



# You Are Not a Fitness Writer

(Yet)



# About *Me* (*I'm Jen Sinkler*)

Former Editorial Director of Fitness Content for  
*Experience Life* magazine

Now freelance writer, editor, and blogger.



# About *Experience Life*

- National magazine published by the health-club chain Life Time Fitness.
- Circulation of 690,000 people (members + outside circulation base).
- Issue reach of 3,000,000 (gets passed around a lot, if you know what I mean).
- Website has 200,000 page views per month (growing 25 percent per month; unique views growing 45 percent per month).
- Average age of audience is 40, but speaks to everyone from those in their teens to those in their 80s.
- Gender split is 60 percent women, 40 percent men.
- I was there for just over 9 years.



# About *JenSinkler.com*

[www.jensinkler.com](http://www.jensinkler.com)

- In January of this year, I launched my own website and began freelance writing.
- Existing connections at magazines and organizations have made this the easiest thing I've ever done.





# Why (try to) get published?



# Why (try to) get published?

- The romantic stuff.



# Why (try to) get published?

“To share information. To inform, instruct, enlighten, entertain. Ideally, your desire to help others begins with KNOWING THINGS THAT ARE WORTH SHARING.”

-Lou Schuler, coauthor of *The New Rules of Lifting* book series, former fitness director for *Men's Health* and fitness editor of *Men's Fitness*



# Why (try to) get published?

“To become more recognized for your knowledge and your ability to make a difference.”

-Cassandra Forsythe-Pribanic, coauthor of *The New Rules of Lifting For Women* and contributor to *Men's Health* and *Women's Health*



# Why (try to) get published?

“The only way good information is going to win out over the crap is if passionate people produce quality content. Touching people's lives and inspiring their journeys should be the cornerstone of the fitness industry.”

-David Tao, Chief Research Officer at Greatist



# Why (try to) get published?

“To me, writing is teaching, and you can't teach unless you are constantly learning new things. If you're being published, it means you're a great teacher, whether it's because you have innovative ideas or because you do a great job of simplifying complex topics.”

-Eric Cressey

Eric's writing and his work with athletes have been featured in such local and national publications as *Men's Health*, *Men's Fitness*, *ESPN*, *T-Muscle*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Boston Herald*, *Baseball America*, *The Worcester Telegram*, *Perform Better*, *Oxygen*, *Experience Life*, *Triathlete Magazine*, *Collegiate Baseball*, *Active.com*, *The Metrowest Daily News*, *Parents and Kids*, and *EliteFTS*.



# Why (try to) get published?

- The ever-so-slightly shrewder stuff.



# Why (try to) get published?

“While it's good to post content on your blog, Twitter or Facebook page, there's an increased credibility factor when you're linking to YOUR stuff that's been vetted by health and fitness editors, who see a lot of different material.”

-Ted Spiker, magazine and sports-media professor at the University of Florida; *Men's Health* contributing editor; coauthor of *YOU* books with Dr. Oz; *Runner's World* blogger



# Why (try to) get published?

“If you want to be successful at building a brand, there are two steps.

“Step 1: Become really freaking good at what you do. Educate yourself, train clients, and find your niche. That's where you cut your teeth and earn your stripes. Most trainers know this. Step 2 is what they miss out on, and that's getting published.

“Why? Because it increases your exposure, forces you to think creatively, and makes you more money. Writing articles will probably never be your primary source of income, but it can help you build your reputation, which can lead to more clients and revenue opportunities.

“The hidden benefit: You might start to understand clients better. Most trainers get stuck thinking in a trainer mindset. You speak in jargon and don't understand how to share your ideas with the lay population. Writing for mainstream media turns you into a better communicator.”

-Adam Bornstein, coauthor of *Man 2.0: Engineering the Alpha*, former editorial director of LIVESTRONG.com and fitness editor of *Men's Health*



