

Your guide to starting out in fitness

PT Personal Trainers Council
of New Zealand

Introduction

This guide has been compiled by the PT Council of New Zealand with assistance from Fitness New Zealand and the New Zealand Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs). It aims to provide information to potential gym instructors and personal trainers that will help them in their career choices in the fitness industry.

It comes in 2 parts:

Part A is most suitable for those considering a fitness or personal training course,

Part B is more applicable to graduates who are looking to launch their careers as PTs.



Part A**So you want to be a personal trainer or gym instructor?**

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A career in the fitness industry is a hugely rewarding one. For most trainers it is being paid for doing what they love and the chance to help people make positive changes in their lives.

Here are some facts about the industry in NZ¹:

- Turnover is around \$220 million per year
- Around 420,000 New Zealanders (approx 9%) have a membership at an exercise facility with tens of thousands more using them on a casual basis.
- The industry employs and supports 5000 individuals, with around 2000-3000 of these in exercise roles.
- There are some 1800 REPs registered trainers. Personal trainers make up 1000 of these of which two-thirds are in contracted role.
- There are approximately 400 gyms/fitness centres in New Zealand, with a further 200 or so smaller exercise or PT studios.
- Over 75% of facilities in NZ are privately owned single site operators. Multi site operators include Les Mills, CityFitness, Club Physical, Contours, Configure Express and Curves.
- Other fitness facilities include: council gyms, university centres, small corporate clubs, community gyms e.g. YMCAs

¹ Source - Fitness NZ

Section 2**Training options**

The following full time courses are all run by REPs registered education providers. These providers can be found online or by going to the reps website - www.reps.org.nz – where you will find direct links to their sites.

AUCKLAND	REPs Levels* Available
AUT University Diploma in Fitness Training Certificate in Sport & Recreation Certificate in Personal Training Certificate in Fitness Instruction Certificate in Group Fitness Instruction	Personal Training Exercise Consultant I Personal Training Exercise Consultant II Group Exercise
Max International College for Fitness Professionals Certificate in Fitness & Fitness Business Diploma	Personal Trainer
NetFit PT And Wellness Coach Aerobics and Group Exercise	Personal Trainer Group Exercise
Manukau Institute of Technology Exercise prescription for Fitness instructors level 4 Human Anatomy and Physiology Level 5 Exercise prescription for Personal Trainers Level 6 Introduction to Sport as a Business Level 7	Exercise Consultant I Exercise Consultant I Exercise Consultant II
The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (NZ Institute of Health and Fitness) NZQA National Certificate in Fitness (Exercise Consultant) Level 3 NZQA National Certificate in Fitness (Personal Training) Level 4	Exercise Consultant II Personal Trainer
WAIKATO	REPs Levels Available
Wintec – Hamilton Pending Application	
The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (NZ Institute of Health and Fitness) NZQA National Certificate in Fitness (Exercise Consultant) Level 3 NZQA National Certificate in Fitness (Personal Training) Level 4	Exercise Consultant II Personal Trainer

MIDDLE/LOWER NORTH ISLAND	REPs Levels Available
Bay of Plenty Polytech – Tauranga National Certificate in Fitness Level 4	Personal Trainer
Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT) – Napier Pending Application	
UCOL (Palmerston North) Bachelor of Human Performance	Personal Trainer
WELLINGTON	REPs Levels Available
Massey University Diploma in Exercise Science Bachelor of Health Science	Exercise Consultant II Exercise Consultant II
New Zealand Institute of Sport (NZIS) Certificate in Personal Training Certificate in Sport & Exercise Prescription	Personal Trainer Exercise Consultant II
WelTech Certificate in Exercise Science Diploma in Exercise Science	Exercise Consultant II Exercise Consultant II
The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (NZ Institute of Health and Fitness) NZQA National Certificate in Fitness (Exercise Consultant) Level 3 NZQA National Certificate in Fitness (Personal Training) Level 4	Exercise Consultant II Personal Trainer
UPPER SOUTH ISLAND	REPs Levels Available
Community Colleges - New Zealand Certificate in Applied Sport	Exercise Consultant II
CHRISTCHURCH	REPs Levels Available
Aoraki Polytechnic Diploma in Sport (Elite Performance)	Exercise Consultant II
New Zealand Institute of Sport (NZIS) Certificate in Personal Training Certificate in Sport & Exercise Prescription	Personal Trainer Exercise Consultant II
Southern Institute of Technology (SIT) Certificate in Personal Training	Personal Trainer
The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (NZ Institute of Health and Fitness) National Certificate in Fitness Exercise Consultant Level 3 PT Certificate 4	Exercise Consultant II Personal Trainer
DUNEDIN	REPs Levels Available
Otago Institute of Sport and Adventure Certificate in Personal Training and Exercise Prescription (Level 4) Diploma in Personal Training and Exercise Prescription (Level 5) Graduate Diploma in Physical Conditioning (Level 7)	Personal Trainer Personal Trainer

Correspondence Courses (available nationwide)

The following organisations offer courses via correspondence, and/or training outside of the cities that have a campus. For full details please contact the institution directly.

