase to the overriding goal of getting stronger, then week 7 will likely be a deload week. This is a week of skill acquisition and refining new movement patterns, exercise variation or skill demand.

Deload weeks are necessary in practice, but can pose a communication challenge with GAP clients, as suggesting they need to have a deload week can leave them feeling underwhelmed and disappointed. While they certainly do need to appropriate less load on the spine and allow the body to recover from what may have been an intense block, the language you choose to convey this is all-important.

Periodisation for GAP clients should be in line with three phases:

1. Introduce
2. Rehearse
3. Perform

1. Introduce

This is your opportunity to introduce the new programme to the client. You need your client to acclimatise to the new stimulus and the new intent, which typically takes about a week. It's also your opportunity to coach new movements, introduce variety and make any changes to the programme if necessary.

2. Rehearse

As the title suggests, this is your rehearsal or practise phase as we look to accumulate good quality load, volume and intensity. This is your opportunity to refine the intent of all the details of the programme, which typically happens over two to three weeks of gradual progression.

3. Perform

Now, it's showtime! Your client has earned the right to test what they are capable of. You will have refined the small details and can now look to see what you can bring to this stage. This is where autonomy is prevalent with regards to skill and execution and intent, effort and attitude should take over across this one-to-five-day period.

NOTE

Not every journey demands PBs or maximum lifts, as each client is different. For yours, it may be as simple as developing intent and confidence. Your programme might look like many introduction phases coupled with various rehearsal phases until the skill is no longer the bottleneck in producing force output. This is where we need to take stock of ego, both for our clients and ourselves. Ego is the enemy. It is also the biggest contributor to most injuries found within the gym.

Progressive overload

No, progressive overload is not just adding microplates to the bar each week! There are various ways to progressively overload if you are looking to grow and develop.

For our GAP athletes, the biggest bottleneck is skill. If the required skill breaks down before true relative failure is reached, then we are likely leaving gains on the table. This isn't to say that everything you do must achieve failure, but the goal should be pushing closer to failure more often. The sweet spot is when the exercise selection allows for the greatest execution and intensity without the skill breaking down.

Progressive overload can be achieved through the following pathways:

1. Improved execution

This relates to a higher quality of the reps performed and the ability to make the particular exercise repeatable. If it's repeatable, then you can look to add additional load.

2. Greater intent

This relates to an improved ability to understand the intention behind the exercise and what is required from your client so they can execute it accordingly.

3. More effort

Although similar to intent, this relates to having rehearsed the movement enough to be able to focus more on effort and less on the exercise execution itself.

4. Greater range of motion (ROM)

Allowing for a greater ROM, where necessary stability is required in this new range.

5. Greater skill

An increase in skill is required to execute the exercise or task with the correct intent, effort, skill and range of motion.

Intent is key

Intent is a word that is often thrown around by coaches, so you'd be surprised how few truly understand it. This is the same as phrases like 'trust the process' or 'you just need consistency'. Instead, coaches must take ownership, and understanding why your client might not be getting it right is on you to figure out.

Intent feeds into the entire story, the WHY behind all that you do in both the macro and the micro.

Macro is the wider goal, the world view and the beliefs of the client. Micro is the smallest of details in regard to execution, skill and feeling.

If you can help your client nail the exercise, then you can certainly influence change, because when the stakes are higher, there is greater awareness and a deeper level of presence.

You can think of deadlifts as just deadlifts. Or, you could think of lifting a car off your child. The movement is the same, but the intent is different.

Equally, if you're encouraging a client to feel a certain muscle during an exercise you may be required to see the finest details of hand position, torque relationships, facial expressions and more to understand what they might be doing wrong and how you can effect change.

So, let's all commit to doing better at using the word 'intent'.

Write down your own definition of intent here:

Tension: position

Tension and position relationships are vital when it comes to correct execution of any exercise. Biomechanic textbooks imply that life is 2D, but it's not. It's at least 3D or maybe even 4D!

What does this mean?

A squat isn't just ankle, knee and hip flexion. It's also rotational stability, anti-extension and anti-spinal flexion. Are you spreading the floor? Are you clawing your feet into the ground? There is the intent component here too.

This is where improving your knowledge of muscles and their various actions and functions become important for any joint or joint segments.

Books, such as the ones listed below are a great start:

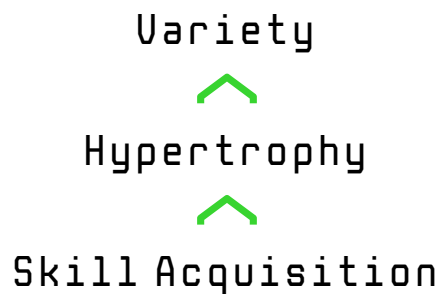
- > ***The Concise Book of Muscles*** – Chris Jarmey
- > ***Strength Training Anatomy*** – Frederic Delavier

8.3

DEVELOPING STRENGTH

‘The stronger the athlete the better the athlete can become.’

When considering strength development for our GAP clients, you may like to examine the following hierarchy:



Why is skill acquisition the foundation? Because strength is a skill.

The biggest bottleneck of any movement found within gyms is skill breakdown, which is why it needs to be in the forefront of your coaching mind's eye. When developing strength for most of your clients, stage 1 will always be skill, as skill acquisition comes first.

The following illustrations provide an opportunity to see the various methods and pathways in which skill acquisition occurs. There are two key concepts when thinking about skill acquisition:

1. Stages of Learning (Fitts & Posner, 1967)
2. Dynamic Systems Perspective (Thelen, 1989)

1. Stages of Learning

In the late 1900s, Fitts & Posner developed a three-stage continuum of practise model.



How does the above illustration influence your coaching, including the words you use, the cues and constraints and the intent?

Case Study

Client Jane, 32, comes in to see you. Post-assessment you uncover the need to develop her hinging pattern. Her assessment uncovered that she struggled to dynamically control her pelvis and maintain a neutral spine during her 3-pt hinge.

Your intent, as Jane's coach, was to build up her awareness and stability at the core and slowly feed into the ability to hinge. You are seeking to build up midline stability and endurance.

Stage 1: Cognitive stage

Initially it's all about gathering information. At this point you are coaching Jane on all things core, particularly an isometric dead bug, which encourages her to understand how to move her pelvis, how to lock her pelvis to her ribcage, how to breathe and finally how to maintain brace.



At first, her ability to do all at once is poor but her rate of learning dramatically increases as you give feedback cues and constraints. Some reps are perfect while others are poor.

Stage 2: Associative stage

This stage is focused on putting actions together. Here Jane will move from the isometric dead bug hold to moving one leg away from the midline. Our goal is still to maintain stability and associate midline stiffness while we move limbs further away from the midline – but the gains are smaller and require A LOT of effort.

