

Differences

By Ken Hutchins
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Occasionally, I am introduced as a personal trainer. When this occurs, I try not to wince. I find the field of personal training unprofessional, unsophisticated and sleazy. I do not understand why anyone would aspire to such a vocation.

Recently, there is a move afoot to regulate those who profess to be personal trainers. I agree that this unruly group needs discipline and control. And I do not want to be lumped in with the personal trainers.

Perhaps it will become of future legal importance that some of the major distinctions between personal trainers and OVERLOAD instructors be documented.

Personal Trainers

Dress like jocks.

Obtain/apply information gleaned from the sports and coaching communities.

Yell and scream at clients for motivation.

Conduct activities in environments inducing overheating and profuse sweating.

Promote dangerously ballistic activities.

OVERLOAD Instructors

Dress like professional business people.

Obtain/apply information gleaned from engineering and human biology.

Speak to curb clients' extraneous physical and emotional tensions.

Conduct exercise in cool and well-ventilated, clinically-controlled settings.

Condemn ballistic exercise as unnecessarily dangerous.

Personal Trainers

Blend recreation with exercise.

Promote steady-state/aerobics/cardio as healthful.

Promote plyometrics.

Allow sweat suits during exercise.

Allow caps and hats during exercise.

Allow weight belts for back protection during exercise.

Allow gum chewing and candy to keep the mouth moist during exercise.

Allow gloves during exercise to assist the hands in gripping.

Promote the notion of rhythmical movement.

Promote the use of heart rate as index of effect and improvement.

Promote the use of fitness testing as a basis of exercise definition.

OVERLOAD Instructors

Segregate exercise from recreation.

Condemn steady-state/aerobics/cardio as injurious and pro-sarcopenia.

Condemn plyometrics as malpractice.

Do not permit sweat suits during exercise.

Do not permit caps, headbands, or any other constrictive material to be worn about the head during exercise, because they may lead to headaches.

Disallow weight belts during exercise, because they lead to back weakness and injuries.

Disallow anything loose in the mouth, due to the serious danger of choking during exercise.

Usually discourage the use of gloves, because gloves interfere with secure gripping.

Promote arrhythmical movement.

Denounce the use of heart rate as a reliable index of exercise effect.
Encourage increased cardiac stroke volume as the most desirable goal.

Denounce fitness testing as bogus in most cases and as circular thinking to use such as the basis of definition.
Apply epistemological principles for a definition.

Personal Trainers

Promote stretching, such as applied in Yoga, as healthful to the joints.

Promote arbitrarily controlled breathing technique.

Promote exercise as a direct *cause* of healthful improvement.

Promote exercise/activity as the most important factor of weight loss.

Promote exercise/activity volume.

Judge intensity by conversation ability of the subject during workout.

Permit strong-smelling liniments to be worn in the workout area.

Promote mirrors as a way to study proper form.

Promote Pilates to build long, slender muscles.

Promote exercises to improve balance.

Allow loud music and socializing in the exercise environment.

Go overboard with muscle isolation to the extent of practicing split routines.

OVERLOAD Instructors

Promote strengthening as the basis of flexibility.

Warn against excessive emphasis on flexibility due to its promotion of joint instability and arthritis.

Promote free and continuous breathing during exercise.

Promote exercise as a stimulus of healthful improvement. Warn that exercise, improperly applied, is a direct *cause* of only one thing: injury.

Denounce “weight loss” as a poor distinction.

Promote exercise as an essential but minor factor of “fat loss.”

Promote caloric control as the most important factor in fat loss.

Promote exercise quality and brevity.

Disallow conversation during a workout as a dangerous and counterproductive distraction.

Disallow strong smelling products in the gym during exercise.

Discourage mirrors as a source of distraction that compromises form.

Condemn Pilates as injurious and misleading to subjects who foolishly believe that human biology would allow muscle belly lengthening.

Promote strengthening as a general aid to balance, but that specific balance skill is developed and maintained only by the specific activity for which the balance is required. Balance skill is not transferable between activities.

Police the gym to enforce a library-like environment conducive to serious study and proper execution of exercise.

Appreciate the value of muscular isolation although it is merely a matter of degree, not an absolute.

Emphasize that the body must be exercised, fed, and rested as a unit, not as separate parts.