NetFit (main campus in Auckland) www.netfit.co.nz

Max International College for Fitness Professionals (main campus in Auckland) www.maxfitnesscollege.co.nz

Fitnation (Certificate in Personal Training) www.fitnation.com.au

Otago Institute of Sport and Adventure, Dunedin www.otagopolytechnic.ac.nz

***Levels**

- For full details on levels please see the [REPs Levels page](http://www.reps.org.nz) at www.reps.org.nz
- In brief, the highest level is Personal Trainer. Exercise Consultant is similar to a "Gym Instructor" in terms of common industry jobs. Exercise consultant has two levels - I and II (level II is higher and enables the exercise professional to personalise a programme, which would be required by almost all employers)

Section 3

Registration

The Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs) is the not-for-profit fitness industry owned registration system for fitness professionals in NZ. REPs offers various levels of professional registration based on job roles, and also registers facilities that use these professionals. Fundamentally, REPs is about the industry setting its own standards and ensuring that those working in the industry meet these standards. The majority of exercise facilities in NZ require that their gym instructors and personal trainers are REPs registered.

The training organisations listed in Section 2 meet the requirements to be registered education providers. This means that all you have to do once you have completed the course is apply to be REPs registered, provide verification of course completion and pay the annual fee.

What being REPs registered means to the PTs out on the coal face...

“Being REPS registered adds credibility to our profession as it sets bench mark standards and ensures trainers have high standards of qualification and professional integrity”.

Jean Scott

“Having a registration system (REPs) for trainers and instructors is a significant, professional step for the health and recreation of New Zealanders. Essentially this means that trainers and instructors who prescribe activity have met a minimal level of competence and in a relatively young industry this is a key factor to gaining credibility and being taken seriously. Further, this increases the service level provided to clients and enhances the reputation of the industry. This has to be of value to all involved.”

Matt Blair

“I believe that it is very important that Personal Trainers develop the standards of professionalism necessary to give the public and our partners in other health professions confidence in our ability to do the job”.

Mish McCormack

In summary if you are REPs registered you signal to clients and the world at large that you:

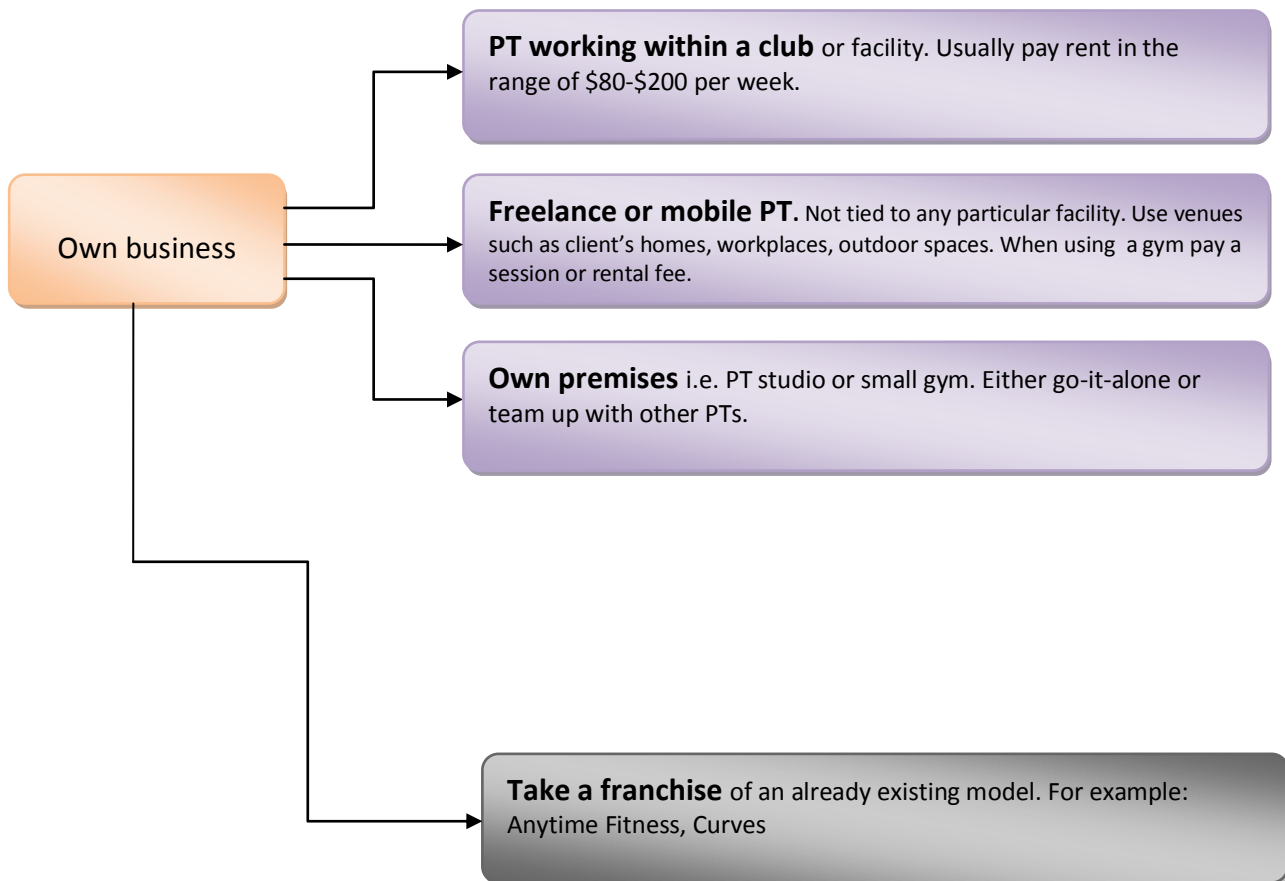
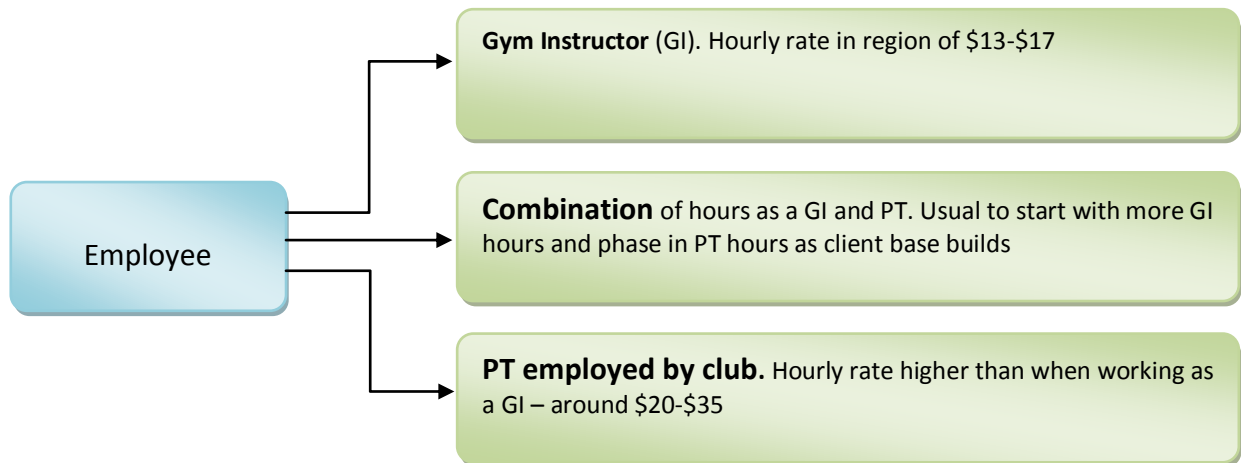
- have gained recognised and approved qualifications
- can demonstrate competence in your working environment
- are committed to continuing professional development
- have appropriate public liability insurance
- are committed to the industry Code of Ethics
- belong to an organisation which, through a common voice, represents the views of the industry to government and other bodies