# Why (try to) get published?

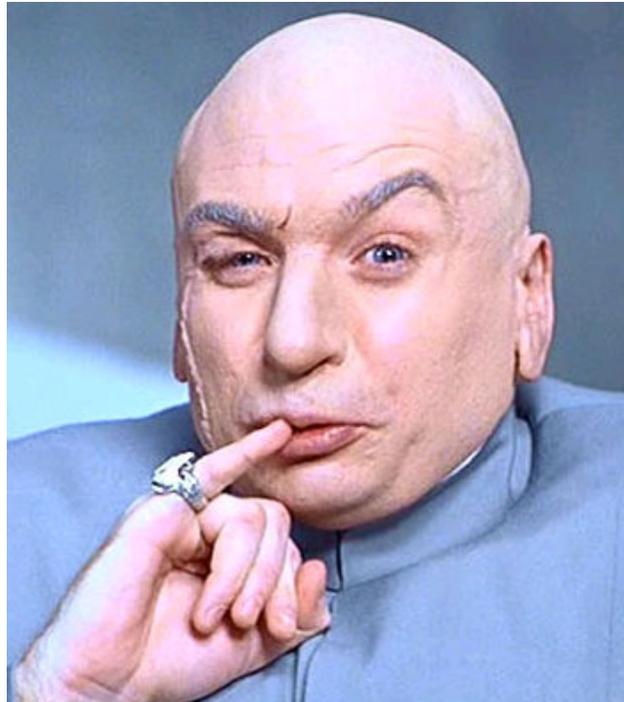
“Fitness is not an easy niche, and excellent fitness writers are cherished among editors. Being able to find the right sources, scour the right journals and decipher new studies, and then write clear, precise copy...those are golden skills that will net you assignment after assignment.”

-Jen Ator, senior fitness editor of *Women's Health*



# Why (try to) get published?

- The much shrewder stuff.



# Why (try to) get published?

“A magazine or online zine can introduce thousands, if not millions, of people to your business, personality, or training philosophy, and that can add a lot of momentum to your career.”

-Sean Hyson, group training director for *Muscle & Fitness* and *Men's Fitness*



# Why (try to) get published?

For credibility and to USE IT IN YOUR MARKETING! Most trainers don't even think about marketing, but one of the only reasons to get published is to be able to put 'As Featured In...' all over everything. On your website, on your marketing pieces, when you speak — *everywhere!*"

-Rachel Cosgrove, cofounder of Results Fitness, columnist for *Women's Health* and author of *Drop Two Sizes* and *The Female Body Breakthrough*



# Why (try to) get published?

“Getting posted or published seems to earn you instant ‘expert’ status. That leads to more clients – often times many more clients – and it also allows you to charge expert fees.

“Furthermore, it paves the way to make what we call ‘mailbox money.’ In other words, you get to sit on your can at home and write books, e-books, or white papers and sell them to people who now recognize your name. I’m told that getting published also gets you babes, but I’m not so sure about that.”

-TC Luoma, editor-in-chief of T-Nation



# Why (try to) get published?

“I'd like to say it's because of the groupies, but I don't have any.”

-Tony Gentilcore, regular contributor to T-Nation, featured in *Men's Health* and *Experience Life*



# Getting Published, Defined

It is *not*:

- Writing a blog (but you should do this).



# Getting Published, Defined

- When it comes to your blog, act as if. Meaning, write posts that wouldn't be out of place copied and pasted into your favorite fitness website or e-zine.



# Getting Published, Defined

“It keeps you current, keeps you in the conversation, sharpens your communication skills, and gives you a low-pressure venue where you can develop your unique voice and refine your philosophy of training.”

-Andrew Heffernan, contributing editor for  
*Experience Life*



# Getting Published, Defined

It is *not*:

- Writing guest posts for other people's blogs (but you should do this, too).



# Getting Published, Defined

- Guest posts = new audience = more exposure



Clayton Lord



Photo Credit: Rog Law

# Why You Should Blog and Guest Blog (by Lou Schuler)

1. Your first few blog posts are the equivalent of practicing free throws in your driveway.



# Why You Should Blog and Guest Blog (by Lou Schuler)

2. As you begin to push your ideas out there (linking to your blog on Facebook and Twitter, getting friends to link to it), you're playing the equivalent of pick-up ball in the local park. You're mostly playing with buddies, but you're also playing with strangers who see your work and will sometimes comment on it.



# Why You Should Blog and Guest Blog (by Lou Schuler)

3. As you develop your game, you'll be invited to other parks. That is, to share information on friends' blogs, or to write guest posts for other sites. Maybe you'll even be invited to play on a rec-league team, which is to say, you'll be asked to contribute regularly to a site that's edited (or at least curated) and has multiple contributors.



# Why You Should Blog and Guest Blog (by Lou Schuler)

Key point: Leave a trail. Build up an archive of useful, interesting, and possibly even entertaining information.

