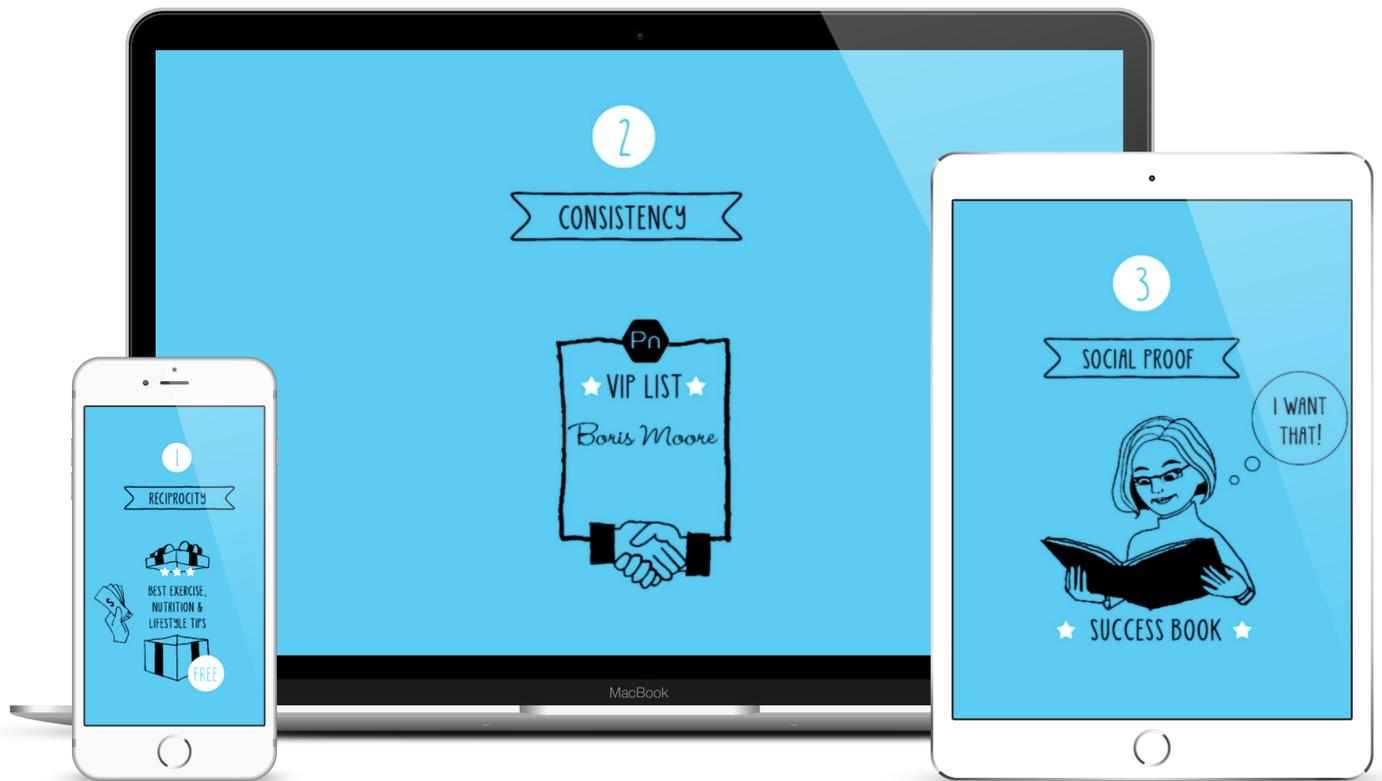


PRECISION NUTRITION
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LESSON 4
BUSINESS MODELS

**BUILD A
SUCCESSFUL
& REWARDING
CAREER IN
FITNESS**





HOW TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL AND REWARDING CAREER IN FITNESS

A step-by-step guide for personal trainers & coaches.

By Nate Green

Every year, thousands of people consider starting a career in fitness and health. But most have no idea how to make their dream a reality. This article—written for both new *and* experienced fitness professionals—outlines a new curriculum for building a successful career.

Change your body, change your... career?

Becoming passionate about health and fitness put the rest of my life into perspective.

I caught the fitness bug early. I started working out and reading articles about nutrition and fitness when I was in high school. By the time I was 21, I'd put on 30 pounds of muscle, felt awesome, and vanquished my skinny guy genetics.

Like many people who start living the “healthy lifestyle”, I quickly became the go-to fitness and nutrition expert for my friends and family, a position and responsibility I enjoyed and cherished.