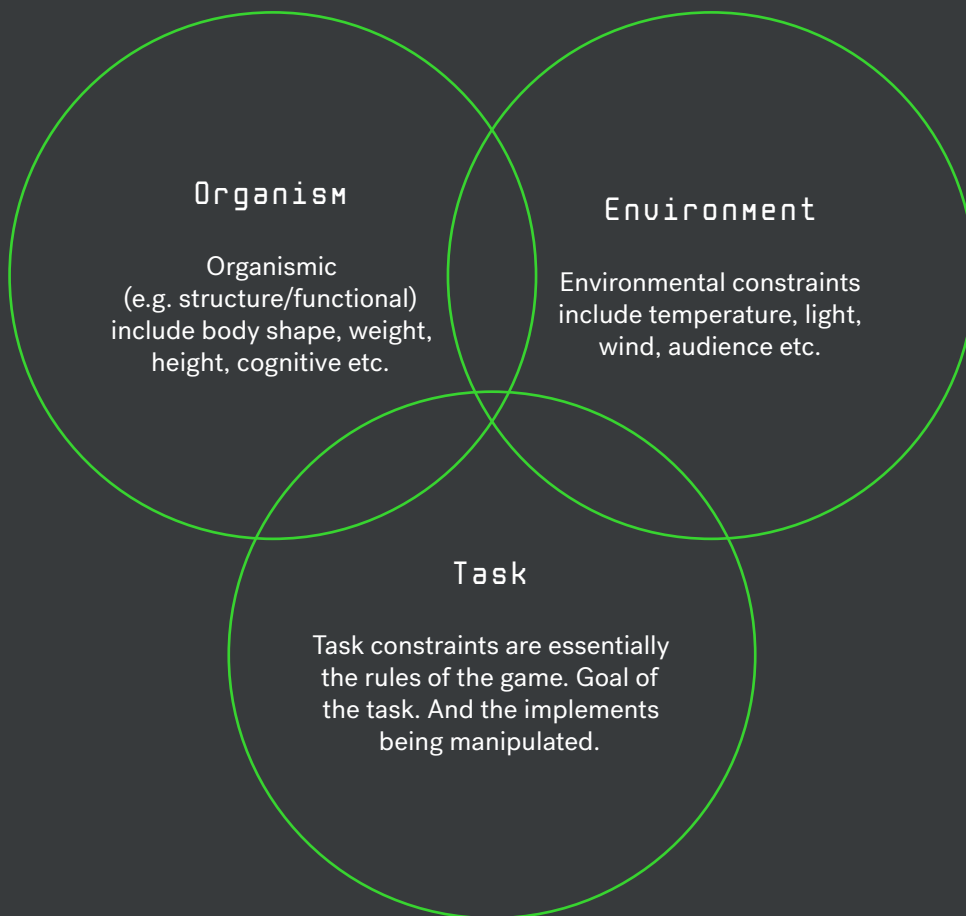
Stage 3: Autonomous stage

As they say, practise makes perfect! At this point you will feel like Jane has nailed the bracing, intent and execution, so you can now look to load this or raise the intensity. As the movement now seems effortless, skill is unlikely to be the bottleneck, it's more likely to be fatigue.

Now you can go back through the stages of learning as you look to raise the stakes. You have built autonomy at the midline to protect the spine, maintain stability and dynamically control the pelvis, and so the continuum is repeated through learning the hinge pattern

2. Dynamic Systems Perspective

While the Stages of Learning method is comprehensive and widely understood, the Dynamic Systems Perspective brings depth and individualisation to all other factors of skill acquisition.



1. Organism

This is your client and all the things that make them an individual, a human being. You need to uncover the factors that impact your prescription and exercise selection, including:

- > Anthropometrics (inc. height, weight, limb length etc.)
- > Training age
- > Skill level
- > Cognitive ability
- > Mental and emotional state
- > The state of the central nervous system

2. Task

This relates to the rules of the game and the goal of the task. The constraints or cues you might use to encourage a better outcome. This includes:

- > External cues
- > Internal cues
- > Visual cues
- > Task-based constraints
- > Reactive Neuromuscular Training (RNT) based exercises

3. Environment

All the constraints of the task and environment will influence skill acquisition. This can relate to the audience and culture within the gym. Is the culture all about heavy weights or perfect movement, or both? Also, things such as the time of year and season can have an impact on the environment and your clients' ability to take on information.

As mentioned, these concepts should feed your mind's eye when teaching a client how to perform a certain exercise. Before you load it significantly, you must ensure there are the necessary prerequisites in place and the execution is somewhat autonomous.

Hypertrophy

Many functional fitness coaches shy away from the concept of hypertrophy, some even saying that they 'don't do bodybuilding'.

But let's be clear. Everyone is looking to increase or at least maintain some level of muscle density or size.

How you achieve this may be different from your traditional bodybuilding approaches, however the mechanism of hypertrophy remains the same.

Put simply, you need to understand the intent of the exercise programme and how it feeds the goal. Some will be for skill acquisition and some will be for hypertrophic gains.

SKILL then INTENT = REFINEMENT

HYPERTROPHY / STRENGTH then INTENT = EFFORT

Two important aspects to consider when thinking about strength development:

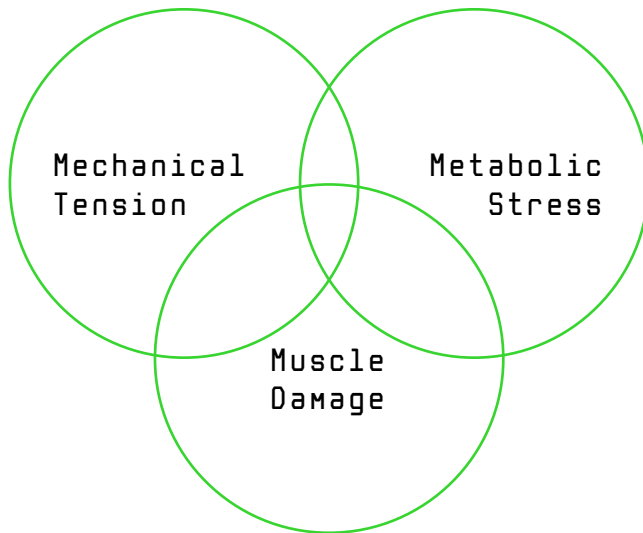
1. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
The key exercises which you will use to monitor and measure the success of performance.
2. Accessories

You need to be clear with the intent, the progressions and execution of the specific exercises.

These both ladder up to the goal of producing adequate stimulation that feeds an ROI on the effort invested.

What are the key mechanisms that cause hypertrophy to occur?

There are three widely researched key mechanisms that cause hypertrophy.



The following are descriptions and applications of each, but the question remains: is this illustration accurate? Are all mechanisms created equal?

The answer is NO.

Mechanical tension

There is a difference between active tension and passive tension, but each have a role to play when it comes to opportunities for more collagen fibres to be laid down.

Here, you'll focus on active tension.

When considering mechanical tension and its role in contributing to hypertrophy there are multiple strategies at play. These include:

1. Concentric and eccentric
2. Moving through a full ROM
3. Creating maximum contraction and activation by:
 - a. Lifting a lot of weight
 - b. Lifting moderate weight until failure
 - c. Maximum effort/focus contractions
4. Low to medium reps 1-12
5. Progressive overload
6. Mind-muscle connection

All of these feed into the intent of time-under-tension (TUT), which requires ample, regular and quality signalling to the working muscle. You need enough stimulating reps that are slow enough to achieve maximal cross-bridge formation at the sarcomere level.

