

# 47 Random Personal Trainer Tips



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**Train People** - Don't just talk or write about it. Do it. Boom.

**Seek both science and application** - One without the other is lame... And useless.

**Identify your mavens** - Figure out who the neighbourhood influencers are and encourage them to try out a session. Offer them a free membership or training sessions. Give them more than you would give to other new members. The referral network they possess is valuable. Some good examples are real estate agents and dentists / doctors

**Bend but not break** - Not every client needs a perfectly put together program. In fact, most won't follow it. Figuring out how to alter your program for the individual's needs is pertinent to your success.

**Follow Through** - If you say you are going to do something, do it. If you don't have the time, then don't commit to something you can't deliver on.

**Educate** -Your job is not to just facilitate, it's to teach as well. Send your clients articles, write blog posts that answer questions they have, and take a few minutes to explain something you feel they should know more about.

**Never stop training people** - Don't train people for 5 years and then think you can make a career out of consulting. You still have a ton more to learn and experience. The best are created through years of hard work and dedicated study.

**Wear good socks** - Socks can make or break your day. Try training 8+ hours in thick cotton tube socks. I dare you.

**Challenge** - You're not a cheer leader. Sometimes you need to challenge your clients. Don't belittle them, or discourage them, but a healthy challenge is positive. Think about the best school teachers or professors you had. I bet they challenged you.

**Forgive** - Give your clients a clean slate when they are less than compliant. It's about them, not you. Always give them the opportunity to impress you, don't continually scold them for being less than perfect. Notice and appreciate when they've made an effort.

**Give your clients ownership** - You shouldn't make every decision. Have your clients start to make decisions. You should be training them to be self-sufficient. Don't ever worry that if you teach a client too much they won't need you anymore. This is a sure-fire way to fail.

**Be yourself** - I wouldn't want to spend an hour 3x a week with a robot. Be yourself. You don't need to share personal information, but you can give honest opinions, be a little goofy and so forth. There is a very human element to what you do, be human.

**Be professional** - Show up on time, be prepared, act like an adult, make ethical decisions, and treat what you do like a career, not a hobby. If it is a hobby, go find a real job.

**Educate yourself** - This gets me fired up. With the access we have to information now there is no excuse to be behind the curve. Read something and spend money on seminars not a new BMW.

**Admit when you make a mistake** - I make mistakes. They're not giant mistakes, but maybe I got a little aggressive, or made the wrong call on something. "The road to hell is paved with good intentions." Sometimes you do the wrong thing for the right reason. I'd rather just say I screwed up than have someone thinking it was entirely their fault.

**Say I don't know** - You don't need to know everything. Sometimes you just forget something, can't make a connection, and flat-out just don't know. The ARMY has taught me many great lessons, one of which is to say I don't know, but I will get the answer for you (sir).

**Start saying no** - Value your time. If it doesn't work, say no. If you can't follow through, say no. If you always say yes you are bound to burn out, half – ass something, or forget. Say yes when you KNOW you can do something, and if you can't, say NO.

**Separate Nutrition and Training** - Don't talk nutrition during training, set up a time to do a consult. After that, give your client the opportunity to put the plan into action. You don't need to micro manage them or do a nutrition consult between sets. They are there to train, focus on training, and work hard.

**Change their philosophy** - If you keep educating yourself, you will probably change how you are doing things from time to time. Remember, what you were doing before isn't wrong, you're just making things better. Understand that your client is coming from a different background than you and take the time to change their philosophy. They came to see you for a reason. You're the expert.

**Fire clients** - One year I took anybody, at any time, no matter what. I made pretty good money doing that. I also had terrible training sessions myself, was unable to deliver 100% to all my clients, and generally hated life and training. Sometimes you have to fire clients. You can only do so much, always remember what your job is: to facilitate a sound training program. If a client is draining you, do yourself and them a favour, cut it off. It's not because you suck, or they suck. The dynamic sucks, and neither of you are benefiting. It happens.

**Go the extra mile** - Some of my clients probably think I'm crazy. I think about their training all the time. I write emails to them - about what I'm thinking, to pick them up, get them thinking etc. I might be a chronic over sharer, I'm definitely a thinker, but it's how I do things, and it's worked well. However you go about it, show them you care.

**Appreciate Differences** - There's billions of niche's and even more subsets of knowledge. You can't master them all. Appreciate that others know things you don't and have experienced things you haven't.

**Develop relationships with their clients** - No, not that kind of relationship (see: being professional – making ethical decisions). I'm talking about remembering that their son has a big game Saturday, going to their games, taking part in something they like to do kind of relationships.

**Foster a community atmosphere** - I teach a few classes, and I make it a point to introduce everyone if it's their first time. I also introduce my clients to each other. Other ideas include having a group dinner, or doing an occasional group outing. Some clients won't be interested, that's fine. For the most part it's a huge hit. It's nice to meet like-minded people and feel like you are part of something larger. Group hikes, a community bbq, or a soccer game for your clients and their families are always fun.

**Get under the bar** - I don't care if you're skinny, fat, ripped or something in between. If you train consistently and purposefully then you're good to go. I know the most important things I have learned have come through my own training. I couldn't imagine taking advice from someone who didn't value their own training as highly as their career as a trainer.