My new-found love for exercising and eating healthy—coupled with the results I saw in the mirror and my ability to help others get in shape—made me feel like a brand new person. Well, almost.

Because even though I looked and felt different, the rest of my life seemed tethered to the “old me”. I'd transformed my mind and body... but I was still doing the same old stuff. Working the same unsatisfying job. Going through the motions at my local community college. Following the same routines.

Taking control of my own health and fitness had shown me how much potential I had to change things in my life. To become happier. To find meaning and purpose. *To make a difference.*

So why the hell was I doing all the boring stuff I was “supposed” to do when I could do something that actually mattered?

A crazy idea popped into my head: What if I became a personal trainer and tried helping others transform their bodies? What if *that* was my job?

As I thought about the possibilities, I got excited. And then reality slapped me in the face. The way I saw it, I had one huge problem:

I had no formal education, no certification, and worse... *absolutely no idea where to start.*

How do you become successful in the fitness industry?

I wasn't alone. And I'm still not.

There are thousands of people who are passionate about health and fitness and considering a career change. But like me back then, they don't know where to start.

Should they go back to school for a new degree? Get certified as a personal trainer? Or maybe something else entirely?

I remember thinking through the positives and negatives of each before deciding on a course of action.

Option 1: Go back to school.

Positives:

- Earn a degree.
- Learn all about biochemistry, anatomy, and exercise physiology.

Negatives:

- Takes at least two years to finish (and more likely, four to six years).
- Costs tens of thousands of dollars and could leave me deep in debt.

- Doesn't prepare me for the day-to-day work of training real people (i.e. doesn't show me how to write training programs or nutritional plans people will actually follow).
- Delivers few (if any) classes or resources on change psychology or business development.

Option 2: Get certified as a personal trainer.

Positives:

- Faster than going back to school (Usually self-study, so I could go at my own pace.)
- Costs way less money.
- Learn enough anatomy and physiology to feel semi-competent.
- The certificate I earned after taking the test would make me seem more credible to potential clients.

Negatives:

- Doesn't seem as "credible" as a degree.
- I don't know which certification is "good" and which certification is "bad".
- Still doesn't teach me much about change psychology or business development.

So what did I do?

I got a crappy personal training certification, sweet-talked my way into a job as a "fitness assistant" at a local gym, and started training clients. (I eventually earned a better certification.)

At times, I felt like I was on top of the world. I had gamed the system! Here I was working with people, building my business, reading nutrition and exercise text books, and attending seminars. I felt like I had a big head-start.

But at other times, I felt like a fraud. I worried that everyone would look at my lack of formal education and know I was unfit to work with people, even if I was a certified trainer.

I worried that because I didn't follow any sort of "path", my new career in fitness was a joke. It was debilitating and even a little depressing.

But as I would later learn, my lack of a formal fitness and nutrition education put me in good company.

Be a world-class strength coach in 3 easy steps

When people ask renowned strength coach Dan John what they should do to become a successful trainer or coach, here's what he tells them:

Step 1: Get a degree in English, study Theology, score a job as a high school teacher.

Step 2: Spend evenings teaching an online religious studies course.

Step 3: Volunteer as a strength coach with your high school track team.

Voilà, just 25 years later, you'll be a household name in strength and conditioning.

While Dan laughs when he says this, *that's exactly what he did.* And his hint of sarcasm isn't missed, largely because Dan knows something most people don't:

Unlike in certain fields like law and medicine, there are no clear, predetermined paths in fitness.

In other words, there is no single—or obvious—path to becoming a successful health and fitness coach.

When I realized that, I felt a huge burden lift off me. I wasn't a fraud. I was just a guy who wanted to help people get in good shape. And, like Dan, I had simply taken an “unconventional” path to get there.

What does that mean for you?

It means that you can find the path that suits *you*. The path that matches *your* experience, personality, character, and principles.

You can create your own unique path to the dream job you want.

But how?

Start here: The new fitness industry curriculum

Of course, even though there's no single template, you can still follow and adapt some of the patterns of the top coaches. Here's how.

1. Start coaching *immediately*.

You don't have to do anything fancy from the start. You don't need to get a degree, rent space in a gym, or start your own studio.

In other words, you don't need permission from anyone to get started.

All you have to do is help someone get in shape and improve their life, one step at a time.

