

TRAINER SUCCESS

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HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN LEARN THIS MONTH:

Use 2009 IDEA Personal Training Programs & Equipment Trends data to focus your marketing and to plan your budget; explore what autumn—the season of change, reflection and beauty—means to you, your clients and your business.

Business insights,
strategies &
directions to help
you Inspire the
World to Fitness®

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SURVEY OVERVIEW by Jan Schroeder, PhD

Personal Trainers Meet the Needs of Savvy, Cost-Conscious Consumers

The 2009 IDEA Personal Training Programs & Equipment Trends report shows that training styles, equipment and choices have broadened to serve an ever-expanding, discriminating market.



Personal training is still king of the hill in the fitness industry. Whether in an entrepreneurial or a facility setting, trainers are steadily filling sessions as a growing variety of clients are inspired to fitness and wellness through personal training leadership.

Not all personal trainers offer all categories; trainers have tailored their services to match or attract a specific market

share rather than stretch themselves over the vast range of specialty categories. This targeted approach may reflect the rigors of a tough economy, but niche specialization is nothing new among smart trainers.

There is strong growth potential along the continuum, which gives most trainers the luxury of choosing the clientele with whom they are passionate

IDEA Trainer Success

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IDEA's Mission Statement

IDEA and its members are passionately committed to improving the health and fitness of all people. We are focused on delivering compelling member value by imparting knowledge, credibility, inspiration, marketability, and personal and professional growth opportunities.

IDEA's Purpose

To Inspire the World to Fitness®

Core Values

- We believe that ethics come first; fairness and integrity guide all of our decisions and relationships.
- We have a passion for providing fitness information and education.
- Our decisions are guided by the professional needs of our members.

about working. Survey respondents customize their offerings to suit the wide array of clients' ages, abilities and goals—from the apparently healthy and the highly athletic to those who need specialized training like postrehab and back pain prevention programs.

Generally speaking, the survey reveals that training methods focus on function by using a range of techniques, such as strength, balance and flexibility training. Overall, respondents report that they continue to use various types of equipment, both small and large, in order to meet their clients' needs. However, most skilled professionals help clients meet goals with the use of small, portable equipment. These training tools (resistance tubing, stability balls, dumbbells, medicine balls, etc.) remain solidly in the top 10 pieces of equipment most frequently used.

Group personal training activities—such as boot camps, circuit training and social activity groups—are offered by approximately one-third of respondents and appear to be poised for growth.

Client retention is robust across the board. IDEA trainers report that 77% of their clients stay with the business 1 year or longer. A magnified look reveals even more impressive client loyalty: most clients stay with their trainer for more than 5 years (32%), while the remaining customers stay 1–2 years (21%), 2–3 years (15%), 3–4 years (12%) or 4–5 years (8%). Just 12% of clients stay with their trainer for less than 1 year.

Do these numbers reflect your experience? If not, diving into these trends may help you determine what's missing in your mix. What are IDEA personal trainers doing to achieve this longevity among their customers?

Taking the Long View

According to the personal trainer members who completed the 2009 survey, training adults one-on-one remains the bread and butter of their business. The focus within sessions includes strength training, stretching, balance and functional resistance training.

These are the session options offered by over 50% of survey respondents:

- 98% personal training, adult, one-on-one
- 97 strength training
- 96 stretching and/or flexibility
- 96 balance training
- 96 functional resistance training
- 89 flexibility/range of motion assessment
- 86 height and weight assessment
- 85 training for weight management
- 85 personal training, 2 clients share
- 84 balance assessment
- 81 cardiorespiratory interval training
- 79 body weight—only training
- 77 circumference measurements assessment
- 77 body composition assessment
- 77 resting heart rate assessment
- 76 cardiorespiratory circuit training
- 75 cardiorespiratory endurance training
- 73 muscular endurance assessment
- 72 back pain prevention
- 72 cardiorespiratory cross-training
- 72 plyometrics
- 71 senior-specific training
- 70 postrehab following injury
- 70 activity heart rate assessment
- 66 cardiorespiratory endurance assessment
- 65 speed, agility, quickness conditioning
- 65 personal training, youth, aged 18 or younger, one-on-one
- 61 exercise for chronic medical conditions (e.g., diabetes, coronary heart disease)
- 60 nutrition coaching
- 60 personal training, outdoor sessions
- 59 blood pressure assessment
- 58 personal training, 3–5 clients share
- 57 nutrition assessment
- 54 online client reminders and information
- 54 sport-specific training
- 52 walking

How Is Personal Training Offered?