NOTE

Although not widely studied, there is enough evidence to suggest how significant mind-muscle connection is when climbing on the gain train. For your clients, this means being present in the moment, connecting with their body and trying to connect with the muscles they are working, for example, feeling their lats during a dumb-bell row.

Metabolic stress

Metabolic stress is the novel pump. And as the legendary Arnie says, 'I love the pump.' But he's also shared an incredible insight about this mechanism: he wouldn't start counting until it started to hurt.

More technically, metabolic stress is the occlusion of veins by persistent muscle contraction. Hypoxia is caused by a lack of O₂ supply in the muscles due to blood being trapped and 'the pump' is caused by cell swelling and blood pooling.

The strategies to achieving metabolic stress include:

1. High reps at fast speeds
2. Short rests
3. Mind-muscle connection
4. Accommodating resistance
5. Blood flow restriction/Kaatsu
6. Partial sets
7. Pyramids + dropsets + supersets

Muscle damage

What was once considered the holy grail of hypertrophy has since been tarnished. Experts now agree that muscular damage is overrated and its contribution to the overall success of hypertrophic efforts is minimal. Microlesions, tears and a ton of inflammation is left in the wake of such a prescription.

So, the question is: why would one programme with this in mind?

Frequency rules the roost with this debate.

How frequently might your clients be looking to train?

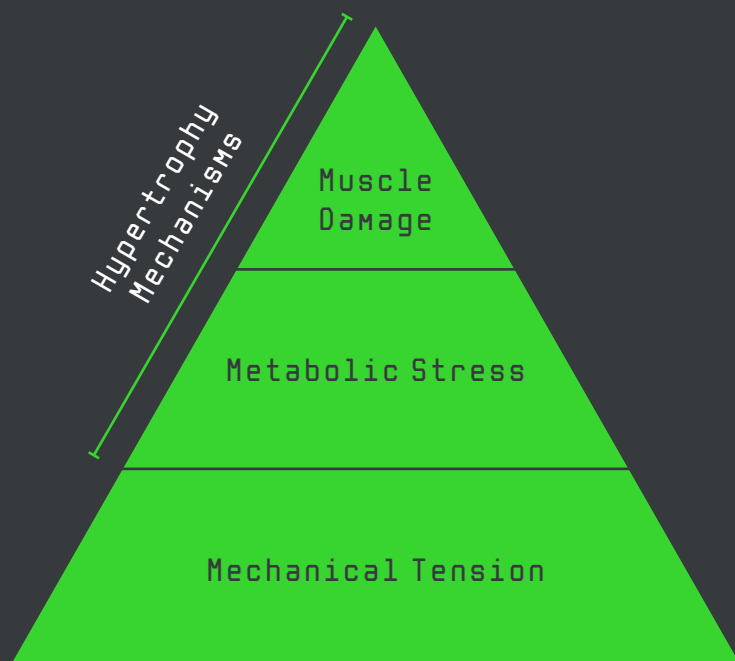
If you look at your GAP clientele, some will be fitness enthusiasts and others very new to fitness, but we aren't talking about elite sports performance in this category.

If your client is only able to see you once a week and there is a significant training age then perhaps a super-taxing session that leaves the client pretty sore for a few days might be worthwhile. After all, muscle damage's proven return on strength gains is well worth the effort.

But, in an ideal world, your job is to encourage regular movement and varying intensities, as often as possible. So, leaving your clients unable to walk and feeling demotivated, broken and unwilling to move is not solving the problem. In actual fact, it's feeding the loop that training is too hard.

The ratio between hard work and repeatability is the art and science of coaching and should forever be analysed and improved upon.

Central Nervous System + Intent



So, to sum up, when developing strength in GAP clients it is essential to understand the intent of all that you prescribe.

Ask yourself, what is the intent for this particular exercise: skill or strength?

1. If skill, then go through skill acquisition pathways to develop, refine and execute perfectly.
2. If strength/hypertrophy, then go hard, chase discomfort and connect with the muscles. This can only be done when skill will not be the limiting factor or a breakdown of skill will increase risk of injury

Variety

Let's return to the hierarchy of strength development for GAP clients. Once you have developed and refined their skills and your client understands the intent of what you are trying to do, you can look at bringing variety to the programming.

This doesn't mean throw anything on the whiteboard and hope it sticks.

But what it does mean is that you have various methods to develop strength/hypertrophy that keeps the goal the goal, but make it interesting along the journey.

Gone are the days where programming looked like this:

- > 3 sets of bench press x 12, rest 90 sec
- > 3 sets of bent over row x 12, rest 90 sec
- > 3 sets of dips x 12, rest 90 sec
- > 3 sets of pull-ups x 12, rest 90 sec

You can and must do better! First, you need to understand how you can manipulate variables such as volume, rep schemes, rest, load and more to achieve the same goal. And secondly, you need to understand the total amount of physical stress your clients can handle and recover from.

The following pages present a case study of various training methods you can use for developing strength for your clients. There is some crossover with skill acquisition, but in this instance let's look at the use of some of these training methods in their application to develop strength and overall athleticism.

Case Study

Katie is 34 years old and has been assessed with: core anti-rotation, anti-extension, anti-lat and T-spine. Her goal is to lose weight from her glutes.

The below examples are a representation of the same KPI, the deadlift and how we might manipulate the intent behind each prescription.

NOTE

This is an example and is not necessarily recommended for all clientele. It is essential you understand the reason why you might choose a certain method outside of just the opportunity and need for variety.

Programming examples:

Method X - Linear Progression Model (Linear from skill to strength)

Week 1

1. KB RDL off blocks x 12 reps build to 24kg
2. RKC plank x 10.10.10 sec work 3 sec rest

Week 2

1. KB RDL x 10 reps build to 24-28kg KB
2. Quadruped plank + shoulder taps x 12

Week 3

1. KB deadlift x build to heavy 8 reps (36-40kg)
2. High plank shoulder taps x 20

Method 1 - EMOM**Skill - EMOM8**

1. KB RDL – 3 sec eccentric x 6-8 @ 16-20kg
2. Bird dog holds X 20 SEC e/s

Strength - EMOM8

1. KB RDL x 12 reps @ 8/9 RPE @ 40Kg KB
2. Banded hip thrusts x 30 reps fast

Method 2 - AMRAP**Skill - AMRAP**

Rounds for quality 9 min

1. KB RDL – 3 sec eccentric x 6-8 2 12-16kg
2. Bird dog holds
3. 30 sec bike – RPE 5/6

Strength - AMRAP

Rounds for quality 9 min

1. KB RDL x 12 @ 40kg
2. Hollow hold x 30 sec
3. SA 3pt row x 10/es

Method 3 - Wave Loading

Strength

Barbell deadlift x 12, 10, 8, 10, 8, 6.

