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Simply Business



How to Start a Personal Training Business

A Simply Business Guide

June 2019



Congrats on Starting Your Own Personal Training Business

Maybe you want to start working for a local gym, or maybe you aspire to create your own brand. Regardless of the reason, deciding to start your own personal training business is a big deal.

You're taking the first big step into bringing your passion into purpose and transforming your hobby (or college degree) into your everyday job. This is no easy feat, but it can be done — and this guide is designed to help you get there!

Plus, this guide is peppered with advice from real personal trainers who were eager to share their hard-earned knowledge with us (and you!).

Here at **Simply Business**, we're all about helping **entrepreneurs** to get their hands on the tools and knowledge they need to start and run their **businesses**.

That's why we created this handy how-to guide on starting your own personal training business. It's chock-full of advice, tips, and techniques that are needed to not just monetize your personal training skills, but also to:

- Understand the qualifications needed
- Get licensing and insurance
- How much money you need to start
- Find your first customers
- Set the right hourly fee
- And more!

Keep in mind that this guide isn't dedicated to the specific personal training skills you need to be a personal trainer. This guide has been created from the perspective that you already have a strong background in personal training and you've been mulling around with the idea of starting a business — you just don't know how to do it.

So how do you know if you should make that leap to starting your own business?

How to Start a Personal Training Business

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7 Questions You Should Ask Before Starting

The desire to become a personal trainer isn't the first business idea the average person thinks of — it takes years of personal testimony and self-transformation to feel confident in your ability to help others achieve their fitness goals to then turn it into a business.

Whether it's warming up on a treadmill, finding the perfect form for push-ups, or helping people modify positions to avoid injury, your expertise is a gift to be shared with people ready to embark on a total mind, body, and lifestyle transformation.

So, how do you turn that passion into a business? Moreover, are you someone who can do it?

The truth is, there's no single correct answer to that question. The good news is, if the idea excites you, that's a very good sign. But there are important things to consider before you take a deep dive into entrepreneur life.



What Will Be Your Specialty?

QUESTION 1

Being a professional trainer opens the door to a lot of pathways. You could specialize in weightlifting, HIIT, barre, or anything else of interest. But if you want to start a successful business, it pays to narrow down what your specialties are so that you get the customers — and projects — you actually want.

Stick to a few specialties instead of trying to teach everything. Some of the best personal trainers are highly specialized, plus customers may feel more comfortable with you if they know you're the master of a specific exercise.

Some people despise cardio and want someone who knows how to transform their body through weightlifting and resistance training. Others avoid the weight room like the plague and want minimal weight work involved in their workout. There are also people who need to be having fun in order to exercise, so they're looking for an inspiring Zumba class. If you specialize in just a couple of areas, you'll find more people who want exactly what you can offer.

SIDE NOTE

If you decide to be a personal trainer who also works in a local gym, you should have a strong understanding of how the gym equipment works.



Is There a Market for Your Services?

QUESTION 2

One of the most common mistakes that personal trainers make is that they don't get a good sense of market demand. And if you don't know how many other personal trainers you're competing with or if there are enough customers for the services you offer, you're running the risk of making that mistake, too.

So how can you tell if there's a good market for your personal training business? You could do some online research, but we'll cut the learning curve down for you. Take a look at this article, which calculates the [best cities](#) for an active lifestyle based on budget, participation, sports, and outdoors.

Take a look at the city or town you live in, and see what other fitness options there are. Is there a lot of demand for exercise? What gyms or boutique fitness studios are around?

Don't just pay attention to exercise — also notice the healthy eating patterns; is it common for people to eat healthfully? Are there any organic juice bars around that are popular?

Exercise is part of a wellness lifestyle, so make sure this is something people care about. Otherwise, you may be wasting your time training in your city. But don't let that be the end for you — check neighboring towns/cities because you may find that your market is a short drive away.



Are You Prepared to Run Your Business?

QUESTION 3

Becoming a successful personal trainer means you're going to do other work besides training people. You'll be a bookkeeper, a lawyer, an office manager, and a marketer — and that's just what you can expect on a daily basis. Just because this is not a corporate desk job in a cubicle, that doesn't mean the office work is out the window.

If you want a personal training business that will stand the test of time, you'll need to account for all of this extra work. During your first few months of business, you'll rarely spend an eight-hour day solely working with clients in a gym or other location. Just consider all the tasks you'll need to complete in order to tackle your first job:

- Find and market to clients
- Create invoices
- Register the business
- Build a website
- Open a business bank account
- Save receipts and invoices
- Buy additional equipment

This information isn't meant to dissuade you from starting your personal training business; it's designed to help you prepare for the most successful start possible. Expect and plan to put in a lot of admin work now, rather than fitting it in after a long day of work. That's when you could potentially run into trouble.



Do You Have Seed Money to Start With?

QUESTION 4

Starting a personal training business can be expensive, even if you already have workout equipment at hand.

Think about it: It costs money to register your business, get insurance coverage, pay for the right marketing, drive to work every day, etc. Even if you have a lot in savings, starting a business could take a much larger chunk of money from your bank account if you aren't prepared for it.