- * One-on-one personal training has once again found itself topping the list of programs, with 98% of respondents reporting that they offer it to their clientele. A little over half (53%) believe one-on-one personal training is stable, while 33% believe there is still potential for growth in the industry.
- * Personal training in which 2 clients share a session is still very popular among IDEA trainers. This year, 85% offer it, a percentage that has held steady from 2008. When we look more closely at who is offering partner training, those trainers who work within their own homes (91%), in personal training studios (90%) and within clients' homes (90%) are slightly more inclined to offer the service.
- * Personal training with 3–5 clients is offered by over half of the respondents (58%); this is up 9 percentage points from last year's results. In addition, 46% of respondents believe this category will continue to grow. The increase is likely due to a combination of factors: (1) the increased popularity of boot camps and circuit

training for small groups; (2) the economies of scale for both personal trainers and consumers; and (3) the social aspect of training in a group, which makes exercise more fun for many.

Michelle Reiter, MS, a fitness professional in Los Angeles, says, "These are exciting times. I believe we are experiencing a shift within our collective culture in taking responsibility for improving our health and wellness; therefore, the potential of our industry is growing evermore!"

"Our clients are looking to us to provide direction and guidance in designing customized programs. I believe what makes a training program successful is not only the trainer's knowledge and expertise, but also serving our clients to the best of our ability, being flexible and adding safety and *fun* to the workouts. I like to use Dr. Wayne Dyer's quote, 'How may I serve?' as my motto for running my personal training business."

According to the survey, only 5% of respondents' clients are younger than 18 years; however, 65% of trainers offer one-on-one personal training for this age group, and 39% offer small-group activities for youth. Even with the con-

stantly increasing numbers of overweight and obese youth, the growth potential in this population is seen as rather small (less than 30%).

Sabrena Merrill, owner of Fitness Logic in Lawrence, Kansas, observes that the majority of clients are middle-aged with adult-aged children. "There really is no 'referral' base to work with, because the kids are already out of the house," she says. When examining this category in more depth, we see that 43% of personal trainers offer programming for teens (13–17 years of age), while only 23% offer programming for kids (12 years and younger). Merrill also feels that some parents do not view structured exercise programs as "safe" for children under 12 years. "I think some of them still operate under the assumption that preadolescents will stunt their growth if they participate in resistance training," she says. "In addition, a significant percentage of parents are overweight or obese and do not place a high time commitment or financial priority on formal exercise. But by the time the kids reach the teen years, their opportunities have really opened up through school programs/sports and the whole family becomes more aware of the

TRAINING BY FACILITY TYPE

How Is Personal Training Offered?

	All Respondents	Health Clubs	Personal Training Gyms	Personal Training in Trainers' Homes	Personal Training in Clients' Homes
<i>n</i> (number)	528	218	105	131	239
personal training, adult, one-on-one	98%	100%	100%	99%	100%
personal training, 2 clients share	85	89	90	91	90
personal training, 3–5 clients share	58	59	61	60	60
personal training, outdoor sessions	60	65	58	73	72
personal training, youth, aged 18 or younger, one-on-one	65	74	75	64	67
personal training, youth, aged 18 years or younger, small-group	39	46	47	40	37

% of respondents offering the activity.

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METHODS USED IN TRAINING SESSIONS

Focus Is on Function

	All Respondents	Health Clubs	Personal Training Gyms	Personal Training in Trainers' Homes	Personal Training in Clients' Homes
<i>n</i>	528	218	105	131	239
Resistance Training					
strength training	97%	99%	100%	99%	99%
functional resistance training	96	98	100	96	98
body weight-only training	79	87	83	84	82
plyometrics	72	79	83	75	77
very slow strength training	38	43	43	43	36
Olympic-style lifting	17	20	21	19	16
Cardiorespiratory Training					
cardiorespiratory interval training	81%	89%	85%	88%	87%
cardiorespiratory circuit training	76	84	81	82	82
cardiorespiratory endurance training	75	83	79	79	78
cardiorespiratory cross-training	72	78	81	78	76
Flexibility Training					
stretching and/or flexibility	96%	97%	98%	99%	98%
Other Training					
balance training	96%	97%	97%	99%	98%
speed, agility and quickness conditioning	65	73	76	70	68

% of respondents offering the activity.