Set 1 - 12 reps @ 60kg

Set 2 - 10 reps @ 65kg

Set 3 - 8 reps @ 70kg

Set 4 - 10 reps @ 70kg

Set 5 - 8 reps @ 72.5kg

Set 6 - 6 Reps @ 75kg

Method 4 - Pre-Exhaust

Skill

90/90 hamstring bridge iso x 30 sec

KB RDL with 2 sec pause

Strength

90/90 hamstring bridge iso x 30 sec

Hamstring bridge x 15 reps

BB RDL x 12-15

Method 5 - 4-Way Method**Skill**

KB RDL x 8
Goblet reverse lunge x 8 e/s
Side plank 30/30 sec
Bike erg x 60 sec breathing pace

Strength

Strength
Trap bar deadlift x 6
Chin-up x 2
Active hanging hollow hold x 20 sec
Ski-erg x 40 sec hard

Method 6 - Clusters**Skill**

Barbell deadlift @ 7/10 RPE 4.4.4 3 sec eccentric
(rest 10 sec between)

Strength

Barbell deadlift 2 8.5/10 RPE
3.2.2 (rest 15 sec)

Method 7 - Supersets

Skill

KB suitcase RDL x 12 reps e/s
Single-arm lat pull-down x 12 e/s

Strength

Barbell sumo deadlift x 5
Ring fall outs x 5

Method 8 - Build To Heavy

Strength

Barbell deadlift x build to a heavy 3RM for the day in 18 min
Start at 10 reps
Aim for 4-5 accumulative sets
2 top sets at 3RM

Method 9 - Triphasic**Strength**

1 week eccentric:

Barbell deadlift x 4 reps 5 sec eccentric

1 week isometric:

Barbell deadlift x 6 reps with 2 sec pause at the mid-shin

1 week concentric:

Barbell deadlift x 2 reps

Method 6 - Accommodating Resistance**Skill**

Dual DB RDL w/band under feet x 8 reps

Strength

BB RDL 3 reps with band under feet

Leave some in the tank

8.4

WORK CAPACITY

Work [*verb*]

- › Be engaged in physical or mental activity in order to achieve a result; do work

Capacity [*noun*]

- › The maximum amount that something can contain

As you dive deeper into the rabbit hole of applied science and knowledge in the fitness industry, more words will become cool and people will assume you know your stuff.

Energy System Development (ESD) is another one of those bastardised phrases within the fitness industry.

If you truly understand ESD, then you'll know that it starts from the minute the client walks into the gym, rather than just during the last five minutes of a session. It is imperative to keep your GAP clientele in mind as we discuss work capacity and EDS.

So, what do you need to know?

There are three main energy systems:

1. Immediate: ATP-CP
2. Medium: Lactate
3. Long: Aerobic

Before you go any deeper, you need to consider the intent behind each system. What would your communication piece be? How does it feed the session and the wider goals of the programme?

Immediate: Intent is hard, fast and violent.

Medium: Intent is go hard and chase discomfort until you quit.

Long: Intent is maintain quality, hold on and breathe.

Intent-based programming is the hallmark of any FFC coach and your ability to justify why you programmed the way you have. Having intent as the backbone for all your decision-making will put you head and shoulders above the rest, by far.

Immediate Energy System

This is the system you call upon to produce short bursts of energy and power, utilising the stored creatine phosphate to produce energy. This fuel burns clean and the by-product is heat.

You know that on average this lasts for between one and 10 seconds for most athletes and takes anywhere from two to five minutes to replenish, depending on the efficiency of their system. Think sprint efforts up to 10 seconds' worth or one to five RM at full pedal.

Medium Energy System

This is the system many coaches try to develop without truly understanding the why or how behind it. The main fuel is stored glycogen to produce the energy for the specific task. In its wake, the by-product is lactic acid.

Time domains of the lactate system depends on the task and level of conditioning of the client. For example, a 30-second lactate effort on an airbike could be very different to a 30-second effort on a sled. As a general rule: high-intensity bouts 10 to 30 seconds' worth of fuel, whereas moderate intensity is 10 seconds to a full two or three minutes. Think building to a heavy 12 RM squat or 30 seconds on/ 90 seconds off maximum effort bike intervals.

Long Energy System

This is where coaches should really look to develop GAP clientele, however many assume this is confined to marathon training or long bike rides.

Within your practice and the one hour you get to see a client, you are looking to develop this energy system the most. For some, being able to last for a 60-minute PT session is more aerobic than you can even imagine.

The main fuels for the aerobic energy system are glycogen, fat and amino acids. The duration is anywhere from 30 seconds to two hours and the by-products are heat, oxygen and CO₂. Developing the aerobic system is developing the metabolic infrastructure of the human body.

You are looking to develop:

1. Circulatory systems
2. Respiratory systems
3. Mitochondrion regeneration
4. Mitochondrion performance
5. Improve lean tissue mass
6. Overall health

So, let's take all that and make sense of it.

Your job as a coach is to build people up. Build enjoyment into their training and feed a long-term sustainable approach to health and fitness.

Everything you do should have the individual front of mind. Whether it's a small group PT environment or a larger group setting, you have the ability to cue, manage and adapt to the individual.

Key programming considerations

Assessment-led

The assessment is a vital tool in allowing you to tailor everything for your clients – from your language selection to your programming prescriptions. If you are to truly build up your clients, it is essential to consider all the pieces of the puzzle when it comes to developing work capacity. Skill breakdown should not be the bottleneck when building capacity. The main considerations start with understanding the client and their athletic profile.

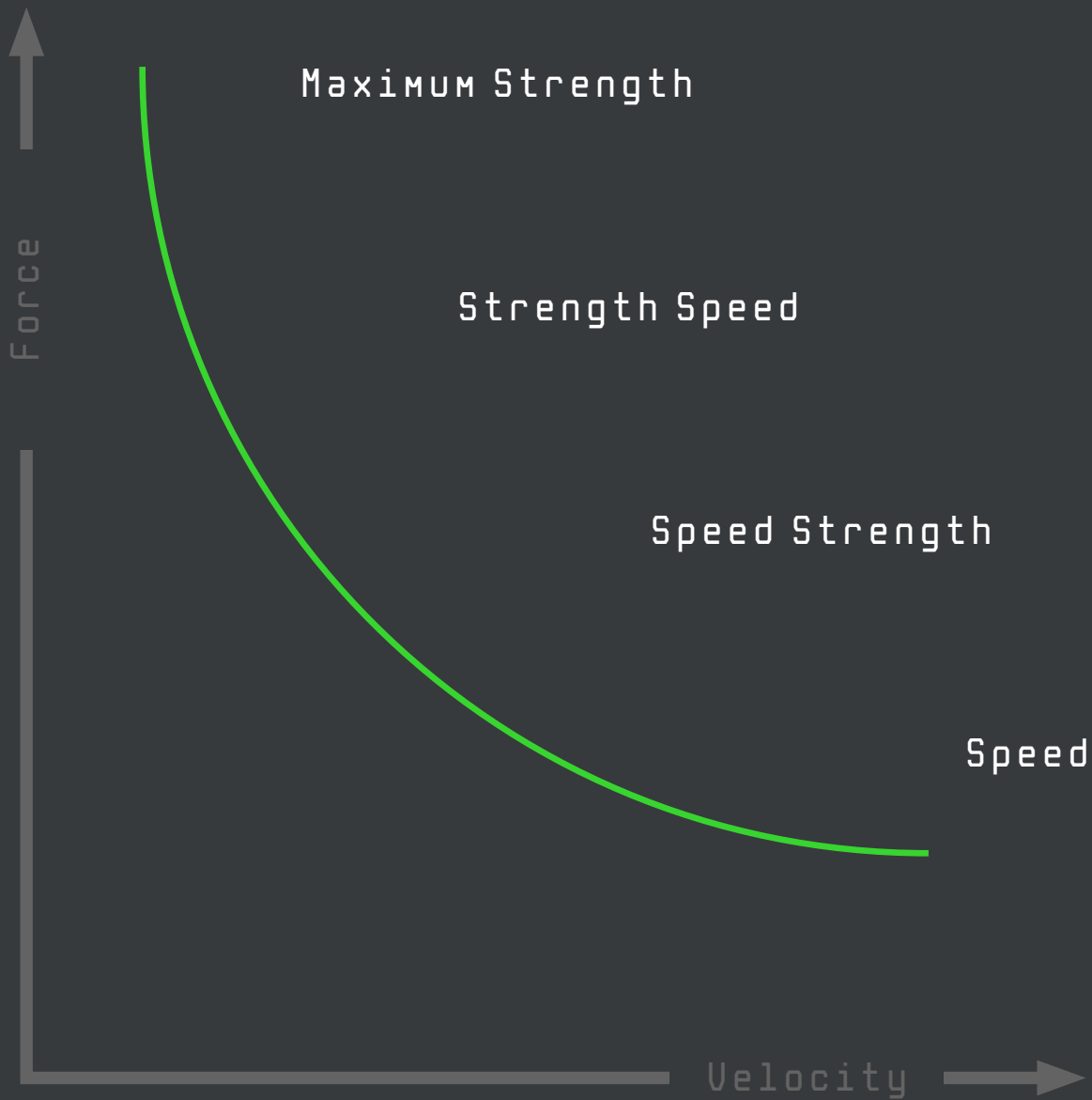
You also need to consider where your prescription sits on the strength continuum (illustration overleaf). You need to earn the right to go fast. Seek stability first, then strength, then look to increase speed and power.