And if you don't already have the savings, we recommend that you track down a source of funding to get your business off the ground.

If you need to get a business loan, you'll need a strong proposal to get help from an outside source. You could try getting investors, but keep in mind that you'll need to repay the loan, so really think it through before you take that route.

If you're using personal funding or a line of credit to finance your business, map out your expenses so you don't inadvertently overspend. Save all your receipts and track all business-related expenses, as many of these will be tax-deductible.



Is There a Personal Training Business That You Admire?

QUESTION 5

Other people in your industry can be extremely helpful — especially if they're already doing things right and doing them the way you want them to. This doesn't mean you should outright copy someone's business — you need to be more creative and unique than that, especially if you want to stand out.

However, that doesn't mean inspiration doesn't go a long way — it's a great way to figure out the kind of personal training business you want to run.

Successful personal training businesses have (largely) achieved these crucial first steps for starting a business, so it's worth deciding if you should follow in their footsteps. During your competitive research, don't forget to:

1. Take a look at their websites to see what their specialties are, as well as how much they charge.
2. Check online how they're marketing their business across Google and social media.
3. Grab a coffee or beer with a personal trainer who's willing to share their hard-won advice with you.

It's worth noting again that you should be keeping an eye on how many personal trainers there are in your specific area. If you're finding a lot of personal training businesses, you might want to return to the second question in this section ("Is there a market for your services?") and analyze your competition.

If the person you aspire to emulate is in another town or specializes in a different exercise, there could be an opportunity for cross-promotion. Just make sure you do your research first to make sure you won't be competing for clients.



Do You Have a Plan?

QUESTION 6

The most successful personal trainers have a strong idea of where they want their businesses to be in five or ten years. That means if you're building a business for the long-term, you need a plan in place, too. For example, do you know if and when you want to start hiring employees? How will you fund your business?

Don't worry if you haven't thought about your plan yet; there's a section in this guide on how to build your business plan (plus a FREE plan template you can download).





Are You a People Person?

QUESTION 7

You may be really good at exercising, but coaching is a whole other job. You need to know how to work well with people from all walks of life, especially if you want to make money. You can't be too selective with whom you want to work with, or the personality types you get along with. With every person you meet, you need to maintain these qualities:

- Professionalism
- Patience
- Persistence
- Strong energy
- A really good motivator
- A good listener
- Flexibility
- Accountability
- Confidence
- Humility

Again, just because you know how to exercise and put together training programs, that doesn't necessarily mean you are fit for the one-on-one experience of personal training. Think about how well you get along with people in general — so if you think personal training is the place to show off yourself, this is the wrong business for you. No client should feel that you are condescending or cocky.

You also can't be too shy — as a trainer, you'll need to be able to communicate clearly and confidently. Plus, you need to feel comfortable to make hands-on adjustments when other people are exercising.

NEXT UP

Getting the essential stuff you need to start your personal training business.





What Do You Need to Start Your Personal Training Business?

Getting your personal training business started requires more than teaching people how to exercise. You need to have a knack for multitasking, whether it's sending an invoice, filing taxes, or renewing your CPR certification.

This information can be overwhelming, so let's take a look at the absolute essentials you should have, including a few surprising qualifications that can help set you up for success.



A Business Name and Structure

WHAT YOU NEED

The first step to setting up a business is to determine the name and structure. As a personal trainer, think about the type of exercise you'll do. Your business name should reflect the type of training you offer, and that sounds inviting rather than intimidating. Many trainers want to show off how fit they are, but this is not the time to show off your intensity — you want to inspire people to take their first steps to fitness.

Fortunately, we have some great content that can help you [pick out the perfect business name](#), so definitely check it out if you don't have a strong idea of what your business's name should be.

Once you've chosen your business name, you'll need to determine what you want your business structure to be.

There are a few questions you should ask yourself before you start looking into which business structure you should choose, including:

- Are you starting a full-time business, or are you doing this as a side business or money-making hobby?
- Do you want to be personally liable for any business debts, or do you want to protect your personal assets?
- Are you starting this business by yourself or working with someone else?
- Are you willing to learn more about any corporate obligations you might have?

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In general, you'll be asked to structure your business as one of the following:

- **Sole Proprietorship:** This is an unincorporated business structure with one person running the company.
- **General Partnership:** This is an unincorporated business structure with two or more people running the company together.
- **Corporation:** A corporation is an incorporated business structure that limits a business owner's personal liability, as the corporation is its own legal entity.
- **Limited Liability Company (LLC):** A limited liability company (LLC) combines the benefits of a corporation with those of an unincorporated business. In other words, business owners have limited liability for debts and aren't required to pay separate corporation taxes.

For the best guidance on how to structure your personal training business, check out this [handy article from the IRS](#) — it can help streamline your decision process.

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- Are you willing to learn more about any corporate obligations you might have?

Additionally, if you want the benefits of an LLC, you can also run a [Single-Member LLC](#). This allows your personal training business to be taxed as a corporation, has minimal regulatory requirements, and to be taken more seriously with the "LLC" behind your name (rather than registering as an S Corporation).

