

Mind-Body Exercise, One-on-One:

Increase Your Marketability by Offering Clients Unique and Specialized Skills

by the Merrithew Health & Fitness™ Team

More than 28.5 million North Americans have incorporated mind-body exercise into their regular workout routine. As a fitness professional and personal training specialist, how will you take advantage of this rising trend?

The demand for fitness professionals is expected to increase by 28 per cent by 2018 as Canadians commit to living a fit lifestyle by being more active and healthy—the industry of personal training shows no signs of slowing down. With more and more personal trainers getting certified, consider specializing in mind-body modalities in order to stand out from the pack.

The mindful movement continuum has been growing over the last few years, evolving from pilates and yoga to include other disciplines such as barre exercise, high-intensity interval training and functional fitness.

Personal trainers possessing the additional specialization skills required for mindful movement modalities have a greater



opportunity to differentiate themselves, expand their range of offerings, better serve their clientele and of course, improve their personal profitability by:

- Distinguishing themselves from the growing number of general personal trainers
- Developing an acute awareness of form, alignment and technique
- Learning how to work with special populations
- Understanding that increasing weight doesn't always mean better strength training

Distinguish Yourself from the Growing Number of General Personal Trainers

Instructors who tailor their teaching approach to working with all walks of life, fitness abilities, ages and levels will be the most marketable. Gaining additional certifications and stocking your personal training toolkit with other speciality designations allows you to market yourself to a larger base of clientele and can also allow you to positively adjust your rates, thanks to the unique abilities that make you stand out above your peers.

Incorporating mindful movement into your clients' regular exercise routines shines a spotlight on the importance of lengthening the muscles to develop even tone, a popular goal of many personal training clients. Also, the increasing demands of everyday life cause both mental and physical stress—something everyone undoubtedly wants to alleviate. Mindful movement requires a state of presence, meaning that even just for an hour, the stresses of the day can go away. Sure you can help your clients get a 'better body', but helping them also feel a sense of calm and peace of mind will make your expertise a necessity in their lives.

Develop an Acute Awareness of Form, Alignment and Technique

Sometimes it does, in fact, pay off to sweat the small stuff. When working one-on-one with your clients, you have more opportunities to focus attention on the finer points of movement and in turn correct positioning and execution before bad habits are formed, ensuring that clients will flourish with their training, reaping all of the benefits that mind-body exercise has to offer them. Many courses and workshops in mind-body fitness take select exercises and break them down to identify the specific joint movements and muscular actions. Trainers have the opportunity to learn cueing tips and modifications to help clients progress into more challenging work while maintaining good form and preventing injury. Being able to hone in on small adjustments that improve mindful practices will allow your clients to fully practice and enjoy optimal fitness and wellness.

Even the most advanced and elite clients can appreciate being instructed and educated on how simple exercises can be used in fitness-based workouts and how different technical movements and correct biomechanics can be used for sport-specific training.

Learn How to Work with Special Populations

Mind-body exercise is also easily adaptable for special populations such as the booming category of active aging clients, making everyday tasks easier and keeping these individuals healthy and dynamic. Enable your clients to move and operate functionally by learning a systematic, movement-based approach to mind-body exercise, while also gaining an understanding of optimal and non-optimal movement strategies through rehabilitation programming.

Independently training clients in mindful movement enables you to introduce new tools, most of which are available in all facilities, even those who have not yet invested in the latest equipment. Take the Halo® Trainer for example, an inexpensive infinity-shaped handlebar that can be used for both rehabilitation and general exercise purposes either independently or with other popular accessories like the Stability Ball™. This versatile tool can regress exercises to their fundamental roots and then progress them, based on your client's gains and advancements in strength. Being spotted on the floor with these types of unique apparatuses makes you more attractive as a trainer, doing something differently from your peers.

Heavier Doesn't Always Mean Better

When you consider strength and resistance training, what comes to mind? A rack of dumbbells, barbells and EZ-bars? How about a three-pound Toning Ball™? Or perhaps a pair of two-pound mini hand weights? It's a common misconception that the heavier the load, the better. Many clients miss out on the opportunity to target and train their smaller muscle groups, which are designed to support the larger muscle groups. Where most trainers are found in the standard weight room, surprise your clients and show them the benefits of working the deeper muscles with mindful movement. Adding in accessories like soft dumbbells will challenge muscles in ways that are often overlooked. Sound too easy? A recent article in *Pilates Style* magazine illustrated how a number of NFL players participate in mind-body modalities such as pilates noting that despite being able to lift 500 pounds, there are motions in their mindful movement exercise routines that are consistently difficult for them to complete.

By Personalizing Programming, You Can Offer All of the Best that Exercise Has to Offer!

The field of personal training is only getting bigger and to stay at the top of the game, exceeding expectations will retain clients and increase referrals. The number of clients seeking personal consultation continues to grow and the popularity of mind-body modalities continues to increase exponentially. By capitalizing on these growing trends and adding mind-body exercise to your business, you can look forward to building your portfolio and your repertoire by catering to individuals who wish to attain a greater sense of awareness and a better sense of presence through forms of exercise that move the mind and body in tandem.



Merrithew Health & Fitness™ (MH&F) is a leader in mindful movement with high-end programming including STOTT PILATES®, ZEN•GA™, CORE™ Athletic Conditioning & Performance Training™, Total Barre™ and Halo® Training. Backed by 25 years of experience and the latest findings in exercise science, MH&F's philosophy is to deliver safe, responsible and effective exercise for people of all ages and levels of fitness.

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