Think overhead carries before dumb-bell snatch work. Before you go power snatch, think dumb-bell muscle snatch and so on.

Goals/Needs/Wants

Understanding the ratio between needs vs wants is the hidden treasure of success in the fitness industry. Using the rule of three, the more justification you have for your prescription and the intent behind your choices the better you will be.

Strength Continuum



8.5

DEVELOPING WORK CAPACITY

It's not just a finisher

Finishers are often all the client may be able to recall from the session. Research has shown that the last five minutes of a session is largely what the client remembers. The finisher is widely considered normal and expected in today's fitness culture so, be sure to build finishers that are fun, challenging, memorable and supportive of the wider goals or programming. They should build people up, reinforce positions, build tolerance, increase capacity and develop all metabolic infrastructure. They shouldn't just end people.

Long-term development

Playing the long game is the golden rule when it comes to the programming considerations of developing work capacity. You are looking to develop sustainability and repeatability into your clients' lives. The work-capacity portion of the programme should build people up and build their ability to maintain quality and consistency.

Aiming for the smallest of gains over longer periods is preferred over really intense bouts where you reinforce fatigue, movement quality breakdown and failure.

You need your clients to leave feeling trained, not drained.

Trained not drained

This mindset highlights a core training value that has served us for many years. It is certainly one of the biggest reasons PFCA has been able to grow so many varying fitness businesses with such great success and retention rates.

A scarcity mindset forces coaches to play all their cards at once and somewhat overcompensate for the lack of confidence in their ability to get the results the client is after.

An abundance mindset leads coaches to act in accordance with confidence and trusting their ability to get the job done. Trusting that their skills will bring them the success they need for their business and their respective clients.

How does all this mindset stuff affect the trained vs drained principle?

Stop trying to be the hardest, toughest or coolest coach. Your success lies in the results you get for clients and how much they want to tell their friends and family about you, not in the few followers you may get on Instagram.

You should aim to be the best part of your clients' day! They should leave feeling challenged, uplifted, a sense of accomplishment, motivated for more and excited to come back. They should feel energised and inspired to be the best version of themselves.

The opposite would be if they're leaving feeling deflated, defeated, broken, abused, lacking in confidence, demotivated, injured, unable to play with their kids, unable to focus at work or live life at their highest ability.

#Trainednotdrained

Maintain quality

At later points in the session, it's widely considered that form may break down and it's all about getting the work done.

The harder and quicker, the better.

Now ask yourself these questions:

- > How does that poor movement quality feed the wider program?
- > What am I trying to reinforce?
- > What lessons am I trying to encourage here?

As an FFC coach, you should play the long game and allow your clients to understand where form isn't essential and when it's okay for it to break down. The long game approach will not only improve the overall athleticism of your clientele but equally keep them away from injury and build a much bigger base of capacity.

For every injury is at least a six-month delay in progress.

Imagine you trained consistently well over 10 years with no injuries. What might you achieve?

Now, instead imagine every six months you get injured. Over 10 years you will literally have seen close to zero progress.

The intention of maintaining quality feeds the narrative, to reinforce better execution while aiming to increase overall capacity.

For example:**Workout A**

5 rounds for time

Ski 30 cal

10 press ups

30m suitcase carry e/s

30m bear crawl

Workout B

5 rounds for quality

Ski 30 cal

10 press-ups

30m suitcase carry e/s

30m bear crawl

Focus on breathing throughout

How could we change the focus in order to improve the intent as it relates to maintaining quality? Workout A is more like 'it's comp time, let's go!', whereas Workout B is 'you've got this, let's get to work and practise'.

Your language will impact how your client approaches the work that lies before them. So, aim to develop a vocabulary that is relatable and concise.

Logistics

The logistics of every programme is so important.

Key aspects include:

- > What equipment is available?
- > What is the distance between each piece of kit?
- > Is the equipment on the same floor?
- > Do people need to share?
- > Are people allowed to share equipment?
- > What time is available?

Understanding all the factors that may influence how easily the programme can be executed is essential. Whether online, 1-1 or in group settings, this is key to building a session that flows and promotes movement and consistency.

Time of the day

Consider how the time of the day can influence the level of readiness for your client. Your 6 a.m. might turn up fresh and ready, or flat as anything after a rough night. And your 8 p.m. might turn up completely wired from an exciting day of crushing it at work or perhaps drained from such a big day.

How do we take these variables and ensure we get the best out of them? How do we influence the whole session and even the mindset they leave in?

Your first person of the day at 6 a.m. will leave in a very different state than your 8 p.m. client at the end of a long day. Your 6 a.m. should leave ready to take on the day, be the best version of themselves and inspired. Your 8 p.m. should leave inspired, accomplished and ready to wind down.

This is where understanding these four elements is most important.

1. Up-regulation – to increase the level of readiness.
2. Session flow – to maintain a session flow that produces a positive outcome throughout.
3. Down-regulation – to encourage a calm, present state and drive the parasympathetic system.
4. Adaptability – to easily adapt, change and seamlessly flow.

