



Trainers set exercise regimens, provide motivation

By Debra Moore, Contributing writer
Thursday, November 20, 2008

The going rate for a personal trainer in the north state is between \$40 and \$80 per hour - is it worth the expense?

It is if you find the right trainer, asserts Jenn Jacoby Sheldon, a personal trainer who holds degrees in exercise science and psychology from the University of California at Davis, as well as certifications from accredited organizations, including the National Strength and Conditioning Association and the American College of Sports Medicine.

A good personal trainer can help a client meet his or her health goals by setting an appropriate exercise regimen, providing feedback as the workouts progress and keeping the client motivated to work out. But how do you find a good personal trainer?

"Certification is critical," Jacoby Sheldon said. She compares hiring a certified trainer to hiring a licensed contractor.

A certified personal trainer has studied physiology, kinesiology and biomechanics similar to the undergraduate work required by doctors, physical therapists and other health professionals. She said that knowledge is crucial when working with clients.

Those who are certified are required to update that status every two years so they remain current with the latest health information.

In addition to certification, she said it's important for personal trainers to be insured.

To find certified personal trainers in the area, Jacoby Sheldon suggests calling or visiting the Web site of an accredited organization.

The next step is to set up a consultation with a certified personal trainer.

"Any trainer should offer a free consultation," Jacoby Sheldon said. "It's a time to talk about the client's needs and concerns and to see if there's a personality match."

Jacoby Sheldon said that it's important to know a client's goals. For example, if a client is only interested in "being a size 4," she's not sure it's a good match.

"I'm not big on the cosmetic thing," Jacoby Sheldon said. "I call myself a performance trainer. I want people to have a healthier performance in life. Cosmetic changes will come with that."

Jacoby Sheldon practices what she calls functional training and defines it as "anything that enhances the function of the body in life."

During a client's first session, Jacoby Sheldon makes a baseline assessment - taking their weight and conducting a body fat analysis. Sometimes this also involves a cardiovascular performance test.

If she is working with someone who has specific health issues, she also consults with his or her doctor.

Her clients range in age from 13 to 72, about 70 percent are women and their workouts combine cardio, weight and balance training.

She trains clients indoors and outdoors and strives to vary the workouts. She spends 10 to 12 hours each week assessing her clients' progress and planning their workouts.

When asked if she addresses their diets as well, Jacoby Sheldon said, "Not initially, unless they're in extreme health risk because of their weight."

She said it's important not to overwhelm the client.

"They're already doing something very important for their bodies. Once they achieve some success, if they want to transition into other goals, I will work with them," she said.

Jacoby Sheldon is working on a master's degree in counseling psychology because she sees that as the necessary next step.

"I want to address the whole body," she said. "I feel passionate about taking it to the next level."

To contact Jacoby Sheldon or for more information, go to her Web site at www.jennsathleticadvantage.com.

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