-Lou Schuler, coauthor of *The New Rules of Lifting* book series, former fitness director for *Men's Health* and fitness editor of *Men's Fitness*



# Getting Published, Defined

It is *not*:

- Being quoted in a magazine as an expert source (but this is worthwhile, and may lead to writing assignments).



# Getting Published, Defined

“We journalists are always looking for an expert to quote, and if we know you're that person, we'll come calling...and other journalists will follow.”

-Kelle Walsh, managing editor of *Yoga Journal*



# Getting Published, Defined

“When you get an opportunity to be quoted, don't pass it up! Be available. Journalists are decent people who are used to getting what we want for free. [←Editor's note: This line is the funniest in this presentation...because it's true.]

“Our needs and schedules have their own logic, which you won't begin to understand at this stage. If you want to play the game, roll with it. Answer emails within 24 hours. Return phone calls, no matter how much you hate talking on the phone.”

-Lou Schuler, coauthor of *The New Rules of Lifting* book series, former fitness director for *Men's Health* and fitness editor of *Men's Fitness*



# Getting Published, Defined

It is *not*:

- Self-publishing a book (but perhaps consider doing this, as well, once you're positioned well in the market as an expert and you enjoy money).



# Getting Published, Defined

Any of the aforementioned activities may be close enough, depending on your goals.

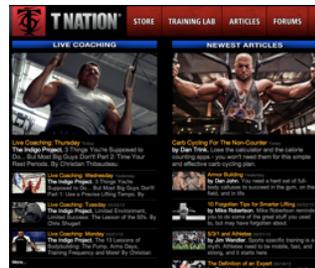
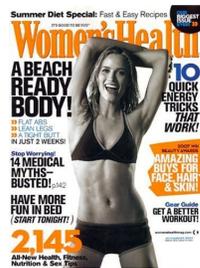
You can dominate a certain space quite effectively without ever getting published in the traditional sense.



# Getting Published, Defined

It is:

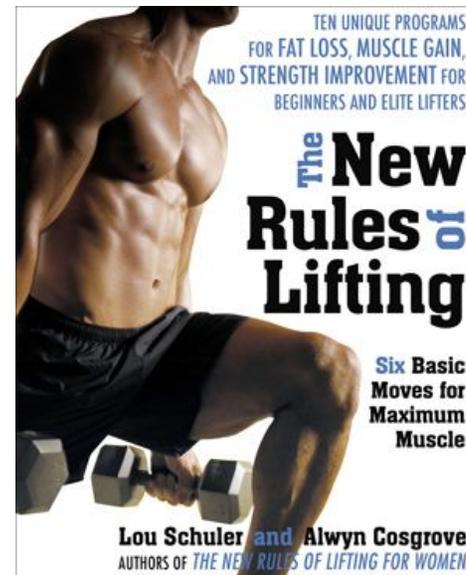
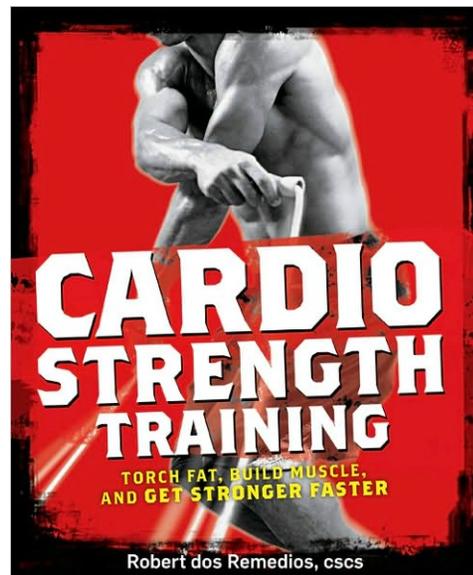
- When publication with some clout runs an article you've written (print magazines, e-zines, fitness websites).



# Getting Published, Defined

It *is*:

- When someone who is not you publishes a book you've written.





**You Sure You Want It?**



# You Sure You Want It?

If you own a gym, getting your name in print *does not* tend to get more bodies through the door...



# You Sure You Want It?

“We very rarely get people coming into the gym to sign up because they saw us in a magazine.”

