



HOW TO CHOOSE A QUALIFIED TRAINER

Introduction

Their business card says “Certified Personal Trainer,” and they have really inspiring pictures of client transformations on the brochure, but how do you truly know if a personal trainer is qualified? A bit of investigative research combined with asking some pointed questions will help reveal the true extent of a trainer’s qualifications. Follow these steps to get your answers.

Instructions

Step One

Ask where they received their certification. Because there is no governing body for personal training, anyone can call themselves a “personal trainer.” Your trainer should be certified by at least one nationally recognized organization, such as the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), the American Council on Exercise (ACE), the Aerobics and Fitness Association of America (AFAA) or the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA). Almost all certifying bodies require a minimum number of continuing education credits every two years in order to remain current, so be sure to ask what type of classes or workshops the trainer has been to lately.

Step Two

Go online or call the certifying body to confirm. It’s not too invasive to confirm the information that a trainer gives you. Call the certifying body to make sure you’re getting accurate and up to date information regarding the trainer’s certification. Check for personal liability insurance. Most trainers are required to carry insurance to protect their clients and themselves against personal injury and property loss.

Step Three

Find out how long they’ve been in the field. A piece of paper is necessary for a trainer to call himself “certified,” but it in no way reflects how much experience he has in the field. As a trainer, I can confidently say that I learned at least 70 percent of what I know about training simply from experience. There is no replacement for walking the walk. Talk with the trainer and determine whether you feel comfortable and confident with his or her skill level and dependability.

Step Four

Ask how many clients they see a week. Even if a trainer has held a certification and been “in the field” for 10 years, that doesn’t mean that he has been logging a certain number of hours. Perhaps he has only seen 2 clients a week for those 10 years. That’s a big difference in experience compared with a trainer who may only have 5 years experience but has been seeing 30 clients a week during that time. You want a trainer who is in demand.

Step Five

Speak to current or past clients. A trainer’s clients are the best source of information regarding how qualified the trainer might be. Ask to speak with at least two clients and then inquire as to how knowledgeable those clients feel the trainer is.

Tips & Warnings

- * Some trainers are willing to train small groups, which can reduce your cost.
- * If you haven’t exercised in a while, prepare to be sore after your first training session. Ask your trainer for suggestions on how to ease the soreness.
- * Alert your trainer to any orthopedic concerns you may have, such as shoulder, back or neck injuries.
- * Check with your physician or health care provider before beginning an exercise program.