Allostatic load

Allostatic load (McEwen and Stellar 1993) is the wear and tear on the body which accumulates as an individual is exposed to repeated or chronic stress. Exercise is stress and this concept rings true when considering how much stress our clients can tolerate. They may hope to recover from an acute dose stronger than before, so that they are more prepared for what might come next. Much like any dose of stress, if the dose is effective then they will develop and grow. But, if it's too much, chronic, or there is not enough time in between bouts to recover, then injury or sickness is likely to occur.

So, it's essential to appreciate that each client will have a unique capacity for allostatic load and you must monitor how well they recover from bouts of exercise with you.

Ask questions like:

- > How well are you sleeping?
- > How is your appetite currently?
- > How many days after training do you still have delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS)?

This line of questioning may give a rough estimation if the dose response is accurate.

After all, your goal should be to seek the minimum effective dose with maximum effectiveness.

Hormesis

Hormesis is the natural phenomenon whereby a beneficial effect (improved health, stress tolerance, growth or longevity) results from exposure to low doses of an agent that is otherwise toxic or lethal when given at higher doses.

Homeostasis is a word most often used within the fitness industry as a means to seek balance, however our goal should not be to encourage more homeostasis but a positive hormesis response. A positive response would be an accurate dose of stress and toxins, which allows for an increase in strength, performance and resilience.

For example, a positive response would be when an accurate dose of sunlight spikes vitamin D levels and improves overall health, function and energy levels etc. Too much sunlight and you might feel drained, dehydrated and unable to perform.

The same mindset should feed your prescription of work capacity workouts, the entire workout, the entire programme and all that you prescribe. It should be just enough to rock homeostasis and get the organism moving but not so much that you break your clients down.

So, how do you know what is right for your clients?

1. Play the long game. You would rather aim low than too high and build consistency. The quickest way to lose a client is to injure them.
2. Ask better questions. Asking better questions about how they feel, their sleep and their recovery all play a huge role. Is their performance on a decline? Perhaps the dose is too high.

Lastly, stressors include everything from home life, work life, relationships, poor nutrition and more. Our job is to understand all the values within this algorithm and develop a solution with the information provided.

You will not get it right every time, but simply having this mindset as a foundational core value will set you apart from most trainers.

Progressive overload in the realms of work capacity

How do we develop work capacity?

There are six rules to keep in mind when developing work capacity.

1. SAID Principle
2. Intent first
3. Understand your metrics
4. Quality
5. Repeatability
6. Sustainability

1. SAID Principle: specific adaptations to imposed demands

Developing a client on a ski-erg will make them better at the ski-erg. Yes, there is some carry-over to increased metabolic function, but they will certainly not have the same rate of improved performance on the bike as they did on the ski-erg.

All this means is that if there is a specific goal or metric you are looking to develop or achieve, keep it specific and understand the variables at play.

For example, if through your thorough assessment you uncover that your client wants to improve their 5k running time, you would also understand the need to develop her core and lateral hip stability. Your programme contains a bunch of ski-erg work because that is all you have access to in your studio. So, her gains are marginal due to strength increase but she saw no overall increase in running performance. She got good at her ski-erg though!

Our advice: keep the goal the goal.

If running was the goal, then a tailored approach to develop her efficiency, her pace, her threshold and her overall skill in running would have been a much better approach.

Keep it specific if specificity is required. If it is generalist fitness, then focus on easy metrics.

2. Intent first: be clear what is required

You need to be clear that from the moment you put pen to paper and start to design your programme that you know what the intent is. When it comes to your clients, you need to know what language to use to get the best out of them for that day and for the wider programme.

More on intent to follow later in the handbook.

3. Understand your metrics

What are the metrics you might focus on in relation to developing work capacity? Especially when some metrics are hard to repeat or measure, such as intent or readiness.

A few key metrics which could give you a framework for progression and regression are listed below;

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Total duration of work | 6. Total reps |
| 2. Work:rest ratio | 7. Total load |
| 3. Average readiness | 8. Movement patterns |
| 4. Heart rate recovery rate | 9. Average performance trends |
| 5. Speed/cadence/wattage/
RPM | |

The key here is to understand that any manipulation of one variable can influence the rest. Be sure to not change too much and as a rule of thumb, concentrate on one at a time, but prioritise the total time of work and paying close attention to the work:rest ratio.

There are likely four things that are limiting factors for performance during a work capacity bout:

1. Heart: cannot handle the demand on the circulatory system to get O₂ to the blood.
2. Lungs: inability to clear enough CO₂ (CO₂ tolerance plays a huge role too).
3. Brain: too much input and an inability to maintain coordination.
4. Muscles: the burn is too much.

When you consider all the variables that may affect the above, then be sure to understand how one change would influence the whole system.

Consider this:

5 rounds for time

20 cal bike erg
20 walking lunges @ bw
20m bear crawl

Your progression may be:

6 rounds for time

20 cal bike erg
20 walking lunges @ bw
20m bear crawl

Or

5 rounds for time

24 cal bike erg
20 walking lunges @ bw
20m bear crawl

Or

5 rounds for time

20 cal bike erg
20 walking lunges @ 2 x 10s
20m bear crawl

Any of these is a slight adjustment to the programme. You could even add intensity or intent but add a rest time. The fact is that one variable change is often perfect – so the following would not be the best approaches:

7 rounds for time

25 cal bike erg
30 walking lunges @ bw
40 m bear crawl

Here the volume increase is far too big and will likely floor your client.

5 rounds for time

20 cal bike erg sprint
20 walking lunges @ 2 x 20s
20m bear crawl (as fast as possible)

Here the intent/intensity is far too high, and the rounds will not be completed without a huge decrease in performance, coordination, execution and more.

The simple rule is just change one variable at a time where a progression of the work capacity is needed, and your client might beat the previous weeks' time! Above all, be sure to keep it client-focused and within the safe parameters.

4. Quality

The intention should be to encourage your clients to lean into discomfort, put the pedal down and move their needle forward when it comes to performance. This is different to fatigue and letting them reinforce poor movement or execution.

Human bodies are incredible at adapting and learning, but sometimes this is not for the best. If you find an easier way to complete a task, you're more likely to go there every time you feel under attack, stressed or tired.

Think burpees, for example.

At some stage those turn into worming up and down off the floor, feet all over the place, shoulders anywhere possible and core completely turned off.

What does this teach you?

You need to appreciate when you are looking to build capacity vs fatigue.

More often than not, focus on quality over quantity. If pure output is the goal, then make sure the bottleneck is not skill. Think low WES Scale (see below).

5. Repeatability

If we have quality as an intent for the work we do then it is more likely to be repeatable. The more repeatable the effort, the easier it is to measure and manipulate the variables.

We are all creatures of habit and as coaches you are looking to build more consistency and repeatability into all that your clients do. This is a feedback loop of success.

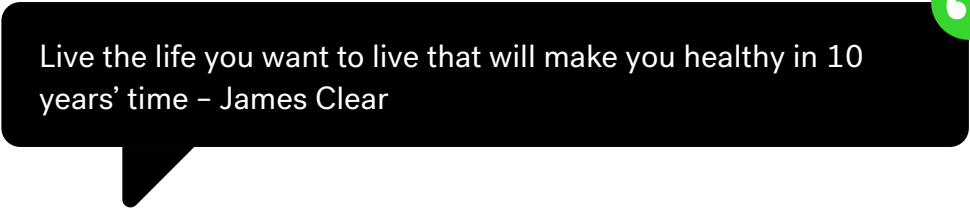
After all, the work done within the four walls of the gym should transcend into life outside.