It doesn't matter if that someone is a friend, family member, or a paying client. The only way to see if you actually enjoy working with people is to *start working with people*.

And if you're not feeling confident enough to coach on your own, ask if you can "shadow" a personal trainer or another experienced coach for a day.

Remember: You don't have to know *everything* about exercise and nutrition to help someone get in shape and improve their life. All you need is to know *a little bit more* about health and fitness than the person you're trying to help.

Becoming great at something (like coaching) is always about trial and error.

No matter how well prepared you think you are, no matter how many tests you pass, no matter how many internships you do, you will eventually have to try stuff and you will still have to make mistakes. On your own.

So start doing—and learning—*now*.

2. Get certified.

While you're coaching, start earning your credentials.

Yes, we all know that a lot of certifications in the fitness industry are considered a joke. Many require a single weekend of "effort" (and I put that in quotations deliberately).

Most barely scratch the surface of what a trainer really needs to know to work effectively with a client.

But if you want to be viewed as a professional—and if you want insurance—you’ll need the paperwork. So get some kind of certification anyway.

Start with a basic certification like one of the following:

- [American College of Sports Medicine – Certified Personal Trainer](#)
- [International Sports Sciences Association – Personal Trainer Certification](#)
- [National Academy of Sports Medicine – Certified Personal Trainer](#)
- [National Strength & Conditioning Association – Certified Personal Trainer](#)
- [PTA Global – Certified Personal Trainer](#)

Once you’ve cleared the initial hurdle and have rounded out your skill set (see below), you can consider more advanced certifications and mentorships.

3. Become a “complete” fitness professional.

Once you get your basic personal training certification, it’s time to take it a step further and expand your education. We know that exercise alone won’t get your clients the kind of results they’re hiring you for.

And your clients will need more help than just the two or three sessions a week they have with you.

So what you should you do?

Nutrition education

First, learn more about nutrition, so you can feel more confident discussing food and diet with your clients.

Nutrition is where people 1) need the most help and 2) will see the greatest results. **In fact, including nutrition coaching with your training advice can increase your effectiveness as a trainer by at least five times.**

In other words:

- That could be 25 pounds lost, instead of 5.
- That could be 20 points knocked off the blood pressure score, instead of 4.
- That could be 5 inches off someone's waist, not 1.

That could be at least five times more client commitment, confidence, motivation, retention, and satisfaction... with five times *less* effort from you.

Since a high-quality, real-world nutrition certification didn't exist a few years ago, we set out to create one: The Precision Nutrition Certification. It's quickly become the industry's most respected nutrition certification, a fact we're very proud of.

- [Precision Nutrition Level 1 Certification](#)

And if you're already a student or graduate of the [Level 1 program](#), we've got something for you too. Check out this [Level 2 page](#) where

you can learn more about the Master Class.

Also, if you want more research on the different nutrition education options out there, check out this site. It compares and contrasts the best schools and online education platforms. That way you can make an educated decision on what's best for you.

- [Nutrition Education and Certification Reviews](#)

Movement education

After establishing your nutrition system, I recommend one more thing to round out your basic skill set: improving your ability to assess movement.

Most exercise programming assumes that clients move well to begin with. And that might be true, if you were training child circus performers, instead of office workers or athletes and manual laborers with years of repetitive stresses and strains.

As physical therapist Gray Cook says, you shouldn't load dysfunctional movement patterns. Adding weight to a structure that can't support it isn't going to make that structure any better.

Your exercise programming can actually hurt your clients if you don't first learn how to help them fix their dysfunctional movement patterns.

So, consider checking out one of the following education tracks for better understanding and programming movement.

- [Functional Movement Systems \(FMS\)](#)
- [Z-Health Performance](#)

4. Learn how to coach real people.

After you've spent some time learning about movement, nutrition, and exercise programming it's time to **learn how to coach your clients**.

That means understanding the deeper psychology at play and saying the right things in the right ways at the right times. It means really connecting with your clients and helping them through their body transformations one step at a time.

You can have someone do all the squats and eat all the broccoli you want, but until you learn “change psychology” and the art of coaching, you'll never be able to actually help your clients change their habits.

Where should you start?

Here are two must-read resources to check out:

- [Effective coach talk: What to say to clients and why it matters](#)
- [10 things elite coaches do \(And 6 things they read\)](#)

Note: In the second article we share six books that will teach you the basics of change psychology. Use it as a jumping off point for digging deeper into this area.