You have to choose to elect yourself as a corporation, otherwise, you are treated as a disregarded entity. Talk to a tax accountant to make sure you select the right business structure for you.



Your Business Plan

WHAT YOU NEED

A business plan gets your business started: it provides an outline for what you intend to do with personal training, which includes how you intend to attract clients, finances to keep your biz afloat, and the resources you need to make things happen.

A business plan also provides guidance and feedback regarding whether you're on track for achieving your personal goals.

For example, if you want to hit a number of personal training memberships or to be recognized as one of the top personal trainers in your area, your plan can suggest milestones you should be accomplishing along the way. It also can help you keep track of additional training and certifications you want to have to continue growing and become a master trainer.

In a more traditional sense, the business plan is absolutely crucial for nabbing any funding you may need. Even if you're planning on raising money from family and friends, a business plan can show you what success looks like, and if you have a solid plan for getting there.

Creating a business plan can be a pain, but we've streamlined the learning curve so you won't waste time with formatting or plan research. Just download our [FREE business plan template](#) and follow the step-by-step instructions to create the best plan for you.

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SMALL BUSINESS GRANTS.

Like small business loans, grants are forms of funding that you can apply for. Unlike loans, you don't have to pay them back. Grants can be hard to find and tough to get, but if there's a strong possibility that you could get one, they're worth looking into.

As an extra bonus, we've compiled the places where you can start the process of applying for a small business grant. They include:

[USA.gov](#)

This is another federal website where you can search for small business grants. You'll also find advice on how to apply for small business grants and even a list of lenders that offer loans.

[Grants.gov](#)

You can search for thousands of federally funded grants designed to help small business owners launch their entrepreneurial dreams. Just click on the "Search Grants" option and enter a keyword to find relevant grants (the keyword could be your personal trainer niche, your location, or even grants for women and minorities).

[Small Business Development Center](#)

Each state has a Small Business Development Center, which provides low-cost training, mentoring, and resources to help entrepreneurs start their own companies. Also, many SBDCs can help business owners find and apply for state business grants.

COMPETITIONS.

Many larger companies conduct competitions that provide winning businesses with generous grants. For example, FedEx holds an [annual competition](#) where they award 10 small businesses with grants of up to \$25,000. The National Association of the Self-Employed (NASE) offers [\\$4,000 in monthly grants](#) to small business owners (must be a member to apply). For more examples of small business grant competitions, or to apply, [check out this NerdWallet article](#).

PRO TIP:

Grants aren't always the fastest way to obtain funding, especially if you're applying for a competitive one. However, some entrepreneurs may want to try this financial option, as it can be freeing to get a large sum of money with no repayment restrictions.

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Personal Training Equipment

WHAT YOU NEED

Exercise comes in all shapes and forms, and may require some equipment or none.

Personal trainers are very different — you may have most of the equipment found in any gym, or you may only have some resistance bands, dumbbells, and discs because you're just starting your business (you might also start out working for a gym and using their equipment).

There's no one right answer for the exact personal training equipment you'll need before you consider yourself "a business"; in fact, a lot of personal trainers say they started with just the equipment they owned.

Take a look at [what equipment personal trainers recommend](#) purchasing if you want a bit more guidance. If you're looking to go into the field as a specialist in a specific workout such as HIIT, boxing, or barre, you'll need to do more research into the required equipment for those activities.



Certifications & People Skills

WHAT YOU NEED

Most of the personal trainers we interviewed for this guidebook highly recommend getting a personal training certification before starting your business. Here are some other qualities that set them up for success:

- Joining a professional organization for networking and continuing education
- Get CPR/AED Certified
- The ability to work well with people — especially clients
- Be willing to invest in yourself and your company
- Kindness and compassion

That's because, according to these personal trainers, having both people and business skills is crucial for starting and growing your business. It makes sense: If you're not necessarily great with people or you tend to ignore admin work, it might be tough building a business over the long term.

“It is crucial to be trained and have a background in the type of fitness coaching you plan to do in order to **safely instruct your clients and also **legally** protect yourself.”**

— [Jessica Delacey, Fitness Instructor](#)



Business Insurance for Personal Trainers

WHAT YOU NEED

Once you've applied for your business license, we recommend shifting gears and looking for [personal training insurance](#).

Insurance for personal trainers is a small business insurance policy that specifically protects your personal business from claims of third-party damages, accidents, or even negligence and copyright issues.

For example, let's say you're hired to lead a corporate group exercise. During the course of the on-site class, you accidentally knock over and break an expensive vase. Without business insurance, you'd be obligated to pay for that vase out of your pocket, which might require dipping into your personal finances.

Or let's say a customer accuses you of not paying attention to their form and become injured during your training session. Even if the claim is baseless, it will still cost money to go to court to defend yourself. That's where your insurance policy can come in handy, as it can pay for your legal costs, as well as any claims you may be ordered to pay.

Business insurance is no joke, and if you want to own a successful personal training business, you *have* to have it.

You can [find and compare quotes](#) for personal training insurance at Simply Business. We specialize in small business insurance for personal trainers, so you can get personalized coverage at affordable prices. All you have to do is provide a few details about you and your personal training business — we'll take care of the rest.