-Rachel Cosgrove, cofounder of Results Fitness, columnist for *Women's Health* and author of *Drop Two Sizes* and *The Female Body Breakthrough*



# You Sure You Want It?

“As a personal trainer, your clients will typically not care about your publications — they care only what you can do and have done for them, personally. Many of the clients in my gym are not even aware of my books and reputation outside the gym, because they have no bearing on their training, goals or life. So understand that being a published writer will not necessarily bring you any more business, especially in a local market.”

-Greg Everett, author of *Olympic Weightlifting: A Complete Guide for Athletes & Coaches*, and cofounder of *The Performance Menu*



# You Sure You Want It?

...but once they're through the door, you being so fancy might help convince them to stay.



# You Sure You Want It?

“What being published *does* do is add to our credibility once new clients realize we are in all the magazines.”

-Rachel Cosgrove, cofounder of Results Fitness, columnist for *Women's Health* and author of *Drop Two Sizes* and *The Female Body Breakthrough*



# You Sure You Want It?

- Your writing will need to be up to an entirely different and more rigorous standard.
- You may go through round after round of revision requests, and you gotta deliver.
- Even then, you may be writing for free (for at least a period of time).
- Writing can be a bloody and painful process.



# You Sure You Want It?

“Some writers can sit down and write prose that just flows like a river downstream, and I fucking hate their guts. Just kidding. Sorta. Others, like me, can take upwards of an hour just to write a single paragraph.”

-Tony Gentilcore, regular contributor to T-Nation, featured in *Men's Health* and *Experience Life*





# Make Friends



# Make Friends

“Work any connections you have to get in the door. If a friend or colleague of yours has already been published in *Men's Fitness*, ask him or her for an introduction to an editor.”

-Sean Hyson, group training director for *Muscle & Fitness* and *Men's Fitness*



# Make Friends

“A recommendation means everything. If you work closely with an existing contributor, have them reach out to me. I'll give you a shot based on that recommendation alone.”

-Amy Rushlow, managing editor of *Prevention*



# Make Friends

“By linking and commenting on articles and sites that are of interest to you, you get on the radar at those places. Make smart comments, amendments, or pose smart questions about this or that current issue or topic, and presto, you're in the loop.”

-Andrew Heffernan, contributing editor for  
*Experience Life*



# Make Friends

“My first writing break happened when I was invited to write for *Men's Health*. I was contacted by their fitness editor at the time, Adam Campbell. He was an active lurker on the fitness and bodybuilding message boards, and he was — for a lack of a better way of putting it — a fan of my posts and debates on the forums.”

-Alan Aragon, contributing editor, *Men's Health*



# Make Friends

“It’s important to network, especially if you're a science-y type. We tend to come off as arrogant pricks in our writing, so it's important to meet people face-to-face so they can see our human side.”

-Bret Contreras, author of *Strong Curves*, writer for T-Nation, published in *Men’s Health*, *Men’s Fitness*, *MuscleMag*, *Oxygen*





# Influence People

(by being good at what you do)



# Influence People

“First, be one of the best at what you do. Put in your hours and learn from every client you train.”

-Rachel Cosgrove, cofounder of Results Fitness, columnist for *Women's Health* and author of *Drop Two Sizes* and *The Female Body Breakthrough*



# Influence People

“Do charity events or other gatherings where you’ll gain exposure to new audiences and build a reputation as someone who cares. Align yourself with professional organizations so that when media calls looking for an expert, you’re on the list. Get on social media and make your presence known with other influencers. Do public classes, get on the roster at festivals, write a newsletter and share it like mad. Once you build a following, you can rightly claim the expertise and popularity that makes editors take notice.”

–Kelle Walsh, managing editor of *Yoga Journal*



# Influence People

“If getting published is near the top of your priority list, forget it. I can tell already that you suck as a trainer and you’re in it for the wrong reasons. Learn more, and train more people. Take on difficult clients and figure out their issues. Build an army of paying clients — real-life people, not Facebook followers — who sing your praises because you helped them.

“Get to the point that you’re so booked training and taking seminars — preferably speaking at them, too — that you honestly can’t see yourself finding the time to bug an editor, much less write a freaking article. But you have *ideas*: things that you’ve done with clients for years that get great results, but that you don’t see anyone else doing (and is definitely not a plank variation). If you *could* find the time to get it into an article, it could really help people.

“THAT’S when you bug an editor.

“Bottom line, if you’re a so-so trainer who’s just looking for an easy way to build your brand, it will show in your work.”