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importance of physical fitness. It is at this time that they may begin to seek the help of a fitness professional.”

Focus Is on Function

Survey respondents report that their training sessions break out as follows: 53% of the time is spent on resistance training, while the remainder is spent on cardiorespiratory (23%) and flexibility training (18%), as well as other training methods (19%). Strength training (97%), functional resistance training (96%), balance training (96%) and stretching/flexibility (96%) are the most commonly used training methods.

Chuck Wolf, MS, director of Human Motion Associates in Orlando, Florida, has a good idea of why trainers are using such techniques so frequently. He says

that to train functionally, a movement pattern must incorporate eccentric loading of the muscle prior to concentric unloading; be triplanar in nature; overcome gravity and ground reaction forces; and incorporate balance and flexibility. “Functional training benefits the client by integrating movements rather than isolating movements; helps promote mobility and stability; can enhance quality of life and daily movement patterns; and can improve overall health and well-being,” Wolf says. “From the trainer’s perspective, this approach creates myriad ways to design programs, provides time efficiency and significantly reduces burn out. It makes training—and our business—fun.”

The majority of the training session is devoted to resistance and flexibility

training; the portion spent on cardiovascular training is just 23%. With heart disease being the number-one cause of death in the U.S. for both men and women, 23% is simply not enough, feels Jason Karp, PhD, exercise physiologist and director/coach of REVO₂LT Running Team™ in San Diego. “Research has shown that low cardiovascular fitness is a strong predictor of death from cardiovascular disease and even of all-cause mortality, with the risk being comparable to the risk associated with other primary cardiovascular-disease risk factors, including diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol and cigarette smoking,” Karp says. “Cardiovascular endurance is arguably the most important component of health-related fitness because the functioning of the heart,

lungs and circulatory system are so essential to overall health.”

Among cardiorespiratory training techniques, interval training (81%) is used slightly more than other methods, like cardiorespiratory endurance (75%), circuit (76%) or cross-training (72%).

The most common types of equipment used for cardiorespiratory training are treadmills (78%), followed by elliptical trainers (71%), upright cycles (63%), recumbent cycles (62%) and stair climbers (50%). Equipment that uses more upper-body musculature—such as indoor rowing machines (42%) and arm ergometers (20%)—are used by fewer than half of the respondents.

Benefits of Group Training

Despite all we hear about the economies and profitability of group training, fewer than half of respondents report that they train clients in such activities as small-group circuit training (48%); indoor small-group boot camps (38%); social activity groups (walking or running clubs, group trips, organized group activities) (31%); outdoor group activities (29%); and outdoor boot camps (26%). Although these activities do not rank very high, the majority of the IDEA trainers surveyed believe there is growth on the horizon.

Ayla Preszler, MS, personal trainer and group fitness director at Frog’s Fitness in Long Beach, California, finds

that training in a group setting has many benefits for the personal trainer and for the participants involved: “I see four main benefits to group training: efficiency, cost-effectiveness, motivation/accountability and retention,” she says. “If the trainer takes the time upfront to assess each participant’s fitness level and goals, a well-designed workout should cater to most of the group’s needs. The trainer can then take time during the workout to work with each individual one-on-one to demonstrate modifications and progressions as necessary. The trainer is now designing one workout (with modifications and progressions) that can apply to many individuals.” >>



WORKING WITH GROUPS: IS IT TIME TO GROW?

Benefits of Group Training

	All Respondents	Health Clubs	Personal Training Gyms	Personal Training in Trainers’ Homes	Personal Training in Clients’ Homes
<i>n</i>	528	218	105	131	239
boot camp classes, outdoor	26	31	25	33	29
group activities, outdoor	29	32	26	37	32
small-group boot camps, indoor	38	41	42	47	40
small-group circuit training, indoor	48	54	57	52	50
social activity groups (walking or running clubs, group trips, organized group activities)	31	32	29	37	30

% of respondents offering the activity.