If you're unsure about choosing your policy, check out our advice on [how to pick the right insurance coverage for your business](#).

Now that we've delved into what you'll need from a legal standpoint, let's take a minute to talk about how much money you may need to start your personal training business.



“Most gyms will insure you, but if you are working out of your home, I would recommend getting personal liability insurance.”

— Jill Boston, Personal Trainer
at [Get In Shape For Women](#)

Getting Funds: The Cost of Starting Your Personal Training Business

One of the most popular questions about starting a personal training business boils down to figuring out how much it will cost.

And unfortunately, it's also one of the most difficult questions to answer. That's because the response can vary depending on:

- Your training niche
- The equipment you already own
- Whether you have a business license and insurance
- Website and social media fees
- And more

So while we'd love to be able to give a single answer to this ever-popular question, the truth is that it's more realistic to say that there's a broad range to how much it will cost to start your personal training business.

So to help answer this question, we reached out to personal trainers who were happy to share their insights into how much they spent to start their business. We've also included some advice on how to reduce your startup costs, which can help trim your expenses if you're working with a tight budget.



The Average Cost to Start a Personal Training Business

GETTING FUNDS

Every personal trainer is different, which means the cost of starting a personal training business varies. However, on average, here are some things to consider that are specific to personal trainers (in addition to business licensing and insurance costs):

- **Personal Training Certification:** Roughly \$500–\$1,000 (depending on the organization)
- **CPR/AED Certification:** Most organizations charge between \$30 and \$50, and you must renew this every 2 years
- **Speciality Credentials:** Anywhere between \$200 and \$500
- **Equipment:** \$0–\$5,000, depending on if you already have the equipment and what more equipment you need to buy

Whether you already have most of these or are starting out with nothing, you probably have this question on your mind: “How can I start my personal training business without spending too much money?”



How to Reduce Costs When Starting

GETTING FUNDS

BUILD AS YOU GO.

As you begin your personal training business, unless you have the funds, there's no need to blow your budget. Start with the necessities, and build from there. You won't need fancy gym equipment from the beginning — a lot of exercising and training can be done without equipment.

If you start working for a gym, then you will have access to their equipment when working with their clients. You could also consider starting off with clients who are gym members.

USE THE EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES YOU ALREADY HAVE.

Maybe you don't have access to a gym, but you have a computer and a new website with a blog. Instead, try building yourself up with some workout schedules people can download and review. Or invite your clients to work with you at a public park or beach to change up the scene and save money.

STICK TO THE BASICS.

As a new personal trainer, you may be looking at others in your profession who have created elaborate workouts and branded themselves. The truth is, you don't jump from 0 to 100. In fact, those fancy workouts won't appeal to most people who are new to exercising or looking to hire a personal trainer for the first time in their lives. As you start your business, stick to the basics when it comes to exercise, as this will both save you money and get people more comfortable with you as a new trainer.

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TAP INTO YOUR CREATIVITY.

While it's going to be helpful to have a certification in personal training, it's not everything that makes someone a good personal trainer. You also can't rely on gym equipment to provide a strong workout. This is where your creativity needs to come through with the workouts.

- Is the workout fun?
- Are there any parts of this workout plan that are too long and would make someone want to quit early-on?
- Is there enough variety?
- What kind of music would be best to match with this exercise?

Creativity means you are also thinking about ways of exercising without using gym equipment. How can you challenge a client without any equipment or the bare minimum? This will help you reduce costs to start your business and show that you know how to create exercises that work.

- Is this workout safe for a beginner? (When you start your business, your clients are new, so you need to assume they are new to exercise and don't know the correct form.)
- What equipment can be added as an optional challenge to deepen the work?



How to Get Funding to Start Your Biz

GETTING FUNDS

OK, so the big question here is: What do you do if you need money to buy necessary personal training equipment or obtain a business insurance policy?

That's where small business funding comes into play. From traditional bank loans to investments from friends and family members, there are a lot of options to help you finance your personal training business. The problem is, how do you know which one is right for you? And what should you expect from the process of funding your business?

Before you begin to consider applying for a loan or asking a friend for money, consider talking to other personal trainers or reach out to them online. Other personal trainers can be essential in giving you a better idea of how to obtain funding, as well as what to expect from the process. There are plenty of Facebook groups, LinkedIn networks, and forums with people who are happy to point you in the right direction.

Here are a few other options for funding your personal training business:

SMALL BUSINESS LOAN.

A small business loan is probably one of the most traditional ways of securing funding for your business. This type of loan can give you the instant equity you need to rent office space, gather supplies, start hiring employees, and develop marketing materials.

However, there are notable drawbacks to a small business loan. One of the biggest is that if your company doesn't make it, you'll have to repay the loan out of your own pocket.

Learn more about [how to get a small business loan here](#).

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PERSONAL FINANCES.

Some personal trainers may find themselves with enough money to fund their new business entirely, or at least part of it. Using your personal funds can be an excellent way to avoid the costs associated with repaying a small business loan. Plus, you have more freedom to do what you want with your money!

Of course, there are some disadvantages that come with using personal finances to fund your business. For example, if you use a credit card to pay for supplies but your business fails, you'll still have to pay back the money. If you're using personal money to fund your business, make sure it's money that you'd be OK with losing.