**Bryan Krahn, assistant editor, T-Nation**



# Influence People

“My colleagues have developed neat formulas for getting published. I could be much better at it, but these days I just focus on being an expert, and the magazines and book publishers approach me for contribution.”

-Bret Contreras, author of *Strong Curves*, writer for T-Nation, published in *Men's Health*, *Men's Fitness*, *MuscleMag*, *Oxygen*



# Influence People

“If you don’t have novel enough insights to offer the world, go train some more people, read more, learn more, and pitch me in five years. There are some good trainers in the world; we're looking for the excellent ones. So become excellent. Then let's talk.”

-Amy Rushlow, managing editor of *Prevention*





# Please Thy Editor

(We are a finicky bunch. Pay attention.)





# Write More Better



# Write More Better

“Are you going to write something that generates hits or sells copies? Something that creates a buzz or enhances the rep of the company? Do that and editors will give you loving noogies on the head, in addition to making you famous.”

-TC Luoma, editor-in-chief of T-Nation



# Write More Better

“Write a lot and read a lot. Also, write how you speak; don't focus on formalities too much. Don't worry about sounding sophisticated or smart.”

-Alan Aragon, contributing editor, *Men's Health*



# Write More Better

“Be concise, avoid flowery language or trying too hard to sound smart, explain things in a way that the general public would understand.”

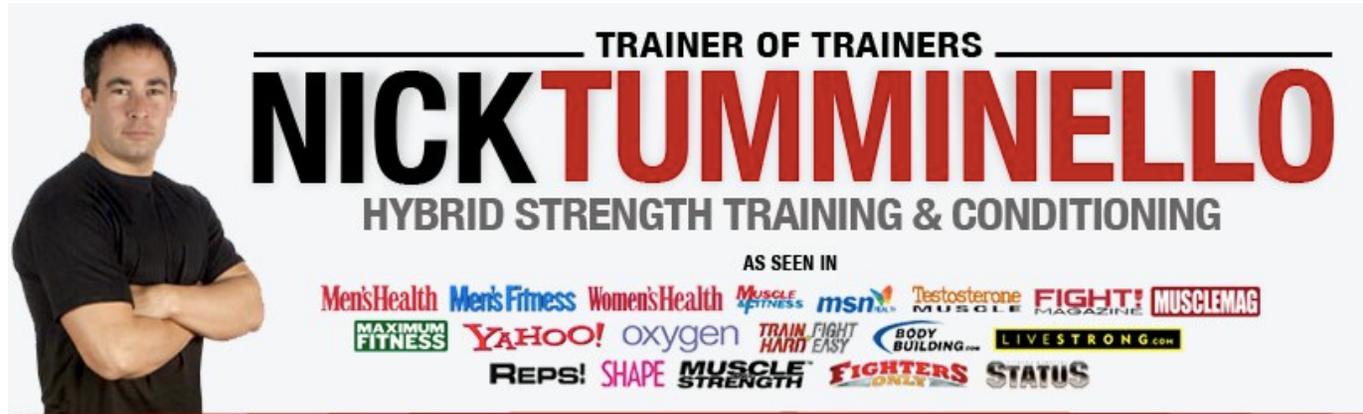
-Nicole Radziszewski, contributor to  
*Experience Life*



# Write More Better

“Try to answer all the questions before they're asked. If you cover the *who*, *what*, *why* and *how* in each article, it'll be solid.”

-Nick Tumminello



TRAINER OF TRAINERS

# NICK TUMMINELLO

HYBRID STRENGTH TRAINING & CONDITIONING

AS SEEN IN

Men'sHealth Men'sFitness Women'sHealth MUSCLE FITNESS msn Testosterone FIGHT! MUSCLEMAG  
MUSCLE MAGAZINE

MAXIMUM FITNESS YAHOO! oxygen TRAIN FIGHT HARD EASY BODY BUILDING... LIVESTRONG.COM

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# Write More Better

“Use spell-check (I'm amazed at how few writers do this), wordsmith your work, and form an outline prior to writing.”

-Bret Contreras, author of *Strong Curves*, writer for T-Nation, published in *Men's Health*, *Men's Fitness*, *MuscleMag*, *Oxygen*



# Write More Better

“Give yourself a quota for every day: say, I don't know, 300 to 500 words. On anything. Write about how kickass deadlifts are. Write about some of your favorite fat-loss strategies. Write about boobies. Who cares. Just write.

