

## Personal Trainers, what is Your Training Philosophy

It would be difficult to deny that the barrage of diet and fitness information in the market today has many consumers totally confused about which direction they should turn to achieve the results they are looking for. But, the confusion about which training methods are most effective is certainly not confined to consumers. Just take a look around the internet or on the shelves of your favorite book store and you will find that most fitness "experts" have a difficult time agreeing about which system/method is best too. We have High Intensity Training, German Volume Training, 6 x 6, Muscle Confusion, Power Factor Training, A Muscle Has Four Sides, and the list goes on. How does one decide which is best?

Personally, I don't believe that the ongoing disagreement about exercise methodology necessarily stems from the scientific merit of one system vs. another. From my perspective the primary sources of disagreement are either: a) the systems in question attempt to present their product as the "only way" in order to sell more books, CD's, DVD's, etc. Or, b) it is more a matter of perspective.

Every Personal Trainer, Coach, and Trainee has different goals in mind and unique definitions of success. Some folks combine a lack of desire to exercise with very vague goals, such as, "I'd like to feel better and lose a few pounds". Another client may be well disciplined with a goal of reaching the NFL. Obviously, the approach to training these two individuals would be completely different. To put it more simply, it wouldn't make much sense to train a Fitness Model in the same way that you would train an Olympic Discus thrower or High School Linebacker. Likewise, you wouldn't train an 11 year old Linebacker the same way that you train a 20 year old, collegiate Linebacker. There are different sets of rules and objectives for each person that you come in contact with. A trainee's goals, expectations, health history, schedule, along with many other factors should determine what training methods are deployed. That is why we call it "Personal Training".

A professional Personal Trainer must have the ability to analyze each client's individual situation and harmonize their training to match their lifestyle and goals. The attempt to build the perfect training "blueprint" or "template" to use on everyone who walks through the door is exactly what many of us have come to know as "cookie cutter programming". Unless you are providing this type of service for free it is certainly not what a Personal Training client expects or deserves to get when paying for our services.

Furthermore, buying into or subscribing exclusively to a given philosophy often limits a trainer's ability to exercise their own better judgment. One of the more recent fads in the industry has been the huge movement toward "functional" training. Personally, I find this to be a very positive trend for the most part. But, it certainly isn't a catch all, "holy grail" system. A few weeks ago, I witnessed a young, inexperienced trainer instruct an elderly, obese woman to drag a duffle bag with a couple of 45 pound plates inside across the floor. As you may have guessed, she ended

up hurting her back as a result of this insanity. The exercise that she performed would have been perfect for an 18 year old defensive tackle. But, it was undoubtedly a stupid choice for a very overweight grandma.

Note to Self: It is very difficult for clients to improve their fitness level if I cause them to be sent to the emergency room!

There are no short cuts to becoming a great trainer. You must constantly seek out new information and carefully observe what you see and here from clients and fellow trainers.

People hire Personal Trainers because they believe that we are knowledgeable, educated, free thinking experts on exercise, not a bunch of sheep who blindly follow the latest diet and exercise fads that have not yet been put through the test of time. In my opinion, fitness training is a lot like a vegetable garden; things need their own unique season and set of conditions to provide the right elements for them to grow and prosper.

- **By: Doug Galligan: Personal Trainer**