Not all personal training businesses become successful, so don't put yourself and your family in a hole by maxing out all of your personal finances for your entrepreneurial dreams.



OK, that's the finances squared away.

Now let's talk about another financial topic that can be a lot more fun to talk about: setting your personal training prices!

Making Money: How to Set Your Personal Training Prices

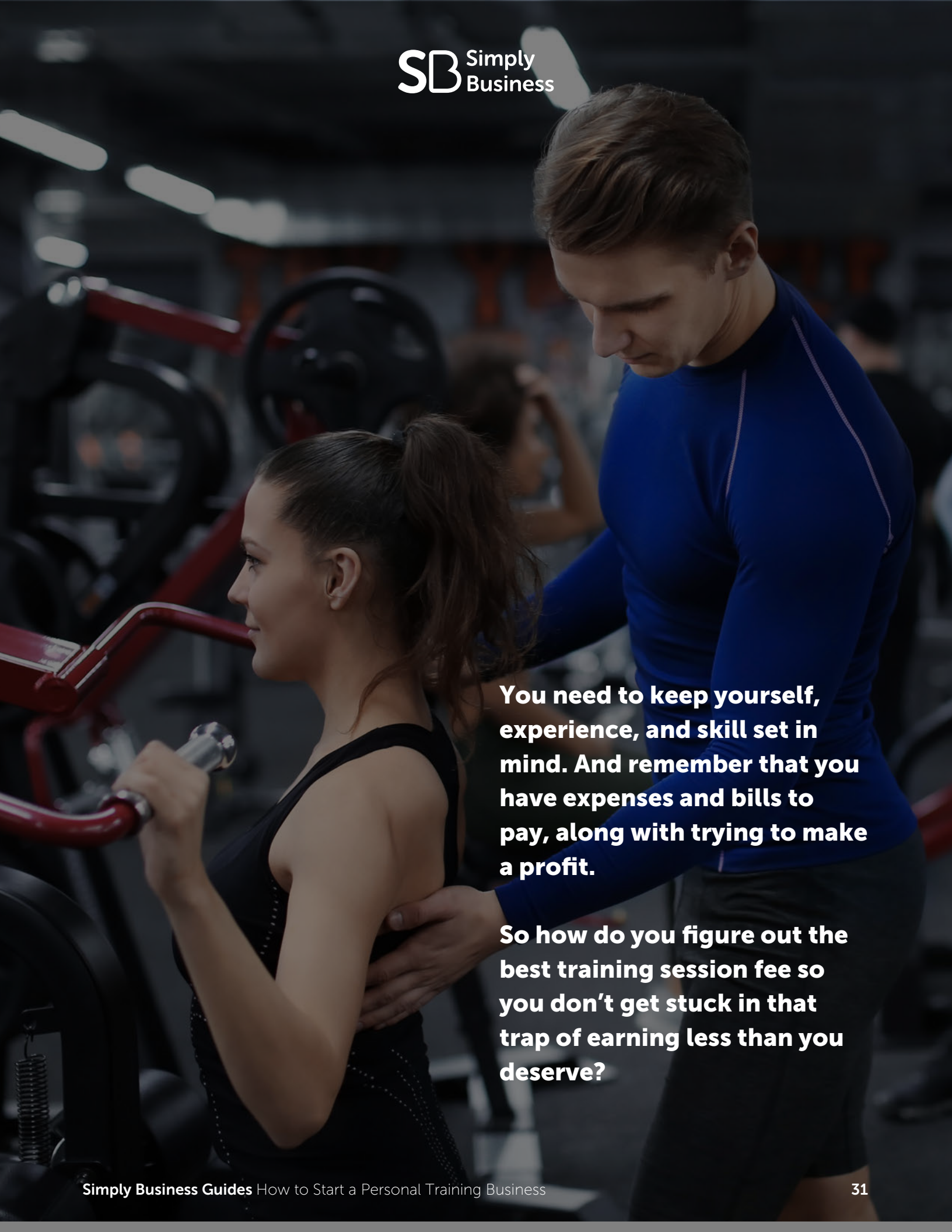
Your first payment from a customer is a big deal; it initiates your business into being “up and running” and helps you feel more legitimate as a personal trainer. However, as a new personal trainer, it can be difficult to figure out how to price your session fees.

Personal trainers know they are going up against some competition and often believe they’ll get clients only by charging low session rates. However, this isn’t a fact and won’t help you bring in customers more than a normal session price.

Plus, if you start off offering too low a price for sessions and it negatively impacts your finances, if you raise your prices, your current customers will be unhappy about it.

On the flip side, if you lower your prices, you’ll have some very pleased customers.

Many new personal trainers think they need to charge less simply for being a new trainer. But customers are purchasing a trainer on their value, and you could have years of experience over a competitor who has been in it for just a couple of years.



You need to keep yourself, experience, and skill set in mind. And remember that you have expenses and bills to pay, along with trying to make a profit.

So how do you figure out the best training session fee so you don't get stuck in that trap of earning less than you deserve?