For more information about REPs visit www.reps.org.nz

Section 4

Common pathways

There are simplistically two pathways that most graduates follow; that of being an employee of a gym or facility or setting up a business. Several options are possible in each pathway as illustrated by the model below. In Part B we examine the pros and cons of each of these pathways.



Working in the fitness industry can be incredibly fulfilling. But like every industry, there are misconceptions about what it involves. As 'forewarned is forearmed' we have identified some areas in which perceptions can often clash with reality.

#1 – You won't be training athletes or top performers

The clients or customers you deal with in the average gym or PT business are not athletes or advanced exercisers. In fact the vast majority will be ordinary people who are just looking to lose a little weight, get a bit fitter and feel better on a daily basis by exercising regularly.

"I always thought that when I became a personal trainer I would only train elite athletes and the wealthy. I thought clients would be easy to get and even easier to keep. Oh how wrong I was!

I had to work very hard to build my client base and retain them and only a handful of them were wealthy. I had to sell my product and my brand and show them an experience they had never had - it wasn't easy and even today 15 years later I still have to give every client, whether they are CEOs or housewives, 110% every time to ensure they keep coming back."

Mish McCormack

"I love training people with no sporting background. The gains they achieve and the improvement I see in their self esteem and quality of life is really satisfying as a trainer."

Hilary Blackstock

#2 – The big money is a way off

You may not be earning the money you envisage straight away. As you can see from the pathways model a Gym Instructor may initially command close to the minimum wage. This is probably not too much of an issue if you are relatively young without responsibilities but if you have a family and a mortgage this is something to consider. Be prepared to start on a minimum wage. Be persistent and work hard on your technical and non-technical skills.

"Experience in this industry is everything. So if you are persistent and take every opportunity to learn from all the people and resources available to you, you will speed up that process & come out on top."

Alison Storey

#3 – Your role will be wide-ranging

You'll be doing much more than just training clients and writing programmes. If you are a GI (gym instructor) for example you will be responsible for supervising the whole gym and maintaining the facility, as well as contributing to other club activities. You may therefore find yourself in any given shift distributing leaflets, cleaning treadmills, taking a turn at reception and making contact with members on the gym floor as well as taking several 1-1 appointments.

#4 - You are in sales

Be under no illusion that if you don't sell yourself as a trainer you will not be successful. This is one of the biggest factors that trips up new PTs. Putting a poster and business cards on display will not be enough to ensure clients roll up in a steady stream. You need to interact, talk to gym users (if you are based in a gym) network and outreach to promote yourself. This is an area where having a mentor or a support group is incredibly powerful. We also dedicate a section to 'marketing yourself' in part 2 of this guide.