“Oh, and also, read David Zinsser's phenomenal book, *On Writing Well*.”

-Tony Gentilcore, regular contributor to T-Nation, featured in *Men's Health* and *Experience Life*



# Write More Better

“Listen to your sources. Fall in love with your topic. Get utterly fascinated by it, dig in, learn it, obsess over how best to express the person's ideas. Make it your mission to represent their ideas accurately and engagingly.

“Not only will you write better, but you'll keep a good relationship with your sources. If your interviews go really well, they'll give you ideas for future articles that you can then pitch down the road. Offend or misrepresent Alwyn Cosgrove or Robert dos Remedios in print, however, and pretty soon the only person who will agree to be a source for you is Bob from the weight room at your local YMCA.”

-Andrew Heffernan, contributing editor for *Experience Life*



# Learn to Pitch: Contacting an Editor Without Seeming Like an A-hole

- Keep it short.



# Learn to Pitch: Contacting an Editor Without Seeming Like an A-hole

“I don’t need a long email about the benefits of HIIT (I already know them). What I do need to know is: Why now? What’s new about it? How can we make it different? And who are your key sources?”

For sources, great experience, certifications and education completely outrank any ‘celebrity’ angle or fitness fad. We want people who know how to create and package programs that work, plain and simple.”

-Jen Ator, senior fitness editor of *Women’s Health*



# Learn to Pitch: Contacting an Editor Without Seeming Like an A-hole

“Don't send me a 27-paragraph email. Please. Or a blind attachment. Short and catchy. Just like the lede/intro to an article. If you can't catch my attention in the first three to four sentences, then your idea isn't good enough or you haven't perfected your writing.”

-Adam Bornstein, coauthor of *Man 2.0: Engineering the Alpha*, former editorial director of LIVESTRONG.com and fitness editor of *Men's Health*



## Learn to Pitch: Contacting an Editor Without Seeming Like an A-hole

“Address your pitch to the appropriate editor for the type of story you're pitching. If you don't hear back within a few weeks, send a follow-up email with one or two more ideas. Always be respectful and professional and make sure your writing is flawless.”

-Nicole Radziszewski, contributor to  
*Experience Life*



# Learn to Pitch: Contacting an Editor Without Seeming Like an A-hole

- Prove you're qualified.



# Learn to Pitch: Contacting an Editor Without Seeming Like an A-hole

“Send clips of previous articles you've written and your blog. I want to know you can write, and I want to screen your training principles to make sure they fit in with those of our publication.”

-Amy Rushlow, managing editor of *Prevention*



# Learn to Pitch: Know Thy Publication (Or Perish)

“Be familiar with the audience, tone, and approach of the publications you want to write for.”

–Kelle Walsh, managing editor of *Yoga Journal*



# Learn to Pitch: Know Thy Publication (Or Perish)

“I can't tell you how often I get submissions that make it clear that the author has never even read T Nation. It's like sending in a Star Trek script to Hollywood that calls the Vulcan commander ‘Spook’ instead of Spock. It just makes us mad and we add your name to a secret list of blackballed authors...not really, but we ought to.”

-TC Luoma, editor-in-chief of T-Nation



# Learn to Pitch: Know Thy Publication (Or Perish)

“Read at least six issues — ideally more — and then try to fit your idea into that mold.”

-Amy Rushlow, managing editor of  
*Prevention*



# Learn to Pitch: Know Thy Publication (Or Perish)

“A pitch to *Men's Fitness* is different than *Men's Health*, which is different than LIVESTRONG.COM. Assess the content in each publication, and try to make your pitch mirror what the publication is already doing. DO NOT reinvent the wheel. That's the editor's job. ”

-Adam Bornstein, coauthor of *Man 2.0: Engineering the Alpha*, former editorial director of LIVESTRONG.com and fitness editor of *Men's Health*



# Learn to Pitch: Know Thy Publication (Or Perish)

- **No repeats! Use the online archives that are so conveniently at your disposal.**

“Do some research to see if your idea has been covered.”

-Kelle Walsh, managing editor of *Yoga Journal*

“I can’t tell you how many times I get a pitch for a story idea that was just in a recent issue.”

-Jen Ator, senior fitness editor of *Women’s Health*



# Learn to Pitch: Know Your Audience

“Rule No. 1 of Journalism (and no one better steal this from me): KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE.”