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Ayla further pointed out that for the trainer, group training is a way to increase income while decreasing the hourly cost of a training session for participants. “Instead of training one client per hour, you are training 4, 5 or even 6 clients in an hour and can charge each person a ‘discounted price’ per hour, which will still hold a higher hourly rate overall for the trainer.”

Finally, Ayla has found that group training provides even greater motivation and accountability for participants than one-on-one training. “If someone does not feel like working out, they are no longer just canceling on the trainer; they are canceling on their workout buddies,” she points out. “I also encourage my clients to spur each other on during our workouts. Due to the cost-effectiveness and motivation/accountability that group training provides, I find that participants are eager to come back for more. Affordability does not tend to be a problem, and they have guaranteed workout buddies to share the challenge with. This leads to great retention both for the trainer and for the fitness center in which the trainer is working.”

Programs for Clients With Medical Concerns

Faced with the realities of an aging population, personal trainers work more and more often with clientele who—for a variety of medical reasons—need spe-

cialized instruction. The vast majority of survey respondents have clients with special medical needs (83%), chronic injury (85%) or physical disabilities (54%). In order to assist these clients, trainers offer specialized programs, such as back pain prevention (72%), postrehab following injury (70%) and exercise for chronic medical conditions (e.g., diabetes, coronary heart disease) (61%). In addition, approximately half of the trainers surveyed believe that these types of special programs will continue to grow.

As Anthony Carey, MA, owner of Function First in San Diego, points out, “Nearly every trainer in the field is working with someone who is, was or will be classified as a special population. The prevalence in society of issues such as lower-back pain and cardiovascular disease makes it nearly impossible not to work with a client with medical concerns. And as the current medical model becomes more restrictive, greater numbers of people will be seeking help and guidance from the fitness community. Fitness professionals need to remain within our professional boundaries and within our level of education and experience. Working with special populations requires special preparation.”

Small, Portable Equipment Remains on Top

Survey respondents reported using all types of equipment, with an emphasis

on the smaller portable pieces. These are the 10 pieces of equipment most frequently available:

- 97% resistance tubing or bands
- 97 stability balls
- 95 barbells and/or dumbbells
- 93 balance equipment (BOSU® Balance Trainers, disks, wobble boards, balance boards)
- 90 medicine balls
- 85 foam rollers and small balls
- 81 steps and platforms
- 78 treadmills
- 75 weighted bars
- 71 elliptical trainers

Once again eight of the top 10 most frequently used pieces of equipment are small and transportable. “The growing trend of [using] small, portable pieces of training equipment offers both clients and trainers many benefits in addition to allowing us to train more functionally,” observes Fabio Comana, exercise physiologist with the American



TRAINING SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Programs for Clients With Medical Concerns

	All Respondents	Health Clubs	Personal Training Gyms	Personal Training in Trainers' Homes	Personal Training in Clients' Homes
<i>n</i>	528	218	105	131	239
back pain prevention	72%	72%	72%	75%	73%
exercise for chronic medical conditions (e.g., diabetes, coronary heart disease)	61	65	62	59	61
postrehab following injury	70	69	77	67	70

% of respondents offering the activity.

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Council on Exercise. "However, we must always remember that functional training is not driven by the equipment we use, but by the results we seek. Consequently, while small, portable equipment can be very functional, it depends on how it is utilized. The added benefit of this portable equipment [is that it] allows trainers and clients to select appropriate training environments while not suffering the constraints of the past, [when] we were limited in what we could use outside of the gym. Much of the growth of in-home training can be attributed to the development of effective, small, portable pieces of equipment."

Even though only two pieces of large equipment (treadmills and elliptical trainers) made the list, the majority of those surveyed use stationary items such as pulley equipment (67%), plate-

loaded machines (63%), upright cycles (63%), recumbent cycles (62%), selectorized (pin-selected) machines (62%) and stair climbers (50%).

About the Survey

The **percentage (%)** shows the number of survey respondents who answered yes to a given survey question. All percentages have been rounded up at 0.5 and down at 0.4. Percentages do not necessarily total 100, because of multiple or missing responses.