How to Set Your Training Session Fee

MAKING MONEY

Your training session fee should cover your expenses (equipment, travel, utilities, etc.) while still providing you enough overhead to make a profit. Plus, if there's a goal salary amount you're aiming for, it's important to factor that into your calculations so you know what you're working toward.

While each personal trainer's specialties may influence how much the session fee will be, here's a basic formula for determining the best price for your business:

HOW MUCH YOU NEED TO MAKE EACH MONTH:

(Equipment Expenses +
Business Expenses + Travel
Expenses + Taxes) / 12 months
x 35% Profit Margin

Once you've calculated how much you need to make each month, divide it by the number of days you want to work, and then divide that by the number of hours you'll work each day (for the sake of argument, say 8 hours, aka the typical work day). **There's your session rate!**

You should return to this formula on an annual basis, as you may find that your expenses have changed over time. In fact, we recommend examining it every three to six months when you're starting out in your business, as you'll probably need to adjust your pricing as you go.

That's definitely a lot to throw at you, so let's break it down so you're getting a more realistic idea of what you should charge.

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EQUIPMENT EXPENSES.

Get a good idea of how much you're spending on personal training equipment every month (or every year), whether it's replacing existing equipment, spending money on weights, or even just purchasing new equipment to help bolster your business.

COST OF JOINING A FITNESS ORGANIZATION.

You may skip the college degree, but it helps your reputation if you join a nationally recognized organization for fitness. This can help you further your education as well, so it may be worth your time. There is an annual fee to join, so keep that in mind when determining your session prices.

BUSINESS EXPENSES.

From renting a space and utilities to website fees, list all of your business expenses each month and add up how much you're spending. You should also include any marketing costs you've incurred (we'll talk more about that in the next section).

Don't forget to keep track of receipts/invoices, as most of these expenses are income tax deductible.

TRAVEL EXPENSES.

If you're not setting up your own personal training gym, you're probably doing a lot of traveling to client sites and vendor destinations. Be sure to include travel costs in your session fees, as this is the money you'll spend for the use and wear-and-tear on your car.

For 2019, the [IRS calculates the standard mileage rate at 58 cents](#). If you happen to be traveling farther or staying overnight for a fitness expo or training, make sure those costs are included as well.

LOCATION.

As a personal trainer, you need to thoroughly research the demographic of potential clients in your area. In some towns, charging \$100 per session will seem reasonable, whereas at other locations, that may be considered too pricey. This also means researching the socioeconomics in your city to understand how much, in general, clients expect to pay a personal trainer.

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PERSONAL TRAINING IS A LUXURY.

Just like going to the spa for a massage or heading to the cosmetologist/esthetician for a facial, a personal training session is a luxury, which means this ties into how you think about pricing, depending on your location. Is it common for people to indulge in luxuries? Or is it something people cut from their budget? You'll need to adjust your pricing so you'll find people who are able to pay for your services. This also means paying attention to the current economy and researching spending patterns.

PRICES CHANGE DEPENDING ON THE SERVICE.

What a client is looking for will vary, e.g., someone may be looking to get just a bit more toned, while someone else is looking for extreme weight loss. Someone may say, "I want to lose 10 pounds by my wedding in 5 months." What the client wants from you will require more or less work on your part, so you can increase or decrease prices accordingly.

INCLUDE YOUR PROFIT MARGIN.

Once you've added your expenses to determine how much you need to make to cover them on an annual basis, multiply that number by your profit margin. This profit margin is essential, because this is where you'll make money that you can spend on yourself, as well as investing in the business. Some sources suggest that personal trainers need a profit margin of at least 60% to stay up and running, and if you plan to expand your business and hire more personal trainers.

DIVIDE BY 12 MONTHS.

Once you've added your expenses and included your profit margin, you'll want to divide that final number by 12 months. The end result will be how much money you'll need to make each month in order to make your ideal personal trainer salary. From there, you can calculate your daily fee, or even an hourly fee.

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CHECK THE SALARY OF PERSONAL TRAINERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

The Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics has information regarding the [current meridian annual wage](#) for personal trainers. It may help you to see how much the annual salary is for other personal trainers, but also keep in mind the other factors as you determine a price for your sessions.

If you're *just* starting out and still feel uncertain about calculating your hourly fee or project rate, there's no harm in getting a better idea of what your competition is charging and modeling it after them.

To that end, do a little online research and gather a pricing list for personal trainers who work in your niche and location. Most personal trainers have prices on their websites, or at least are willing to email price packages if you reach out to them. It might feel a little sneaky, but this technique can really cut the learning curve in half if you're concerned about setting the wrong session fees.

OVERESTIMATE HOW MUCH YOU NEED TO CHARGE.

Underpricing your personal training sessions might leave you struggling to pay your business's bills.

Unfortunately in the business world, you don't know how other personal trainers will act and change their pricing. It's possible that another personal trainer will offer lower prices and steal some of your clients.

As you grow in experience and demand, don't feel bad about raising your prices accordingly. While you're doing what you love, you still have bills to pay — plus, you should reward yourself if you become a top personal trainer in your area!