“Join business groups & networking groups, and talk to sports clubs and businesses at every opportunity. People hire trainers because someone else told them that they’re good. Get a good reputation early on - guard and preserve it with your integrity as a professional and your business will grow accordingly”.

Alison Storey

#5 - The hours are not 9-5

The fitness industry doesn’t operate on a 9-5 working day simply because your clients and customers need access to you outside their working hours. This means working early mornings, evenings and weekends so be prepared to work split shifts to take this into account. It is also worth noting that if you are seriously into a sport yourself, getting extensive time off for training and or matches and competition may not always be convenient for your business or your employer.

*“Within this ensure you have personal ‘down time’. To last in this industry it is essential that your energy is managed well. Remember that your clients need your attention and energy and good service is best achieved when it is consistent over a long period of time. **Matt Blair***

Getting up early to start the day training clients is a fantastic way to give your day a boost - then you get to enjoy the middle of the day spending time with friends or family while others work, or making the most of the surf without the masses!”

Hilary Blackstock

#6 – Beware the ‘setting up set-backs’

Setting yourself up in business as a PT is no different to any small business start up. Many fail due to a lack of simple financial planning. Assume that setting up everything will take much longer than anticipated – Income will therefore be slower coming in than predicted and costs will also run higher. Our advice is to have a realistic business plan in place with enough cash to see you through a reasonable length of time. Cash flow is crucial. In Part B we reference some financial templates that may be useful.

“Having a business plan is crucial - get as much help as you can to set a realistic plan. You can get free help from lots of places including accountants and mentors or Trade and Enterprise NZ. In Taranaki Venture Taranaki regularly run business workshops and coaching free of charge covering all aspects of running a business. It is also a great idea to find others in your area doing similar work and ask them for advice.”

Hilary Blackstock

#7 – Back yourself

All PTs starting out feel a little overwhelmed at times. It is easy to get into a ‘confidence crisis’ especially when you are working alone and feeling isolated. We recommend you develop networks and support groups with other PTs and small businesses. Join organisations that will keep you updated and motivated. For example check out the ‘supporters’ of the PTC. Come to the Business Grow Roadshows and GetNZActive Conference and any other training courses that become available.

Seek out mentors that have ‘been there, done it’ and understand the issues you encounter.

In summary

Our intention with this section is not to put you off a career in the fitness industry – it is after all one of the best professions in the world. We do however want you to go into it with your eyes wide open and be under no illusions so that you are better positioned to be the success you deserve to be.

We wish you the very best of luck!

The PT Council Regional Reps

Part B

You've got your qualification – now what?

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Section 1

Pros and Cons of each pathway

Employee

As an employee the most obvious benefit is that you have a guaranteed salary and that all your tax and Kiwi saver contributions can be taken care of. You will also benefit from the usual holiday and sick day entitlements that employees receive. Aligning yourself to one of the larger organisations may also mean there is in-house training and marketing support available to you.

Gym Instructor (GI). Hourly rate in region of \$13-\$17

Pros

Opportunity to learn the gym business from other trainers

Cons

Hourly rate low
Need to have initiative when working alone

PT employed by club. Hourly rate around \$20-\$35

Pros

Club may provide support in terms of promotion
Ready supply of potential clients in the form of members

Cons

Restricted to working within that one organisation

Combination of GI and PT.

Pros

A good way to transition to a full time PT

Cons

Restricted to working within that one organisation

Own business

You will have more freedom following this pathway but you will need to acquire appropriate business skills - particularly in the areas of finance, marketing and sales. Spending time on these areas is imperative but does not generate immediate income i.e. you will not receive any income for non chargeable time. In a nutshell if you don't have clients you don't get paid.

PT working within a club.

Pros

Equipment and facility provided for you
No maintenance costs
Other PTs to learn from
Ready supply of potential clients in the form of members

Cons

There will be club policies and rules to adhere to
Still need to market and sell yourself – not a given you will get new clients
Difficult to distinguish between PT and GI roles
Competing with other PTs for clients
Rent to pay regardless of income

Freelance or mobile PT

Pros

Pay no rent (when outside or in client's home)
Need to purchase basic equipment
No restrictions or rules to follow
Go to clients which is attractive to them

Cons

Need to invest in a decent vehicle
Still need to market and sell yourself which can be harder than when in a club
Weather or bad light problematic when outside
Need to factor in travel time

Own premises

Pros

Capacity to take membership to generate income
Potential to rent space for other income generators
Eg other PTs, massage, therapies
You have a base that is all yours!

Cons

Many overheads on premises: eg rent, insurance rates, utilities, equipment purchase or leasing etc
Opening hours may require extra staffing

Take a franchise of an already existing model. Egs Anytime Fitness, Curves

Pros

All systems and brand already set up for you

Cons

Set up investment required

Section 2:**Job Hunting**

Options:

- Directly approach the gym or club in your area. Prepare a good CV by all means but also try to meet the manager in person. One way to do this is to ask if they can spare ten minutes to tell you what they would be looking for in a fitness instructor or personal trainer. Most people can spare ten minutes and if they refuse or ignore your request you may not want to work for them anyway.

Consider how you present yourself when approaching a club or going for a job interview. You are creating an impression of yourself to a potential employer and track pants and a t-shirt may not be appropriate. A suit or smart casual clothing will be more likely to get their attention and show them you are serious and highly professional.