**Get quantifiable results** - There are a lot of non-quantifiable results that can be achieved through training. I also think they are important. I write about them all the time. You will be more successful, and so will your clients, if you have some numbers to work with. After all, you are a business, and I don't think many businesses survive without producing more than they started with. Take pictures, get measurements, keep track of the numbers, they don't lie. You can argue the means all you want, I'll take the results every time.

**Ask Yes or No questions** - People love to argue, reason, and make excuses. For example, if you're talking about compliance, or whether they want to attempt a higher lift, accept only Yes or No answers. Don't leave any room for quibbling. If they don't say yes or no, the answers no.

**Do Curls in the Squat Rack** – Just checking if you're paying attention.

**Build a network** - You should have network of colleagues, PT's, nutritionists and so on. If you develop these relationships you will have healthy clients, you won't step outside your scope of practice, and you will have a nice flow of referrals.

**Have fun** - If you don't like what you do, I firmly believe you shouldn't be doing it. At the very least you should be putting things in order to make a feasible change ASAP. If you train people because it's a job you are doing everyone a disservice.

**Care** - Care about your client's health, adherence, and attitude.

**Take Responsibility** - Take responsibility for your client's adherence/compliance. It is easy to blame a client for "being lazy", but the trainer should ask themselves what could they have done more to keep a client enthused about a session.

**Laugh often** - Research has shown that with regular, practiced laughing, a person can increase their pain tolerance, quality of life, immune response, and even modulate their fecal polyamine levels (yep, even your client's poop gets an upgrade). Not to mention the improvements seen in commitment, depression, energy, and willpower. When you laugh, they'll laugh. So laugh often to break up the seriousness of their thoughts. Speaking of which, "Five PTDC coaches walk in to a bar..."

**Test and perfect** - Don't ever use your clients to try out an exercise. Grab a colleague and perfect the ins and outs of a piece of equipment or new exercise first.

**Wash your dry fit** - Cheap dry fit clothing stinks. Keep it clean.

**Learn Motivational Interviewing** - Clients are fully capable of motivating themselves, if you'll only get out of their way. Learn Motivational Interviewing, and it'll be one of the most powerful change-stimulating tools you have in your arsenal.

**Know enough about nutrition to help with the basics** – Nutrition in its simplest form is basic and that's all most clients need. If you choose to learn more great but make sure to grasp the basics.

**See the Good** - Clients get enough self-berating, guilt, and shame from their own inner dialogue; don't add to it. Instead, try to see the good in every encounter. Like their shoes? Tell them. They changed their hair? Compliment. Their squat is 0.00005% better? Make a big deal out of it.

**Celebrate little victories** - Frame your clients to LOOK FOR victories in their day-to-day life (eg. "I binged on the weekend, but then went for a walk the next morning and ate half an apple."), and then focus exclusively on those victories. What you focus on, you'll attract more of... and who doesn't like celebrating?

**Employ secret agents** - Want Bill to start eating more veggies? Get his wife, Tania, on-board as your secret agent (call when you know Bill isn't home... ie on the way to train with you). Tania's job isn't to be an accountability-cop, but just another environment-setting secret agent. So instead of neglecting the people that Bill lives with, use them as leverage for nudging him to change. Their only job is never to let on to Bill that you're in cahoots, and to occasionally leave an extra fruit/vegetable/healthy fat on the counter. What's lying around always gets eaten.

**Photoshop their heads** - Ask your client what their ideal physique is. When they answer (eg. "Brad Pitt in Fight Club"), go home and crappy-photoshop a picture of their head over his body. Not only will it make them laugh, but it'll show that you listen, care, are on-board with their goals. Not to mention giving them some extra fuel in the tank via cognitive dissonance.

**Get "before" measurements** - ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS get as many "before" measurements as possible. Photos, girths, weights, skinfolds, ranges of motion (pictures say 1,000 words), quality of life, daily diet record... get EVERYTHING on file. If you're taking money and not quantifying results, you're a scam artist.

**Process tensions** - Phone/have a regularly-scheduled "tension-processing" sit-down with every client (eg. once/week on Fridays for 10 minutes). Ask them what's bugging them about how their progress is going, what they'd like to see more of from you, how you can make your coaching even better, etc. Clients are ALWAYS thinking it, but just don't feel safe freely giving you their feedback, because they're rightfully worried of the relationship repercussions. Be an emotionally-proactive coach by processing the tensions and ACTIVELY LOOKING for "how can I improve my coaching" feedback. Otherwise, your ego needs to go for a workout.

**Evolve** - This is one of the most exciting industries to be in - it's constantly changing so keep up with the research.

**Wear clean shoes** - Nothing looks better than a clean pair of athletic footwear. It look professional and looks damn good!

**Read, often** - Spend an hour a day reading a training/business book or watching an educational DVD. (and no, blog reading doesn't count) How are you supposed to get smarter if you're just training clients all day? Apply what you read when appropriate. Also, try to teach your clients what you're reading because it shows your interest in the field and constant need to better yourself as a trainer. It also helps you learn and understand the concepts.

**Feelings > Knowledge** - No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care. And conversely, you can't get someone fact'ed when their emotions are whack'ted. Clean the emotional slate regularly, and you'll see how much further your clients go knowledge-wise.