-Adam Bornstein, coauthor of *Man 2.0: Engineering the Alpha*, former editorial director of LIVESTRONG.com and fitness editor of *Men's Health*



# Learn to Pitch: Know Your Audience

“For our reader, three sets of pull-ups is too extreme. When in doubt, give the regression of the exercise, and then say that it can be progressed to a harder variation. Also, think about the equipment practicality. If you’re at a gym, it’s going to be tough to bounce from stability ball to cable machine to medicine ball to kettlebell all in one circuit. If you keep it to a few pieces of equipment, it creates a more doable and efficient workout for readers (it’s also more practical for those doing the workout in a home gym).”

-Jen Ator, senior fitness editor of *Women’s Health*



# Learn to Pitch: Have an Angle

- Oh, and it had better be specific.



# Learn to Pitch: Have an Angle

“Pitch a specific idea for a specific section, and offer a compelling headline (even if we don't run with it in the end). I can't tell you how many times I've been pitched ‘Pilates.’ Pilates is not a story idea. But ‘10 Ways to Build Muscle Without Lifting a Weight’? *Now* I'm interested.”

–Amy Rushlow, managing editor of *Prevention*



# Learn to Pitch: Have an Angle



# Learn to Pitch: Have an Angle

- Make it so fresh and so clean (clean!).



# Learn to Pitch: Have an Angle

“For many of pubs, it comes down to the ‘wow’ factor. You've got to provide original content. Trainers who are innovative, inventive and can almost Einstein up some new moves are the ones who are appealing to editors.”

-Ted Spiker, magazine and sports-media professor at the University of Florida; *Men's Health* contributing editor; coauthor of *YOU* books with Dr. Oz; *Runner's World* blogger



# Learn to Pitch: Have an Angle

“If you’re writing about a current fad or trend (think Zumba, CrossFit or Spinning) that you’ve already read about in other places, it won’t work for us. We need breaking stories, new studies and emerging trends.

“Current topics work well in an online format, but for print you have to think: Will people still be talking about it in three months, or will it be totally over-talked about? Great example: Pippa’s butt. After the Royal Wedding, everyone was talking about Pippa workouts. While that would work online immediately following the wedding, it quickly lost steam and wouldn’t translate to print a few months later.”

-Jen Ator, senior fitness editor, *Women’s Health*





# Pitch Perfect

Email from Andrew Heffernan to me:

“Moving into Fascia”: Fascia, the layer of connective tissue that envelops all your muscle, nerves and organs, can be manipulated in ways beyond foam rolling and massage. Experts reveal how to integrate myofascial meridians into strength training and stretching. Sources would include Thomas Myers, author of *Anatomy Trains*, and Anthony Carey, corrective exercise specialist who presented “Fascia: The Rising Star in Human Movement” at the 2010 IDEA Fitness Fusion conference in Chicago.



# Pitch Perfect

That pitch turned into this feature in Experience Life:



The screenshot shows the Experience Life website interface. At the top, the logo "EXPERIENCE LIFE" is displayed in blue, with the tagline "Being Healthy Is a Revolutionary Act" in orange. Below the logo is a navigation bar with links for "FIT BODY | HEALTHY EATING | LIFE WISDOM | WELLNESS" and "VIDEOS | BLOGS | AUDIO | WORTHY GOODS | FEATURED PARTNERS | TALK TO US | REVOLUTIONARY ACT". A search bar is located to the right of the logo.

The main content area features a large image of a human figure with a transparent blue body, revealing internal muscles and organs. Below the image, the article title "The Web of Life" is displayed in blue. The text below the title reads: "Just beneath your skin lies a complex network of connective tissue called fascia. It helps you move well, stand straight and play hard. Keeping it healthy might be one of the fastest – and most overlooked – ways to improve your health and fitness." The author information "By Andrew Heffernan / November 2011" is shown at the bottom of the article.

To the right of the main content, there is a "STORY AT A GLANCE" section with a list of related articles: "Facing the Fascia", "The Tangled Web", "Flexibility Reclaimed", "DIY Anatomy Trains", "Anatomy Trains at Work", "Web Extra: Snuffing Out Fascial Inflammation", and "Web Extra: Tennis Ball Trick". Below this is a subscription section with the "EXPERIENCE LIFE" logo and several orange buttons: "SUBSCRIBE NOW", "RENEWALS", "GIVE A GIFT", "READER SERVICES", and "DIGITAL EDITION". At the bottom right, there is a "JOIN OUR COMMUNITIES" section.