- Go online and see what is available

www.nzihf.co.nz

www.fitnz.co.nz

www.sportspeople.co.nz

www.seek.co.nz

www.leisurejobs.co.nz

- Look in your local papers.
- Attend workshops and PT get-togethers as these are a good way to network and find about local employment opportunities.

Section 3:**On going learning**

CECs

In order to maintain your REPs registration you must continue to demonstrate your commitment to on-going learning. These are called **CECs (Continuing Education Credits)** 30 credits is required each year to maintain your registration.

The REPs website has details of how these credits can be earned.

Ongoing education courses that meet the criteria to earn CECs are listed on the REPs website. Furthermore your workplace can apply to have CECs attached to any in-house training they may do.

Non technical skills

In addition to staying on top of the technical aspects of fitness you need to develop other skills. To quote Dave Liow from PT Plus; “to be a successful PT you need to have good B.U.T!”

He is not referring to the tight buns that you sit on but rather the B standing for **business skills**, the T - **technical skills** and the U – the **you factor** or the non-technical skills of motivation and communication.

Many PTs focus overly on the technical skills to the detriment of the other two areas. It therefore makes sense to gain knowledge and experience in these areas. Here are some ideas for doing so;

Keep a look out for any courses running in these areas: Lifestyle or wellness coaching, motivational interviewing, behavioural change. See the PT Plus website for a great wellness coaching package.

Buy books (or get them from the library) or go online for information about communication.

The Interactive Instructor is a book specifically written for the fitness industry on how instructors and PTs can interact and communicate with clients and members For details go to www.lightenup.co.nz/interactive-instructor

Conventions

GetNZActive - With over 70 sessions spread over two days in November, this is the number 1 learning event for fitness professionals in NZ. www.getnzactive.co.nz

Filex - is the equivalent Australian event which is held in April each year in Sydney. www.network.com.au

Business Grow – is the Fitness NZ road show that travels around NZ in June. There are PT tracks, sales tracks and management tracks. www.businessgrow.co.nz

Section 4:**Resources & further information**

By being REPs registered you can take advantage of the resources designed specifically for trainers and clubs in NZ. These include: 'Getting to know you' form, pre-exercise screening form, agreement between client and trainer, reminder card, profile poster, goals card, planning card, feedback form and the 'tell me more' series. www.reps.org.nz

Excel templates available

Expenses & costs template – A simple document to help you calculate your living expenses, your likely business costs and your set-up costs.

Available by clicking on www.catchfitness.co.nz/free-resources

New club cashflow template – This is appropriate if you are looking to set up a studio or small club. www.richardbeddie.co.nz/free-tools

Small Business Enterprise centres can provide practical and relevant business advice on tax, marketing, planning and market research plus business training courses and seminars.

General financial information – www.ird.govt.nz
www.companies.govt.nz
www.acc.govt.nz

Business mentors - www.businessmentors.org.nz. This can cost as little as \$100 for 2 years.

WINZ have produced a very good brochure 'Start your own business –some things to think about first' www.workandincome.govt.nz/documents/start-your-own-business-jobs0003.pdf

Record Keeping Software - www.banklink.co.nz www.cashmanager.co.nz www.westpac.co.nz

Section 5:

Equipment

The following chart courtesy of CATCH Fitness will give you an idea of start up equipment options and costs.

TYPICAL START UP EQUIPMENT COSTS	
<p>Bare Essentials</p> <p>What every PT needs regardless of whether they have 1 client or 100, are mobile or studio based, working in gyms or onsite in corporate environments</p> <p>Approx \$500</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body fat monitors (High quality) • Heart rate monitor • Pedometer • 10 x 1/2 marker cones (flat ones) • Measuring tape • Brief case/backpack for complete look! • 20 laminated circuit signs <p>(other options – ropes, chains, tyres, planks, bricks etc)</p>
<p>Essentials Plus</p> <p>Perfect for the mobile PT. Fits into most vehicles for easy transport</p> <p>Allows PTs to run indoor and outdoor equipment based circuits for 30 plus people as well as high quality, advanced 1-1 sessions.</p> <p>Approx \$1000</p>	<p>Includes the Bare Essential packages above PLUS the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x 55cm swiss ball • 1 x 3 kg medicine ball • 3 x dyna bands • 2 x yoga mats • 2 x skipping ropes • 1 set pads and 1 x set box gloves • Evasion belt or similar
<p>Studio Bronze</p> <p>For those who have their own premises, are on a tight budget and/or will not have more than one trainer operating on site at any given time.</p> <p>Approx \$4000</p>	<p>Includes BOTH packages above PLUS the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rower • Mini tramp • Narrow bench • Dumbbell set (BOWFLEX set option) • Full length Obie foam roller • Boxing bag • Rubber tubing equipment
<p>Studio Silver</p> <p>For those preparing to work full time in the industry and/or who are thinking of offering the use of the studio to other trainers to operate from.</p> <p>Approx \$12000</p>	<p>Includes ALL packages above PLUS the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bike • Olympic bar • Squat cage with cables like the F430 • 80kg of Olympic weight plates • Additional dumb bell set
<p>Studio Gold</p> <p>Essentially a mini fitness centre/gym/health club. Perfect for those with good sized premises who are keen to have other trainers operating from their studio and who are excited about having a large client base.</p> <p>Approx \$30000</p>	<p>Includes ALL packages above PLUS the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dual Cable System e.g. Paul Check • Elliptical • Treadmill • 2nd bench • 2 more swiss balls • 5kg medicine ball