And if you've done all that and you're ready to level up, you might consider these courses:

- [Precision Nutrition Level 2 Certification](#)
- [Excellence in Motivational Interviewing](#)

5. Get some business training.

You've gotta keep the lights on, your financials in order, and clients coming in the door. But how?

If you're considering opening your own personal training studio or gym—or if you work at a bigger gym and want to learn how to get more clients—you'll need to get some business training.

I'm not talking about a MBA here. I'm talking about fitness-specific training taught by people who've actually had success in the field.

Here's are some great options:

- [Net Profit Explosion](#)
- [Online Trainer Academy](#)
- [Results Fitness University](#)
- [Fitness Consulting Group](#)
- [100K Info Group \(for online businesses\)](#)

The better you get at marketing and running your business, the more people you can help, and the more money you can make.

6. Commit to a career of learning and development.

Once you've built a strong foundation of training, nutrition, movement, change, and business knowledge, it's time to commit to a lifetime of learning and personal development.

Feel free to pick the books, courses, internships, and certifications that most resonate with you. Or will most help your clients.

Now is the time to geek out about advanced programming for different populations, nutrient timing, soft-tissue therapy, hormonal issues, advanced exercise and diet techniques, and more.

If you're interested in finally leveling up that basic training certification from Step 2, consider:

- [PTA Global \(Advanced Course\)](#)

And if you're ready for internships and mentorships, these come highly recommended:

- [World Athletics Center](#)
- [EXOS \(formerly Athlete's Performance\)](#)
- [Cressey Sports Performance](#)
- [IFAST](#)
- [Mike Boyle Strength and Conditioning](#)

If you're interested in different areas of nutrition:

- [Nutrition Education and Certification Reviews](#)

If you're interested in more athletic populations:

- [Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist \(CSCS\)](#)
- [Certified Physical Preparation Specialist \(CPPS\)](#)
- [Certified Functional Strength Coach \(CFSC\)](#)

If you're interested in high intensity and group training:

- [Training for Warriors](#)

- Crossfit Certification
- TRX Courses

If you're interested in special populations:

- Pre and Post Natal Certification (GGS)
- Corrective Exercise Specialist (NASM)
- Fitness and Exercise Therapy Certification (ISSA)
- Youth Fitness Specialist (IYCA)
- Senior Fitness Certification (ISSA)
- Golf Fitness Certification (TPI)

Remember: There is no one “right” way to make it in the fitness industry

Fitness and nutrition is still a young industry. There is no one “right” path to success. In fact, there may never be.

And I kinda like it that way. It means that **possibilities are infinite.**

The best trainers can come from anywhere: four-year colleges. Doctoral programs. Theology school. College drop-outs. Someone who found a gym flyer in the parking lot.

It doesn't matter.

If you've got the energy, the drive, and the interest to do this work, you can eventually do it... **no matter what you're doing as a career now.**

What to do

While there isn't one "right" path, there are six things you can do to set yourself apart from 99% of other trainers out there:

1. **Start coaching now**—even if it's just family or friends.
2. **Get certified**—even if it's a basic entry-level certification.
3. **Become a "complete" fitness professional**—someone who understands exercise, but also nutrition and quality movement.
4. **Learn how to coach real people**—by focusing on change psychology and connections.
5. **Get business training**—so you can take your fitness "pipe dream" and turn it into something meaningful and profitable.
6. **Commit to a career of learning and development**—geek out on advanced programs and build your skills and specialties.

Want to learn more?

If you'd like to learn more about helping people find the best way of eating for them, check out our [Precision Nutrition Level 1 Certification](#) program; the next group kicks off soon.

The Precision Nutrition Level 1 Certification is the world's most respected nutrition education program. It gives you the knowledge, systems, and tools you need to *really* understand how food influences a person's health and fitness. Plus the ability to turn that knowledge into a thriving coaching practice.

Developed over 15 years, and proven with over 100,000 clients and patients, the Level 1 curriculum stands alone as the authority on the science of nutrition and the art of coaching.

Whether you're already mid-career, or just starting out, the Level 1 Certification is your springboard to a **deeper understanding of nutrition**, the **authority to coach it**, and the **ability to turn what you know into results**.

Visit this link for more information:

<http://get.pn/level-1>

[Of course, if you're already a student or graduate of the Level 1 Certification, check out our [Level 2 Certification](#), an exclusive year long Master Class for elite professionals looking to take their nutrition knowledge and coaching techniques to the highest possible level.]