

# RAISING

INSPIRATION FOR EXTRAORDINARY FITNESS CAREERS

ISSUE 4

# THE BAR

**THE  
EQUATION  
FOR CHANGE**

**HOW  
TO EASE  
MEMBER  
ANXIETY**

THOMAS PLUMMER'S

**TIPS FOR  
REOPENING**

**THE BODY  
ACCORDING TO  
SOMA**

## WELCOME FROM DENNIS HOSKING



If you're scratching your head and wondering what the heck is going on right now, please rest assured – you're not alone! On the back of the bushfires (remember way back then?), this out-of-nowhere pandemic has pretty much decimated all our plans for 2020. BUT with every challenge comes opportunity and choice. In life, we have the power to choose how to approach what's happening to us and around us. With every adversity comes the chance to do something different; to create brilliance. Epictetus once said "it's not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters" and he was right. Because with the right perspective and attitude, you might actually be able to use this point in time for the rare opportunity it is – to take a breath and reassess how your business can be better by being different to how it was before – possibly even in brand new ways. Of course this is a bloody tough time; but there may be a silver lining or two to be found in there... somewhere. Just keep looking!

### DENNIS HOSKING

Founder & Managing Director  
FITREC & HealthyPeople

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## FITREC™

Phone: 03 9021 0836

Email: [hello@fitrec.org](mailto:hello@fitrec.org)

Web: [fitrec.org](http://fitrec.org)



## HealthyPeople

Phone: 03 9021 0836

Email: [hello@healthypeople.com.au](mailto:hello@healthypeople.com.au)

Web: [healthypeople.com.au](http://healthypeople.com.au)



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# THE EQUATION FOR CHANGE

## THE KEY TO EFFECTIVE CHANGE MANAGEMENT



**H**aving successfully set up multiple businesses across multiple countries, *Dave Wright* knows change and how to effectively manage it. Recently he delivered a presentation where he shared The Equation For Change, which is an adapted version of Tim Knoster's change management model.

As we all approach the long-awaited moment where the industry can commence operating again, we thought it a timely opportunity to share Dave's model, to help you ensure you have the resources required to avoid creating confusion, anxiety, resistance, frustration and false starts. ♦



### About Dave Wright

Dave Wright is the Creator and CEO of MYZONE® - a Physical Activity Heart Rate Monitor and system used to monitor, motivate, evidence and increase exercise adherence. He's also the CEO and owner of Creative Fitness Marketing (CFM), a global company with offices in the UK, Australia and North America that has served the international fitness community since 1990 – specifically helping people be more and stay more physically active. A health club operator with multiple health clubs across two continents. He can be contacted via [dave@myzone.org](mailto:dave@myzone.org)

## THE EQUATION FOR CHANGE

VISION	+	SKILLS	+	INCENTIVES	+	RESOURCES	+	ACTION PLAN	=	CHANGE
	+	SKILLS	+	INCENTIVES	+	RESOURCES	+	ACTION PLAN	=	CONFUSION
VISION	+		+	INCENTIVES	+	RESOURCES	+	ACTION PLAN	=	ANXIETY
VISION	+	SKILLS	+		+	RESOURCES	+	ACTION PLAN	=	RESISTANCE
VISION	+	SKILLS	+	INCENTIVES	+		+	ACTION PLAN	=	FRUSTRATION
VISION	+	SKILLS	+	INCENTIVES	+	RESOURCES	+		=	FALSE STARTS

*Adapted from Knoster, T.*



OPENING  
SOON

# WHAT'S NEXT AFTER THE TRAUMA ENDS?

**IT IS GOING TO BE ALL ABOUT TRUST.**

There is hope in this industry and there is always opportunity in chaos. Gyms moving beyond the shutdowns will be positioned to attack and those survivors will probably have the best September-May run in recent fitness industry history. *Thomas Plummer* explains.





# 30%

## of the gyms now closed will not reopen

First the bad news. If we were to stay closed until the end of June, we would lose at least 30% of the gyms currently operating here in the US. It costs at least 60% of your operating costs to sit dark and there will be a large number of operators unable to come up with the cash needed to keep going forward. There will be some bailout money for the chains, but the amount needed to save them will be staggering and slow to come. When they do reopen, or better said if they do reopen, most will come out of the relaunch slowly, requiring months of time to re-staff and regroup.

If we do stay closed for at least three months, we will also have a destroyed membership base to contend with and it will be as if we're starting over again from our first days, although now you're reopening with older physical plants and clients who will not necessarily be standing in line to get back in.

Most owners do not understand the non-usage damage that will be done. For example, if you have 60% of your clients who did not use your gym eight times or more per month prior to your closure, and their contracts are cancelled by your billing company, you should not expect these clients to automatically reappear when you reopen. They were not using the gym prior to closing and now have a pass out of their membership so it is doubtful they will return.