Getting started financially

Employing the services of a good accountant from the start will almost certainly save you time, money and anguish further down the line. Not only will they advise you on record keeping, tax and other issues but they will be able to help you with forward planning and take a proactive approach to your business. To find a good accountant ask people you trust who they recommend, then visit or phone them to make sure you can work with them. Ask for a quote once they have an understanding of what your situation is likely to be. Generally be prepared to pay in the range of \$1,500 - \$3,000 per year if your circumstances are fairly straightforward and you keep good records. Remember accountants charge by the hour so if you give them a lot of unnecessary work to do it will cost you more.

There are three main business structures you are likely to consider:

1. Sole Trader
2. Partnership (if more than one person)
3. Limited Liability Company

There are pros and cons for each structure but most PTs would probably initially look to set up as a Sole Trader.

Tax Obligations

For sole traders and partnerships, income tax is paid based on individual tax rates using a sliding scale according to profits (or net income) made. The tax year runs from 1st April to 31st March.

Individual tax rates	At 31 March 2010	From 1 October 2010	Composite rate at 31 March 2011	From 31 March 2012
\$0 to \$14k	12.5%	10.5%	11.5%	10.5%
\$14k to \$48k	21%	17.5%	19.25%	17.5%
\$48k to \$70k	33%	30%	31.5%	30%
\$70k and over	38%	33%	35.5%	33%
Company rates	30%	30%	30%	28%

As an example, if you earned \$50k as at 31 March 2010, you will be taxed as follows; the first \$14k is taxed at 12.5% (\$1,750), then the next \$34k is taxed at 21% (\$7140) and the final \$2k is taxed at 33% (\$660) bringing a total tax of \$9,550. That's an overall average rate of about 19% on \$50k income. As a discipline you should set aside between 20% and 25% of your revenue (sales) in order to pay tax. The more you make the more you may need to put aside.

Dual GI and PT

If you work as a Gym Instructor and get PAYE deducted wage but also take on clients privately as a self-employed person you need to be aware of the following tax payment scenario:

Let's say as a GI you are paid a gross salary of \$20k with \$5k deducted as PAYE, leaving you an income of \$15k in that role. As a PT you invoice clients \$20k and have \$14k worth of expenses, leaving you a net profit of \$6k

GI		PT	
Gross	\$20k	Income	\$20k
PAYE	\$5k	Expenses	\$14k
<u>Take home Pay: \$15k</u>		<u>Net Profit \$6k</u>	

A mistake often made is to assume that tax is paid on \$15k plus \$6k. i.e. \$21k. This is not the case however- you'll pay tax on the gross figure of \$20k plus the net profit figure of \$6k i.e. \$26k.

How and when you pay tax

You can pay as you go, bimonthly or six monthly via your GST returns or three times a year (August, January and May) under a provisional tax scheme. Most PTs choose the latter option.

The tax honeymoon and the hangover

Be warned. When you are first starting out you receive a 'honeymoon' period which catches up with you in your second year and can leave you with a tax 'hangover' if you are not careful. To avoid this put your tax money away religiously and don't touch it. A lot of people have a separate tax account earning interest on tax money that has been put aside.

ACC

This is charged once your business files its first annual results (as an individual or as a company). Again this system is designed to strike as a double whammy in your second year when you have to pay for both your first year and your second in advance. Check the ACC website out but currently rates are about 1.6% of net income or wages.

GST

If you know you will receive more than \$60,000 income (non-PAYE deducted) for the year ahead you must register for GST. This means you must charge GST on your services but you can also claim back on your purchases. If you are below the \$60,000 threshold registration is voluntary however it makes sense to register if you are going to be buying high cost items like vehicles and equipment to use in the business as you can claim the GST back on these items. GST returns can be made monthly, bi-monthly, or 6 monthly. At present GST is 12.5% however this is set to increase to 15% as at 31 October 2010.

FBT or Fringe Benefit Tax

This is paid where a business asset has been made available to a staff member or self-employed person for their personal use/benefit. The IRD require that where there is an element of personal benefit you quantify the value of this and inform the IRD through regular FBT returns. Cars and bikes would be good examples here as you use them for business trips but also for your personal use. A log book should be kept to measure what level of personal use is being made. Your accountant will be able to best advise you as to the ways FBT is calculated and returned to the IRD.

Tax Responsibility

The onus of paying tax is all on the tax payer. Ignorance is no excuse and the IRD have the ability to attach penalties and interest if you don't pay what you are required to pay on time. The message here; Don't ignore the paperwork or bury your head in the sand.

What expenses can I claim?

Costs incurred in the 'generation of income' is deemed tax deductible. Costs of a private nature are not. For a PT the following headings and examples would generally be deductible.