“Price ranges vary depending on the length of time and number of clients in a session. A general rate for one-on-one training is \$25 per half-hour; however, this can vary depending on if you are traveling to a client, if you have to pay for gym space, etc.”

— Jill Boston,
Personal Trainer at
[Get In Shape For Women](#)



Getting Customers: How to Market Your Personal Training Business

Standing out as a fitness professional can feel overwhelming; the fitness industry is a very popular market. However, having a strong marketing strategy will help you find success as a new personal trainer in a saturated industry.



Video Is Key for Personal Trainers

GETTING CUSTOMERS

Many personal trainers share content with videos. The nature of exercise requires guidance and a lot of people are visual learners. While you can create video content for purchase, your marketing strategy as a fitness guru needs to include some free videos as well.

Videos are a way for you to establish trust with your audience. Providing a face behind your brand reveals who you are as a personal trainer and will help customers trust your business. You're in a trade where people will aspire to have a similar physique to your own, so it's also important to show off that you know how to effectively work out with your own personal results.

Use video as an opportunity to show off your unique personality — while you may think you need to behave a certain way, there's not a single personal trainer who is meant for everyone. Some people want a boot camp-style personality in a personal trainer because they thrive when a coach is aggressive and shouts. Others may want a personal trainer who is friendly and encouraging because they don't respond well to shouting.

If you're more of a go-with-the-flow personality, you'll find a lot of people who prefer that in a personal trainer. Don't overthink this — it's better to be yourself and attract the clients that are a good match with your training personality.



Local Businesses Are Your Best Friends

GETTING CUSTOMERS

Though you may be a one-man show, teamwork makes the dream work. Partnering with local businesses to network and create a referral program is a great way to market your business.

For instance, you may consider visiting a local athletic shop to introduce yourself and talk about cross-promotions. You could recommend clients to that store when you make athletic apparel recommendations, and that store could share your business card with clients when they make a purchase.

Another way to get referrals is by visiting local businesses as a customer. You could visit a chiropractor, or if you already have one, tell them about your small business. Mention that you could cross-promote when it seems right and natural.

For instance, if you're working with someone who has back pain, you could say you know a great chiropractor. And if the chiropractor has a patient who says they want to start exercising, your business would naturally fit in the conversation as a recommendation.

Otherwise, you wouldn't refer a client to your chiropractor if they don't need to see a chiropractor. It's important to remember that referrals shouldn't be forced on someone. Let the referral occur naturally in conversations!



Free Pop-Up Events Are Fun & GREAT Promotion

GETTING CUSTOMERS

The best way to show potential clients what you can do is to show them for free. Hosting a pop-up exercise class is a great way to show people your skill set as a personal trainer and give them a sample of your workouts.

Find a nice venue, such as a cool brewery or a rooftop bar/restaurant, and invite people for a free workout followed by light snacks and drinks (if offering food and beverages fits in your budget). You could also put together goodie bags with your brand's logo on merchandise along with your business card.

If you do this, make sure you have the right equipment, inform clients how to dress appropriately, and say what they need to bring.

For example, if you wanted to lead a 45-minute class in a restaurant, tell clients they need to bring a yoga mat, towel, and water. Also mention that they need to wear loose, comfortable exercise clothes along with running or training sneakers.

Also remember this: People love getting free stuff and to be invited to exclusive events. If you can offer strong incentives and make customers feel special, you'll likely get their support.



Discounted Package Deals Motivate Customers to Buy

GETTING CUSTOMERS

You've likely seen personal trainers use YouTube to upload free workouts or exercise Q&A's. By providing free content, such as a video, you help establish trust with your followers and motivate people to spend money on your services.

Video isn't the only channel for free content that you should use. In addition to video, create a website and blog page. Even if writing isn't your favorite thing, it's still important to offer additional free material.

It's an opportunity to show off your knowledge and assure your potential clients that your method is safe, that you're an expert, and that they can also feel empowered with deeper exercise knowledge.

The "freebies" don't end there — you should also think about offering one free session to prospective customers. This will help them experience your services and feel more at ease when it comes to buying training sessions from you.



Testimonials Validate Your Business

GETTING CUSTOMERS

Once you have a website or social media page up and running, it's important to start collecting testimonials from clients. People love to see "before-and-after" photos of someone's fitness journey, so collecting those from your clients is important. If you haven't yet acquired any clients, use before-and-after photos of your own personal fitness journey.

You can also ask your clients to write a testimonial to post on your website — the length of it doesn't really matter, especially if you're able to post pictures of their progress. Make sure you post testimonials on any web page you direct people to — whether it's a website, an Instagram page, or a Facebook business page.



“Fitspiration” on Social Media Is a Marketing Hotspot

GETTING CUSTOMERS

Many “fitspiration” accounts are created on social media every day, and it’s a good way to research clients. Let’s say you research “fitspiration” or “fitness” hashtags (on Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook) and come across a woman named Lindsey who is sharing her weight loss journey through her page. She has a strong following of people asking her questions daily or telling her that she is motivating them on their own fitness journeys. You could then follow those people (and Lindsey) so that they see your brand and possibly follow you in return.