Life outside includes all this and more: health, energy, mindset, readiness, resilience and relationships.

We are the vehicle for change in so many people, change within all these areas, so that their behaviours are more in line with who they want to be.

This is repeatability, this is habit change. This is coaching.

6. Sustainability



Live the life you want to live that will make you healthy in 10 years' time – James Clear

This philosophy speaks volumes.

Fitness should transcend into life. Not only should your efforts be sustainable now but have a lasting impact for years to come. Sustainable and challenging efforts within your programming feed a loop of hard work + consistency = results.

Results that are sustainable.

In your programming, ensure there's an underlying tone of building your clients up through dedicated and meaningful sustainable work.

8.6

EFFICIENT PROGRAM DESIGN

Intent-based

Intent-based programming is the rule of life as an FFC coach. This is even more important when considering the language you use for developing work capacity for GAP clientele.

More often than not, there are two main types of GAP clients:

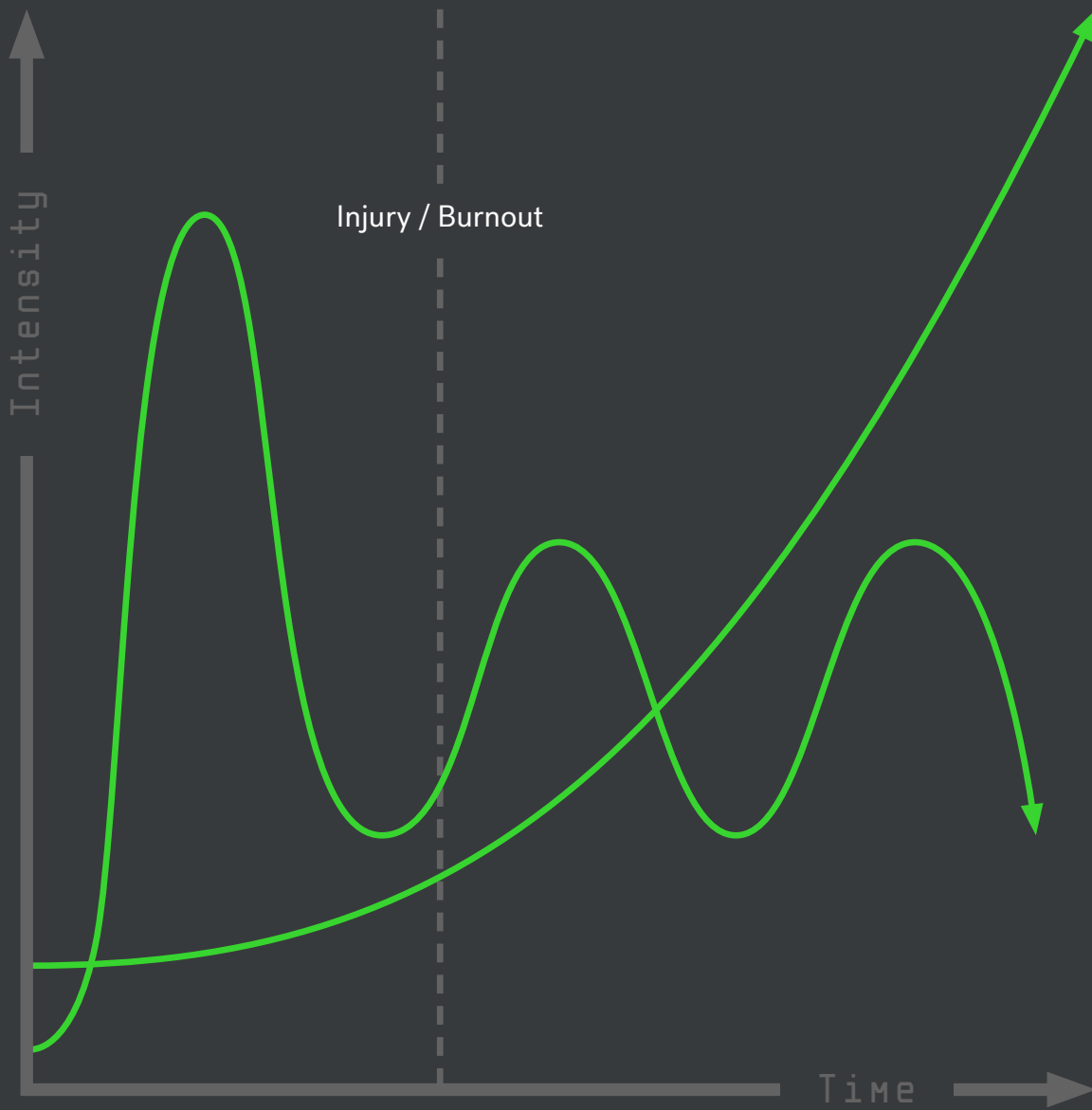
1. Goes too hard
2. Barely tries

It is essential you get the best out of each of these individuals if you want to develop their respective work capacity.

What is the intent behind the programme?

When going for long bouts of aerobic work, think five-to-15-minute AMRAPs or even longer. In that duration you are looking to reinforce positions, build awareness and positions under fatigue and improve the ability to withstand stress for an extended period. Maintaining a good rhythm of breathing is essential in maintaining quality.

Intensity vs Consistency



For the client who often goes too hard too soon, how would your language improve their performance?

“

In this AMRAP you are going to work for 15 minutes. You'll go through the movements listed on the whiteboard. Your goal is to maintain quality throughout. I'm looking for as many quality rounds as possible.

Let's call this scenario AMQWAP. Your language will completely change the intent behind the workload. You would hope to see very little movement breakdown and a state of presence and flow, a challenge but achievable.

How about the client not going hard enough?

You have the opportunity to give targets throughout the set, so introduce small achievable targets that move the needle and get them slightly away from the comfort zone. This might be a certain number of calories per minute on the bike or X amount of press-ups per 30 seconds.

Setting some non-negotiables might be just what is needed.

“

In this AMRAP I am looking for you to get the work done with great form, I want you to push yourself and breathe throughout. In each bike element please aim for 12 cal per minute. Can you do that?

Case Study

We once ran a seminar held at MARCHON. In this seminar we split two groups ahead of a spicy 12-minute AMRAP. Both groups were given the same workout, however just before the workout started, each group received separate instructions as to the intent we were encouraging them to aim for.

Group 1

Had to go as hard as possible, to chase discomfort, to taste blood in their mouths.

Group 2

Had to aim for quality and repeatability. Own every position and breathe throughout.

Of the two groups which group do you think managed more total rounds and reps? Any guesses?