Admin	Accounting costs, bank fees, credit card charges (if used solely for business), interest on money borrowed, on hire purchase or overdrafts
Advertising	Yellow pages, newspapers, fliers, website, signage, business cards, promotional items (bottles, gym bags etc)
Equipment	Purchase or lease of equipment, repairs. NB If you purchase something like a mountain bike then theoretically for you to claim its full cost you could use it <u>only</u> for client work. This is unlikely to be the case so it would be more realistic to claim 50% of its cost.
Stationery	Paper, pens, envelopes, postage, ink cartridges etc
Premises	Power, rent etc. NB If you have an office at home you can apply an apportionment to the rent or mortgage and associated house costs. As a guide 5-15% is typical.
Communication	Phones, internet connection. Again the chances are that you will use your mobile and internet for personal use as well, which means theoretically you should apportion what you claim. In reality if you don't abuse the system the IRD have probably got bigger fish to fry.
Clothing	Uniform or special clothing or footwear worn as part of your work requirements. Laundry of this clothing.
Entertainment	Only 50% can be claimed outside business premises so for example if you take a prospective client for a coffee or lunch you may only claim 50% for GST and income tax purposes.
Vehicle	There are two ways you can claim. (1)Apportion all costs associated with the vehicle – i.e. if the mileage you do 30% of the time is for business then you claim for 30% of all costs. (2)Keep a record of mileage done on business and claim for a certain rate per kilometre. The IRD allow 70c per km for the first 3,000kms and 19c per km for anything over that. Generally the claim for this will be done by your accountant at year end.
Other	Training courses, workshops and conventions, associated travel and accommodation costs. Subscriptions to relevant magazines and books, REPs registration

A final point

Make it a discipline to deal with your admin and paperwork weekly. Just like housework if you do a little often it won't turn into a herculean task. The 'shoebox scenario' (where all your receipts and bills etc are shoved in a shoebox or something similar) is not the best way of record keeping. It is good practice to keep all receipts for expenses you are claiming for but for items under \$50 proof of receipt is not required by the IRD.

Name and logo

Many newcomers entering the PT business make the mistake of spending way too much time and money on creating a business name and logo. Our advice is not to overly agonise coming up with a business name. If you have one you want to use, great but if not consider using your own name or a derivative of it. After all YOU are your brand and it is no coincidence that the world's most successful trainers seem to use their own names. Home grown examples are Ish Cheyne, Mish McCormack and Broni Mc. They will all tell you that clients don't remember fitness business name - especially if it is rather mainstream and unmemorable – but they will remember you and your name.

Considerations when designing a logo

Ensure it is not overly complex and reliant solely on colour for its effect. The font should be clear and readable. Think about how it will look on a variety of media; web, print, clothing, car for example. Logos that are horizontal rather than vertical are possibly more versatile but consider have 2 options – a vertical and a horizontal to cover all eventualities. N.B. If you intend to use the REPs resources and download your logo, horizontal works best.

Your profile

One of the REPs resources is a professional looking profile template. Simply download your photo and text using whatever headings you like. Advice on how to present your profile is given on the REPs website.

Generalist vs. Specialist

One of the most difficult things when you start out is not being clear about the area of fitness and exercise you will specialise in or the type of client you work best with. It is only through experience that you build up knowledge and credibility in a specific niche area but the earlier you can start focusing on this area the better. Increasingly successful PTs are moving away from being “Jack of all trades” to really honing their skills in two or three niche areas. You can probably eliminate many areas already that you have no interest in and develop a short list of the type of work and client you want to focus on. Bear in mind however, that early on any paying session is a good session!

Leads are your lifeblood

There are two aspects to lead generation – **whom** you target and **how** you target them. The following list is a combination of the two and is designed to get you thinking about what may work for you given your contacts, interests and resources.

- **Website** – in the 21st century this is a must. It needn't be an all singing and dancing site but should carry a minimum of your profile, picture, contact details and a contact form. The most cost effective way of doing this (assuming you don't have the training yourself) is to get a professional to set it up but use a format like 'word press' or similar where you can make changes yourself as you do not want to be reliant on someone else to make changes to your site going forward.
- **Friends and family** – you may need to cajole, beg or just plain bully your loved ones into putting their bodies on the line for you! But these are ready made leads, don't miss the opportunity they present.
- **Email** – sending an email to your network of friends and family is the quickest and cheapest way to communicate what you are offering.
- **Gym floor** – if you are aligned to a gym this is the most valuable and cost-effective lead avenue you have. In fact it costs you nothing BUT you must be prepared to get out on the gym floor and talk to people. The Interactive Instructor book (see resources page) can help you with some ideas on just how to approach people you don't know on the gym floor.
- **Local papers & publications** – this is an option certainly but beware that print adverts may not necessarily result in the return you are hoping for so be mindful that money spent in this area could be put to better use elsewhere.
- **Yellow pages** – ditto to the above.
- **Local businesses** – this is probably more effective than print ads and includes lead boxes, posters and fliers in local businesses or anywhere people hang out. Good examples are cafes, hairdressers, beauticians, real estate agents, car dealers etc. If you have contacts in any of these places use them, possibly trading out sessions.
- **Specific niche businesses** – If you have an interest in a certain niche area of training it makes sense to promote yourself where your target market can be found. i.e. bike shops, golf clubs, baby/children's shops, day care,
- **Schools** – get involved with your local school in whatever way is possible. Maybe you could run a fitness session from time to time, advertise in their newsletter or at their fair.
- **Health professionals** – this makes perfect sense but it takes time to build the credibility that these sort of professionals are looking for from the fitness industry. Don't be put off if you are met with a luke warm response; we are a young industry and physios and dieticians especially are not used to working with us.