About the Respondents

IDEA personal trainer members who gave us permission to use their e-mail addresses were sent three e-mail invitations to link to a Web-based survey in February 2009. The 557 trainers who responded represent 77% personal trainers, 12% owners, 4% fitness direc-

tors, 1% personal training directors, 1% general managers and 3% other titles. There was an 8% response rate, with a 95% confidence level and a $\pm 5\%$ margin of error.

About the Demographics

On average, the respondents work at two separate facilities. Forty-three percent offer personal training in clients' homes, whereas 24% offer personal training in their own homes; otherwise, 20% work in fitness-only health clubs, 12% in multipurpose health clubs, 19% in personal training gyms, 9% in Pilates or yoga studios, 10% in parks or recreation programs, 7% in a YMCA/YWCA/JCC, 6% in corporate fitness centers, 6% in group exercise studios and under 6% in other venues. Most of the respondents are self-employed (56%), while 31% are independent contractors and

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PERSONAL TRAINING

26% are employees. A number of trainers (26%) earn additional revenue by selling products to their clientele. As for location, 24% work in suburbs, 33% in large cities, 36% in small cities or towns and 7% in rural areas. Most respondents live in the United States—35% in the West, 26% in the Northeast, 20% in the North Central region and 19% in the South; 4% live in Canada.

About the Clientele

Our trainers serve a predominantly female clientele (72%), with the most common age ranges being 35–44 years (24%), 45–54 years (32%) and 55–64 years (23%). Most clients are at an intermediate fitness level (48%) or beginner fitness level (40%), while only 19% are advanced. While 97% of trainers have clients that are apparently healthy, they also train individuals with special med-

ical needs (83%), chronic injury (85%) or physical disabilities (54%). Amateur athletes (64%) are also a common clientele for trainers, while professional athletes (14%) are clients less frequently. Almost half of all trainers work with children and teens (aged 18 years or younger) (49%), whereas 25% of trainers work with women only.

The average cost of a training session is \$56 (median \$55). Most clients pay for their training sessions either as a package (63%) or as individual sessions (51%); just 14% pay for sessions with a monthly membership fee, and 5% pay with an annual membership fee.

About Median and Mean

The mean (average) is found by adding together all the numbers and dividing by the number of responses. Very large numbers and very small numbers can

create a wide range, which may make an average less representative of most of the people.

The median is the midpoint, meaning 50% of respondents answered above that number and 50% answered below it. A median is useful because it helps eliminate the distortion that an average can cause.

About Health Clubs

The “health clubs” category in the charts includes multipurpose and fitness-only health clubs and YMCA/YWCA/JCC facilities. ■

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SURVEY DATA

2009 IDEA Personal Training Programs & Equipment Trends

BUSINESS PROFILE OF IDEA PERSONAL TRAINERS

Average Number of Sessions per Week

38%	1–9 sessions
30	10–19
13	20–29
6	30–49
3	50 or more
10	no response
15	median number of sessions per week
10	median number of clients per week
19	mean number of sessions per week
15	mean number of clients per week

Length of Personal Training Sessions

26%	30 minutes
11	45 minutes
86	60 minutes
5	90 minutes

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PERSONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS

	Offer	Yes, my company offers this program, and I think it is:		
		Growing	Stable	Declining
Current Programs and Future Projections				
Basic Training				
personal training, adult, one-on-one	98%	33%	53%	13%
personal training, 2 clients share	85	39	48	6
personal training, 3–5 clients share	58	46	39	4
personal training, youth, aged 18 or younger, one-on-one	65	25	45	15
personal training, youth, aged 18 years or younger, small-group	39	29	45	13
personal training, outdoor sessions	60	50	42	4
small-group boot camps, indoor	38	54	36	4
small-group circuit training, indoor	48	n/a	n/a	n/a
Fitness Assessments				
activity heart rate	70%	21%	66%	4%
balance	84	49	42	2
blood pressure	59	18	70	1
body composition	77	26	62	6
cardiorespiratory endurance	66	19	70	3
circumference measurements	77	22	65	7
flexibility, range of motion	89	35	54	2
height, weight	86	12	74	6
muscular endurance	73	21	67	4
muscular strength	79	21	68	3
resting heart rate	77	16	72	3
skill-related components (agility, speed, coordination, power, reaction time, etc.)	41	38	49	5
Additional Services				
boot camp classes, outdoor	26%	64%	32%	3%
clinics on special topics	40	51	37	5
group activities, outdoor	29	55	39	2
lifestyle coaching	45	62	33	0
meditation	21	61	28	5
nutrition assessment	57	50	40	5
nutrition coaching	60	52	40	3
online client reminders and information	54	56	29	2
online training programs	17	n/a	n/a	n/a
social activity groups (walking or running clubs, group trips, organized group activities)	31	59	36	1

