

# Getting out there and on the run

By **Charlie Kanzig**  
Correspondent

How does someone get started as a runner if they have never taken part in this magical activity?

If you are overweight or have simply not been very active for a long stretch of time, it is advised that you have a medical check-up before beginning a vigorous exercise program.

To get started, go to a running store like FootZone in Bend and tell them you are just getting started as a runner. They will help you find a pair of quality shoes to begin your venture into running. Additionally, they sponsor training groups throughout the year.

Once you have the shoes, walking is a good way to start for the first week or two. Find ways to make it a little challenging either by pace, duration, or finding some hills. Weave in some short spurts of running/jogging to your walks and, over time, increase the running amounts. You may be surprised how quickly your body begins to adapt to this new physical movement, but be patient about your progress. This will help you avoid injury.

The track at the high school is a good place to do some of the beginning running since it is level and somewhat cushioned as opposed to pavement. Of course, there are plenty of trails and dirt roads to explore in our area as well.

There is a plethora of information on the subject of how to get started with running. A recommended article from *Runner's World* can be found at <https://www.runnersworld.com/training/a20845020/how-to-get-started-as-a-runner>.



## Fit For Sisters

**Andrew Loscutoff**  
Columnist

### What does it take to be a fitness professional?

While the career ladder in many professions is pretty structured and rigid, a health and fitness professional can choose their own journey. It can be a gig, job, or career with a good amount of variability and a wide spectrum of styles.

A fitness professional can work in a variety of different environments: As a trainer at a gym, as a specialist in rehab centers, as a consultant for businesses — or as a writer.

Acquiring the skills required can be done in a number of ways. A college education is the gold standard for a starting point. Studying kinesiology, biomechanics, physiology, and even psychology are all part of what many college programs require. Depending on the school, pedagogy,

motor development, and coaching will also be on the list of requisite courses.

If fitness is more of a passion than an area of study, they too can become a very good fitness professional. Many of the trainers who work in gyms, or that are seen on TV, have no formal college training. They got into the career because they love it, or they related to others and wanted to spread the joys of exercise. They are different from the studious technician, but these people often are good at motivating and developing camaraderie and enthusiasm. They'll need to take a course and pass an accredited test to be licensed as a personal trainer.

Once someone gains the knowledge, it is important to realize that they will struggle to gain traction in their first months, and the building process takes a long time. Gym-goers are skeptical and often judge someone's ability to work with them based on their appearance. A young man, with rippling muscles, wearing a too-tight shirt will not get a chance with a timid first-timer who has some extra pounds to lose. This kind of perception problem is just one of the obstacles a new professional will face.

A fitness professional must be a master of organization and diligence. Often, the bulk of business is done while other people are not at work. The 6 to 10 a.m. and 3 to 6 p.m. hotspots make the work challenging for those

not committed. Those who stay motivated and cultivate a large clientele will establish a lifestyle around these unorthodox working hours.

The best way to overcome the challenges of the initial months is to work on people skills, approach gym-goers with inquisitive questions about their workout goals, and offer a tip to them. Teach a workshop on an area of knowledge and passion. Be helpful to others and let them know that this trainer is approachable and helpful to them.

Next, consider continuing education. Like any craftsman, a fitness professional isn't showing up and doing a job. Their whole world is about learning more about the body, people, and how to continue to help others. There are so many opportunities: Read, practice, and apply fervently. In a career where there is so much turnover (because many cannot make it past the first struggles) the professional who isn't constantly learning and adopting new ideas will quickly be left behind.

On the path to making it in the fitness professional career it is wise to adopt a specific area one is passionate about and promote this as a specialty. A generalist will often be overshadowed and overlooked. People have specific problems that they need specific answers for. Is this trainer an expert in weight-loss? Will they help kids learn that weight training can improve their

abilities in sports, play, and life? Perhaps someone who was injured and still struggles with loss of function can count on a trainer to help them?

It is vital in an age where anyone can research the web and proclaim themselves knowledgeable to know where your position stands in the continuum of care. Nutrition prescription is the job of a dietician; a trainer can give a meal plan or advice, but they should not tell a client that they ought to be eating more oranges to cure their scurvy, or that they saw on Dr. Oz that this pill will help stoke their metabolism.

While it is fairly obvious to diagnose a muscle strain, always refer bigger, more painful problems to a qualified professional. Referring to a client's doctor not only shows the client that the fitness professional is part of their personal healthcare team but it will also show the doctor that the fitness professional is looking out for their patients.

Working in the fitness profession is a wonderful way to bring purpose and joy into a career. Days spent helping people in a variety of different ways physically and mentally are very rewarding. While "fitness professional" isn't on anyone's top career aspirations when money is the motive, it isn't all about BMWs and the square footage of living space. It's about passion and the reward of helping others.

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