- **Sports teams and clubs** – this is a great source of leads; active people wanting to improve on what they have. You will be able to offer your services in simple but high profile ways like taking the warm up or cool down before a match, giving seminars or coaching junior teams.
- **Church and community groups** – if you are involved in the church or have contacts there this is another excellent lead avenue.
- **Public notice boards** (libraries, supermarkets etc) – put your information up here but continually check it is still there as notices tend to get removed.
- **Signage** – Car signage, A frame boards or flags.(If you have premises or your gym allows you to put one up outside.)
- **Seminars/workshops** – this will work best if you link it to one of the groups mentioned already. Just assuming people will turn up to an open seminar is a bit optimistic. That said – start small and even if you only have a small audience start with that and turn it to your advantage by making it a personal interactive session.. Never cancel anything unless it is absolutely necessary.
- **Group fitness class** – if you take these you can promote yourself very easily indeed.
- **Local business groups** – Toastmasters, Rotary, Probus etc. Ask around to find out what is available in your area and then go along or offer to present to them as they are always looking for speakers.
- **Sponsorship** – you probably don't have much spare cash to sponsor events or organizations but aligning yourself with worthy charitable causes is a great way to network and make new contacts as well as supporting your community.

In a nutshell:

Use your cash wisely. The most effective lead generator is YOU getting out and talking to people. Selling **yourself** is as if not more important than selling your product.

A note here about the value of your database and testimonials

Your database is gold dust. Right from the start keep a record of every contact and lead you make. At the minimum record their name, email and how they came to be on your list. You can then work the list in a variety of ways. Also continually gather testimonials from people you work with. They will not volunteer them you will have to ask. As a rule of thumb every 2-3 months you should get a new one.

Professional standards and etiquette

Because marketing is “everything you say and everything you do” you must be aware of how you come across in a variety of situations. Here are a few tips to get you thinking:

- Get your written word proof read by at least 3 others. If you can afford a professional get them to do it.
- Be very careful with making jokes etc via email. If you have something contentious to deal with you may be better speaking in person.
- Never make derogatory remarks about any other trainers or facilities.
- Do not make phone calls before 8am or after 9pm unless you know the client well or it is an emergency.
- Think about what you wear, your body language and your behavior when you are training clients as you are a walking billboard to prospects.

Section 8:**The international scene**

Registration is now expected internationally with more and more countries developing registers. Certainly the most common destinations for trainers from New Zealand i.e. Australia and the UK require you to be registered before you can work.

Luckily through portability agreements with the registration bodies in Australia, UK and Europe, your REPs registration is portable to these countries. Just speak to the team at REPs before travelling.

Appendix

Skills Active – This is a predominantly government funded body responsible for setting and quality assuring academic standards in line with the industry’s needs. Skills Active submits these standards to NZQA (see below) to become national standards on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

NZQA - This organization administers all the standards on the National Qualifications Framework including the standards that make up the five national qualifications in fitness.

National Qualifications Framework -This is a database that contains all of the national standards and qualifications in New Zealand and a record of learning for any student who has studied and attained them.

Accredited and approved education providers - These are education providers who have been ‘approved’ by the government’s quality assurance body (usually NZQA) to deliver education under the Education Act. They receive government funding as a result. They are encouraged to deliver national qualifications but can also deliver ‘regional’ qualifications if they can show there is a ‘regional’ requirement that is different from the national requirement. They must also be ‘accredited’ to deliver the nationally registered fitness standards by Skills Active. Some of these providers may also have registered their courses with REPs (see below). Where this has occurred the graduates of these courses may be entitled to automatic REPs registration.

Non accredited education providers - These education providers have not been approved by the government’s quality assurance body to deliver education under the Education Act. They may have REPs registration.

Register of Exercise Professionals - REPs is a registration system that fitness professionals, clubs, or education providers can choose to register with. It is not mandatory, it is a participatory system.

Fitness NZ - FitnessNZ represents some of the owners and suppliers within the New Zealand fitness industry. It has a range of information resources for paying members, and is involved in various initiatives to connect paying members and promote their interests. Usually if something major happens in fitness the media would contact Fitness New Zealand for comment.

OSH / Department of Labour (DOL) - The Department of Labour (DOL) provide best practice information and guidance to assist New Zealand businesses with health and safety in the workplace. The Department of Labour also inspects workplaces to check on safety and health arrangements, investigates accidents at work, and makes sure employers and employees comply with health and safety legislation. If there was a serious accident at a gym it is likely DOL would investigate.

Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) - The Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) administers New Zealand’s accident compensation scheme, which provides personal injury cover for all New Zealand citizens, residents and temporary visitors to New Zealand. In return people do not have the right to sue for personal injury, other than for exemplary damages. Their pledge is; to prevent injury, to provide the best treatment and care if injury occurs, and to quickly rehabilitate people back to work or independence at a price that offers high value to levy payers and all New Zealanders. If there was a serious accident at a gym the person injured may get ACC and ACC may, if it is established that there was negligence on the part of the workplace or their staff, then pursue the workplace or staff for compensation.