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PERSONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS

	Offer	Yes, my company offers this program, and I think it is:		
		Growing	Stable	Declining
Current Programs and Future Projections, cont'd				
Program Design				
balance training	96%	60%	36%	1%
body weight-only training	79	53	43	2
cardiorespiratory circuit training	76	39	54	2
cardiorespiratory cross-training	72	37	57	1
cardiorespiratory endurance training	75	28	65	2
cardiorespiratory interval training	81	47	49	1
functional resistance training	96	60	35	1
Gyrotonic® or Gyrokinesis® exercise	2	27	46	18
mind-body fusion	10	63	26	2
Olympic-style lifting	17	16	49	26
Pilates	36	44	49	3
Pilates and yoga fusion	23	45	42	4
Pilates or yoga training, one-on-one	39	43	44	8
plyometrics	72	34	51	6
speed, agility, quickness conditioning	65	42	48	5
strength training	97	37	59	2
stretching and/or flexibility	96	48	47	2
tai chi	9	33	57	5
very slow strength training	38	20	49	17
yoga	33	46	44	5
Client Goals				
back pain prevention	72%	55%	38%	2%
exercise for chronic medical conditions (e.g., diabetes, coronary heart disease)	61	58	36	2
kids' programming, 12 years and younger	23	47	40	11
postrehab following injury	70	49	44	2
pre/postnatal training	44	33	57	5
senior-specific training	71	65	29	3
sports clinics	14	51	41	3
sport-specific training	54	39	48	6
teens' programming, 13–17 years	43	42	39	11
training for weight management	85	50	44	1
walking	52	42	48	3
water fitness	23	44	39	13 >>

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PERSONAL TRAINING EQUIPMENT

	Offer	Yes, my company offers this equipment, and I think it is:		
		Growing	Stable	Declining
Current Equipment and Future Projections				
Portable or Specialized				
balance equipment (BOSU® Balance Trainers, disks, wobble boards, balance boards)	93%	58%	37%	2%
barbells and/or dumbbells	95	24	70	2
boxing equipment	32	42	47	7
computer training programs, interactive (exergaming)	7	53	33	3
computer workout tracking	15	52	35	3
foam rollers and small balls	85	57	37	2
Gravity trainers	12	50	33	6
Gyrotonic equipment	2	0	78	11
medicine balls	90	46	51	1
nutrition analysis software	17	44	38	9
Pilates equipment	31	42	48	3
resistance tubing or bands	97	35	57	4
stability balls	97	46	50	1
steps and platforms	81	11	68	11
suspension training apparatus (TRX, Inkaflexx, etc.)	31	63	32	0
water fitness equipment	22	28	51	9
yoga mats and equipment	65	30	61	1
Gym Basics				
arm ergometers	20%	22%	53%	14%
child-sized machines	2	30	40	10
computerized strength machines	7	41	38	7
cycles, recumbent	62	20	69	6
cycles, upright	63	14	72	9
elliptical trainers	71	39	56	1
indoor rowing machines	42	18	57	20
plate-loaded machines	63	10	71	12
pneumatic machines	7	28	48	14
pulley equipment	67	24	65	3
selectorized (pin-selected) machines	62	11	69	10
stair climbers	50	15	57	23
treadmills	78	26	66	2
weighted bars	75	25	65	5

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PROJECTED TO GROW THE MOST—PROGRAMS

The 10 programs predicted to grow by the most respondents are quite diverse, ranging from mind-body activities to technology. In addition, programs that are offered by the majority of trainers (over 70%) and the minority of trainers (under 35%) both find their way onto the top-10 list of programs predicted to grow.