When you research hashtags, you’ll come across thousands of users who may fit your target audience. As you build a strong social media following, you’ll get your brand out to more people who may be interested in purchasing your services.

Make sure you’re also researching customers in your local area on social media, as they are more likely to sign up for in-person sessions than someone farther away.

This also ties into learning more about your customer. Knowing your customer is a huge step in marketing. When researching, look for the basic information about your average customer, including:

- Gender
- Age
- Location
- Income level
- Behaviors
- Interests

You can get more specific with your customer research, but the above characteristics will tell you a lot about how you should approach your marketing, as well as the places where you’re more likely to find customers.



Your Outfit Is Part of Your Marketing Strategy

GETTING CUSTOMERS

As a personal trainer, you need to be more than just a fitness guru — you need to stand out as a professional. Though there are moments when you can show off your physique with tight shirts and leggings, more often than not you need to dress up as you would expect an executive in any other field.

This is important when you walk into a gym and are looking to attract new clients. If you're dressed in athleisure that any other gym member could be wearing, you won't stand out.

Dress like a professional — it's common to see personal trainers wearing a collared shirt and nice, comfortable pants with clean sneakers.

When you make the extra effort to look good, potential clients will view you as important. Also, make sure you wear a nametag — this helps to identify you as a fitness professional in the gym.



Develop a Memorable Logo

GETTING CUSTOMERS

Every business should have a logo, which will add some personality to your marketing materials and branding. If you have a knack for graphic design, try [designing your own logo](#); otherwise, it's best to hire an expert who can quickly capture the essence of your business.

In general, your business's logo should:

- Be clean
- Be simple
- Be recognizable
- Be professional
- Be associated with your business

Your logo should be a seamless part of your business. That's why it's important to avoid large, messy, or complicated logos that need more than a second to interpret.

If you're looking for inspiration, try checking out the logos that your competitors are using, or search for images online. Remember, don't use a logo without permission or payment; instead, have a professional graphic designer create one for you.

Once you have your logo, add it to everything with your business's name on it, including:

- Website
- Business cards
- Company vehicles
- Clothing
- Marketing materials
- Social media
- Email signature



Network, Network, Network

GETTING CUSTOMERS

Don't underestimate the power of word-of-mouth marketing. If you want to get your business out there, go to local events, fairs, and any other places where you can reach out to potential customers. Be sure to have professional business cards with your contact information that you can hand out to prospective customers.

Fairly soon, your networking efforts will build up the momentum you need to start bringing in customers. For more guidance on marketing through word-of-mouth, check out our guide on it [here](#).



Use Social Media — Wisely

GETTING CUSTOMERS

Your potential customers are probably spending a lot of time on social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, so if you want to reach out to them, consider investing in paid social campaigns. Each platform is different, but in general, paid social campaigns will place your ad in front of customers while they're scrolling through their feed.

Social campaigns provide great opportunities to offer free trials and first-time customer discounts, but be warned — it can be easy to overspend on social campaigns.

Make sure you have enough money to engage in a campaign, and be aware of when you should stop.

Want help running your first few social campaigns? Check out our article on [how to master Facebook advertising](#).



Get Noticed on Google

GETTING CUSTOMERS

Google listings are often a trusted source for customers, especially if they're checking out a company that they're interested in doing business with. Think about the last time you looked up a restaurant or a local store — chances are Google listings (including website information, phone number, and reviews) helped you make your final purchasing decision. To get noticed on Google, make sure you have a [website](#).

From there, create a free [Google Account for your business](#), then search for your business name on Google. When it appears, you should see a "More Info" option that appears in the top-right corner of the map listing. Click on that link, which will take you to a page where you can manage your business listing, as well as add your website address, request reviews, and more.



Try out Google AdWords

GETTING CUSTOMERS

Google AdWords — those ads featured at the top of every Google results page — is a great way to let the world know you're open for business...

But only if you know what you're doing!

AdWords involves some monetary savvy, as it can be easy to spend too much money on online traffic without actually gaining any customers. If you're interested in trying it out, [check out our fun infographic](#) on how to use Google AdWords for the first time.



Sometimes it can feel like it's taking forever to find your first customer, but keep your head up!

The work you're putting in now is creating momentum for your business for years to come.

Ready to Get Started?

Starting your personal training business will be tough, but it also will be one of the most rewarding things you could do.

Think about all the freedom you're about to enjoy and having the ability to make your own decisions without a boss telling you what to do.

You'll be able to take on your own projects and work with the clients you choose. You can set your own schedule so you can decide what time you want to take off.

Maybe that means more time at home with your family or actually having an excuse to travel more.

Whatever your reasons, starting your own personal training business is going to be life-changing. So take this moment to appreciate where you are right now. Because if you follow the advice in this guide, there's a good chance you'll be running a successful personal trainer business in the near future.

"I wanted to show people how exercise and a healthy lifestyle could change their lives in such a positive way."

— Jill Boston, Personal Trainer
at [Get In Shape For Women](#)

About Simply Business

Simply Business is an [online business insurance brokerage](#) that specializes in one thing: protecting the business our customers are working hard to build. We make it possible for our customers to choose the exact insurance coverage they need, so they can get back to growing their businesses.

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