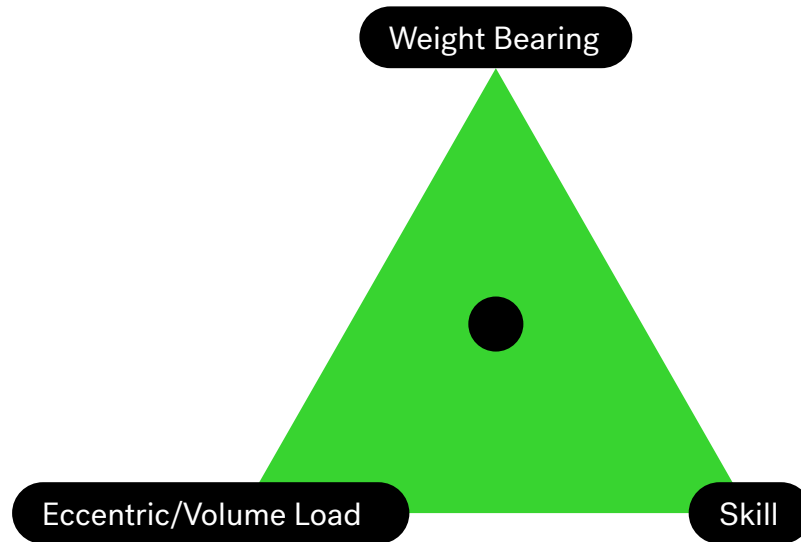
Group 2.

The members in Group 1 quickly started showing signs that they had hit their lactate threshold and they spent the rest of the workout barely holding on. Execution was poor and it only got worse – even basic squats turned ugly. This was a group of elite coaches, some even top athletes.

Now imagine that for your clients. Aiming low, breeding familiarity, refining positions and slowly increasing the dose is a much better intent as a coach and for the client.

WES Scale

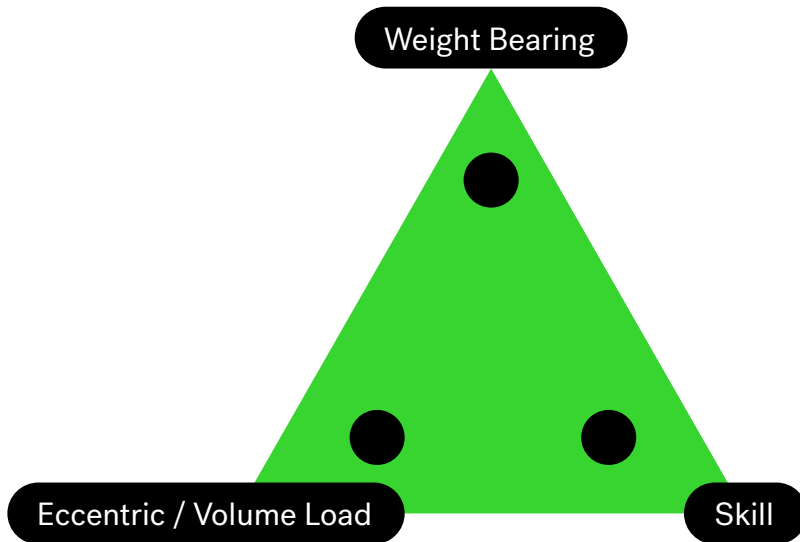
The WES Scale, founded by Julien Pineau (StrongFit) is a concept that gives an incredible framework to exercise selection, especially as it pertains to work capacity.



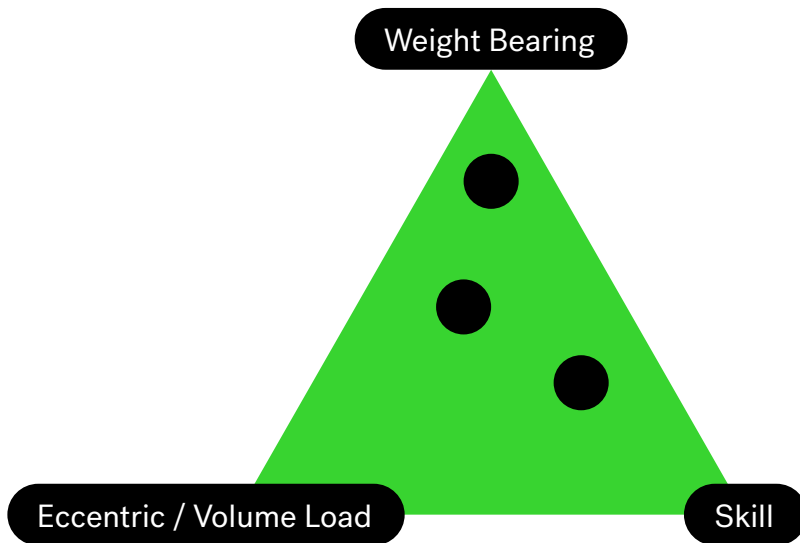
1. Weight bearing describes how much weight is being lifted. Think a session of light dumb-bell deadlifts versus heavy barbell deadlifts in a circuit.
2. Skill describes the level of skill required to execute the movement, especially under fatigue. Think air squat vs barbell overhead squats.
3. Eccentric/volume describes how much eccentric load the athlete is exposed to and how likely will this influence repeatability the next day.

Let's look at some exercises under the WES Scale

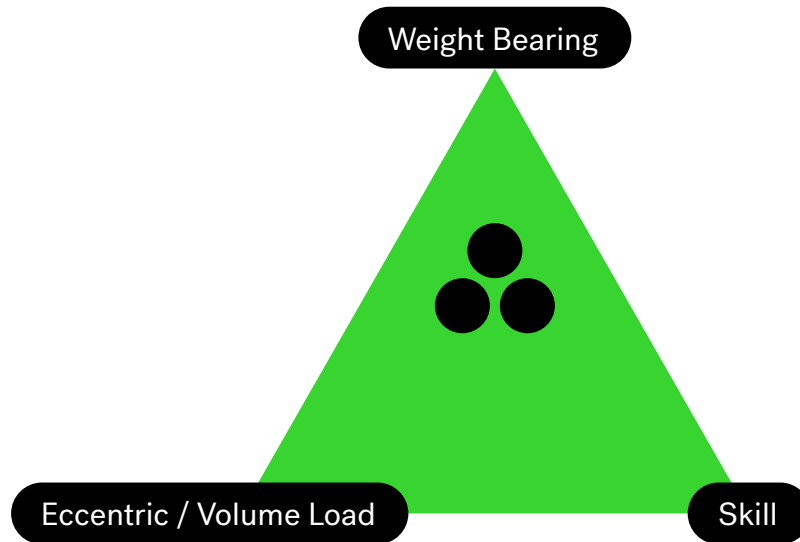
1. Barbell Overhead Squat @ 70%RM - very high on the WES Scale.



2. D-ball over the shoulder - No eccentric volume, high weight bearing and medium skill required.



3. Sled push/pull – No eccentric volume, light weight and low skill.



The WES Scale framework allows you to make more informed decisions on exercise selection that will ultimately impact how positive the response will be from the session.

You do want to encourage intensity but more importantly, you want to encourage repeatability and sustainability. You want your clients to be able to walk the next day, enjoy their improved performance in life and look to go again.

This is what developing work capacity should be about.

Programming examples – beginner, intermediate, advanced

5 rounds
 20/20 side plank/suitcase march
 20 air squats/goblet squat
 10 incline press-ups/press-ups
 30s assault bike/longer, harder
 60 sec rest