	I Offer This Service*	And I Believe It Will Grow**
senior-specific training	71%	65%
boot camp classes, outdoor	26	64
mind-body fusion	10	63
lifestyle coaching	45	62
meditation	21	61
balance training	96	60
functional resistance training	96	60
social activity groups (walking or running clubs, group trips, organized group activities)	31	59
exercise for chronic medical conditions (e.g., diabetes, coronary heart disease)	61	58
online client reminders and information	54	56

* % of respondents offering the program.

** % of those offering the program who think it will grow.



PROJECTED TO GROW THE MOST—EQUIPMENT

Most of the equipment that is expected to grow is small and easily portable. Four of the 10 pieces of equipment are offered by the majority of the trainers, while the remaining pieces of equipment are offered by fewer than 35% of the trainers.

	My Company Has This Equipment*	And I Believe Usage Will Grow**
suspension training apparatus (TRX, Inkaflexx, etc.)	31%	63%
balance (BOSU Balance Trainers, disks, wobble boards, balance boards)	93	58
foam rollers and small balls	85	57
computer training programs, interactive (exergaming)	7	53
computer workout tracking	15	52
gravity trainers	12	50
stability balls	97	46
medicine balls	90	46
nutrition analysis software	17	44
boxing equipment	32	42
Pilates equipment	31	42

* % of respondents offering the equipment.



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Autumn Color

What does the season of change, reflection and beauty mean for you, your clients and your business?

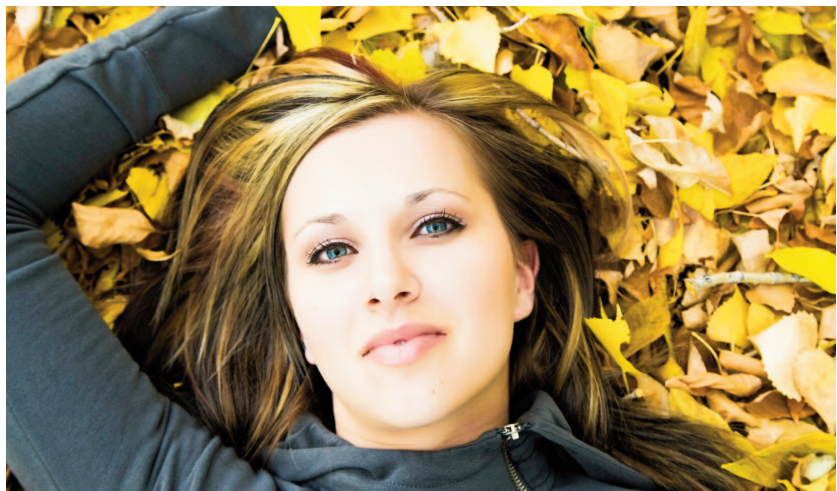
Autumn is by far my favorite time of year. It means that the suffocating heat of summer is coming to a close and a beautiful symphony of color is on its way to Texas. Kids go back to school, and summer activities wind down in preparation for cooler-weather sports like football and more at-home family time.

Autumn is a season of great change, representing a period of maturity or the beginning of decline. It is a combination of beauty and aging—an explosion of beautiful color, and then the “letting go” of life, yielding to the cycle that repeats itself over and over again: birth, growth, aging and death. Autumn reminds us of our mortality and the limited time we have on Earth to leave our mark. What can we learn from this glorious 3-month period of change that can positively impact our lives and businesses?

Changes for You

The beauty of autumn has always given me cause to reflect on my life and choices during the previous months of the year. What decisions have I made? Which directions have I taken? Half of my year is gone; am I following the right path? Have I matured in the areas I wanted and needed to? If not, now is the time to act. It is a time to let go of things and activities that do not match my principles and values.

To give yourself an opportunity to answer your own questions about *your* life, set aside time for reflection. Most of



QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- Am I focused on the people and things that are important to me?
- Are there personal habits that I need to let go of?
- What roles do I play in my life, and how can I be better in those roles (i.e., family member, friend, father, husband, business owner, cook)?
- How can I add beauty to my life (i.e., plant fall flowers, spend more time outdoors, go camping, listen to music, etc.)?
- If I am harvesting what I have sown, have I sown the right things? If not, what can I do differently to get the harvest I want for next fall?
- What does pre-retirement look like to me? Is there a specific age at which I would like to retire or cut back?
- Am I taking the steps that will allow me to retire when I want?
- As some birds migrate to avoid cold weather, have I learned to avoid situations that are detrimental to me?

us know what is right for ourselves based on our deepest desires and values. With regular quiet time, you can get to the heart of what matters most to you.