# Start Small

“Pitch your local newspaper with a local spin on a hot fitness trend, or a profile of an unsung hero in the community. Start building some clips, then move onto larger publications: regional magazines, trade journals, membership magazines. Once you have honed your writing and pitching skills, and have a good representation of clips, try going national.”

-Kelle Walsh, managing editor of *Yoga Journal*



## Learn to Pitch: Ask These Questions

- Do you accept pitches, outlines or fully written articles?
- At certain times of the year, or any time?
- Would you prefer email or phone?



# Calling an Editor



# Learn to Pitch: Ask These Questions

- What is your lead time?



## Learn to Pitch: Ask These Questions

“Pitch story ideas ahead of time. *Way* ahead of time. Most magazines work four to six months out, so plan accordingly. Pitch summer stories in winter and vice versa.”

-Kelle Walsh, managing editor of *Yoga Journal*



# Learn to Pitch: Ask These Questions

“Your best bet around this time would be to think winter.”

-Jen Ator, senior fitness editor of *Women's Health*



# Learn to Pitch: Ask These Questions

- Who is your audience?



# Learn to Pitch: Know When to Leggo

“You might think this or that idea is brilliant, but if no one else does, just let it go, man, and move on. Ideas are like Kleenex: Use them once, and once they've served their purpose, let them go.

Decide that you're an endless fountain of ideas. If an editor asks you, ‘Got any ideas?’ the answer is always YES. Just crank them out based on whoever or whatever's interesting to you in the field at the moment.”

-Andrew Heffernan, contributing editor for  
*Experience Life*



# Be Easy to Work With

- You're hired! Now make it a nice experience for everyone involved.



# Be Easy to Work With

“Answer emails within three to four business hours (morning emails returned that afternoon, afternoon emails returned by the next morning), and return phone calls immediately.

“Play by the rules. Publishing is a unique business. Different publications have slightly different ways of doing things. Don't tell them how to run their business, because the people you're dealing with aren't the ones who set the agenda.”

-Lou Schuler, coauthor of *The New Rules of Lifting* book series, former fitness director for *Men's Health* and fitness editor of *Men's Fitness*



# Be Easy to Work With

- Know when to leggo, once again.  
“Be willing to kill your children. Not literally. [Editor’s note: Children = sentences, Andrew is not a murderer.] You might be totally into the way you phrased this or that idea, but if it’s off-tone for the publication you’re writing for, it’s not going to make it to print.

“Editors will mess with what you wrote. Jen will probably edit what I’m writing right now. [Editor’s note: I did, but just a little.] That’s their job. Just accept that and don’t be overly attached to anything you write.”

-Andrew Heffernan, contributing editor for *Experience Life*



# Be Easy to Work With

“Feel free to ask for feedback or make sure that your content is representative of you, but at the same time, understand that it's the editor's job to mold the content into the structure and voice of the publication. Accuracy is No. 1. But your ego should be No. 546.”

-Adam Bornstein, coauthor of *Man 2.0: Engineering the Alpha*, former editorial director of LIVESTRONG.com and fitness editor of *Men's Health*



## ...Until You're a Big Gun (But Please Remain Easy to Work With)

“When you have a track record, and you're in some demand, you have the right to be treated like a valued contributor. That is, you can expect to get paid for your contributions. You can ask for bylines. You can occasionally turn something down if it's not in your wheelhouse. You'll notice the shift of power in the relationship when it happens. You'll notice that reporters and editors show you more deference. They may even come to you seeking big-picture advice.

“In other words, rather than coming to you to help them fill in the blanks on *their* ideas, they may start with one or more of *your* ideas. Use this opportunity wisely. This is when you break out the A+ material, but only if it's a potential showcase for you.”

-Lou Schuler, coauthor of *The New Rules of Lifting* book series, former fitness director for *Men's Health* and fitness editor of *Men's Fitness*





# Q&A + Keep In Touch

Connect with me on Facebook at my fitness page, Thrive as the Fittest ([www.facebook.com/thrive.as.the.fittest](http://www.facebook.com/thrive.as.the.fittest)).

Connect with me on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/jensinkler](http://www.twitter.com/jensinkler).