Changes for Your Clients

Most of my personal training clients represent autumn to me, in that they have been training with me for 10–18

years and many are in their 50s. They are generally focused on fitness maintenance, although their programs still need to be altered regularly to keep producing results and to keep people's interest. On the other hand, these clients have trained with me long enough to have a strong exercise foundation—with their experience, there is no more need to convince them of the value of exercise. They have seen the positive lifestyle results for themselves.

Fitness and exercise are a way of life for these long-term clients. However, the autumn of their lives is a time to rethink their workout regimens—to lessen harmful impact activities and substitute lower-impact activities, to ease the strain on joints and old injuries. At this point you need to keep your clients fit, injury free and motivated to stay strong as they continue through the aging process. How can you best help your clients living in the autumn of their lives?

Changes for Your Business Model

After 21 years as a personal trainer and coach, I am experiencing the autumn of my business. I am reaping what I have sown and enjoying the fruit of my labors. I have lessened my work hours over the last 10 years to reflect the importance of family and simplicity in my life. I am focusing more on relationships and less on things and accomplishments. However, the never-ending task of keeping my business alive and prosperous is still a full-time job. Even a mature business needs nurturing and marketing. What do you need to know to thrive in the autumn of your business?

I have shortened my client appointment hours to 20 hours per week over the course of the last several years, but I want to keep those hours always “full.”

I have also raised my fees over the years to make it possible to live comfortably while working shorter days. Thus I have the quality of life I

YOUR BUSINESS AGES ALONG WITH YOU

- Take time to reflect on the early days of your career. What are you thankful for? What have you learned? How can you use your knowledge to help others reach this place in their careers?
- Now that your business has aged along with you, what do you want it to look like in the immediate future? Do you want to cut back your hours? Do you want to focus more strongly on a different aspect of your business?
- Like the animals, are you gathering the resources you need for the winter of your life?
- Have you grown a thicker coat so that the harshness of life is less harmful to you?



was aiming for, with time for my family, me, relaxation and travel.

Stage of Life

Autumn is the beginning of aging for plant life and people. It is a season wrought with change, but change that can be beautiful. It represents our 50s and early 60s, when the kids are grown and gone, our careers are changing or slowing down and thoughts of retirement are on the horizon. It is a period of life when we re-evaluate our health; the ways we spend our time; and whether we have relegated important things to the back burner. It is the perfect opportunity to enjoy more travel and fun with less responsibility. Autumn is a reminder that it is vital to be flexible, open to change and willing to let go of things that don't matter. Clients may change their exercise schedules to be more available to kids and grandkids. They may want to be less locked into fixed workout times. They may need changes in their exercise programs because of aging joints and disease.

Winds of Change

Autumn is a beautiful representation of aging and change. The crispness in the air mingled with the exploding display of color gets you excited about the days ahead, yet the season can leave you with

a feeling of melancholy. Soon the tree branches will be bare, and will be drawing to a close. An uncertain economy this year may have left you scraping for business and struggling to stay busy.

But there is one lesson we can all learn from the coolness of this season: change is coming once again. Embrace the wisdom of your older clients, and learn to age and change gracefully in accord with whatever life hands you. Know that as you and your business age, your goals and desires will change. Remain open to that thought as this year marches quickly to a close, and listen to your heart about what you want your personal life and business to be. In the autumn season of life, make sure you savor and enjoy every moment, focusing on the people and activities that are truly important to *you*. Let's all learn the valuable lesson that autumn teaches us: aging and letting go are inevitable, but it is within our power to do both, gracefully and beautifully. ■

Kay L. Cross, MEd, ACC, CSCS, president of Cross Coaching & Wellness in Fort Worth, Texas, is celebrating 21 years of business. She is a certified business and wellness coach, an IDEA Master Personal Trainer and an educational speaker. She can be reached at www.kaycross.com.

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