## Gym owners with single units or small groups will recover the fastest

Multiple gym owners will especially be hard hit. They will be using managers



## About Thomas Plummer

If you're looking for sugar-coated sweet talk, you've come to the wrong place. Thousands of fitness professionals turn to Thomas Plummer for advice and insights about fitness trends, creating outstanding member experiences and mastering business fundamentals in sales, marketing, staffing and programming. Nearly every fitness industry leader and innovator, past and present, has met with Thomas. But not one to be content with past successes, Thomas continues to attract and develop club operators through Australia, the United States, Eastern Europe, Latin America, the United Kingdom, Brazil and China. Find out more and connect with Thomas at [www.thomasplummer.com](http://www.thomasplummer.com)

to rebuild a business where trust is low and the competition is keen to keep you closed, although if we do lose 30%, there will be new clients drifting in the market again with no home.

Franchises will also stumble out of the reopening. It will be the rare franchise that can take a model based upon a supposed consistency and be strong enough to modify it to fit what is next in the industry. The old rule of what made you successful years ago is the very thing that could kill your business now especially applies to franchise groups who do not move fast enough to take advantage of the new market conditions.

## Two types of members will emerge

The membership will split into two distinct components: the under 36 aged consumer (the ones who stood on the beaches in Florida during the virus

rebelieving they are bullet-proof), and the over 35 aged consumers who wants a gym, but whose concept of what a gym has to be to get his business has changed.

Here is what these members will want in their new normal:

## Trust



It's not going to be about the best workout, the most equipment or the most classes, it will be about whether or not I trust my health to you and your team.

**One-on-one and small groups (meaning up to four) will be hot again**



The gym will have to feel individualised for these people. For example, I have been teaching a pod system for a number of years where we have gyms within gyms, meaning we set up 90m (300ft) spaces where up to four people can train together without having to be

***It's not going to be about the best workout, the most equipment or the most classes, it will be about whether or not I trust my health to you and your team.***

manipulated around a full gym. In other words, they do not need to share equipment with anyone, something which will be a strong selling point in the future. I come in, go to my designated space, and the equipment there has been cleaned and is ready to go. As a client I am no longer prepared to have to pick up a piece of equipment that someone has immediately used before me. Instead, I'll do my thing, using equipment that only I, or a small group, have touched.

**The team/boot camp approach is not dead, but it will be damaged**



You would have to be a fairly out of touch human to want to work out with 30 people in an 500 square metre gym, sweating for an hour and sharing equipment. Yes, there will be those who don't care, but there will also be an entire generation of clients that doubt this is what they want from their gym today. The team players will have to find a way to create space amongst the clients, individualise tools and keep the equipment clean between sessions. For example, you may need to invest in three months' worth of non-latex gloves to give to every client for every workout. This can work by having clients grab a pair of gloves from any of the several stations around the gym before doing their workout. This enables them to know they'll never have to directly touch a piece of equipment. They can then peel off the gloves at dedicated disposal stations that offer safe waste bins and additional hand sanitiser. This system can work well in the smaller gyms too, where sharing equipment is a must, as it provides an additional layer of safety and trust for your members.

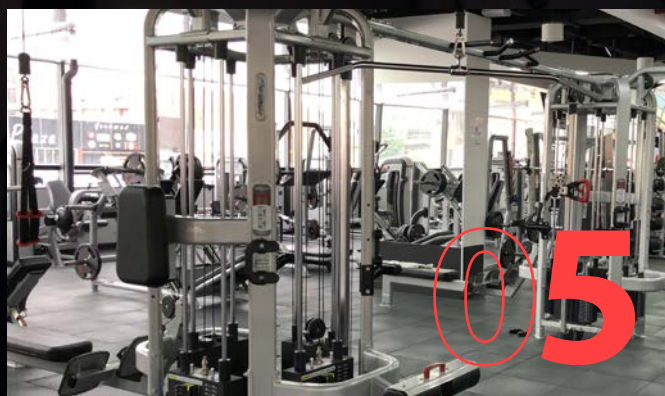


## The old cluttered gym from the 1980s that's packed full of equipment in every corner is dead



Clean, sparse, sterile, almost antiseptic will sell the client. I walked into a restaurant I frequently visit, to pick up takeaway, and while I was standing there I noticed how cluttered their front counter/workspace was, with everything from takeout menus to gifts the clients have left, to a bowl of candy for the patrons to take from as they leave... and it was disgusting. I stood wondering how you could ever clean that space with all that accumulated junk from all the years they had been opened, until I realised you could never clean that space adequately. This problem is what most gyms suffer from – too much accumulated stuff. And we stop seeing it, but your clients will hate this clutter because they'll associate it with a space that can never be properly cleaned, sanitised or kept safe due to the layers of accumulation.

## Too much equipment is too much



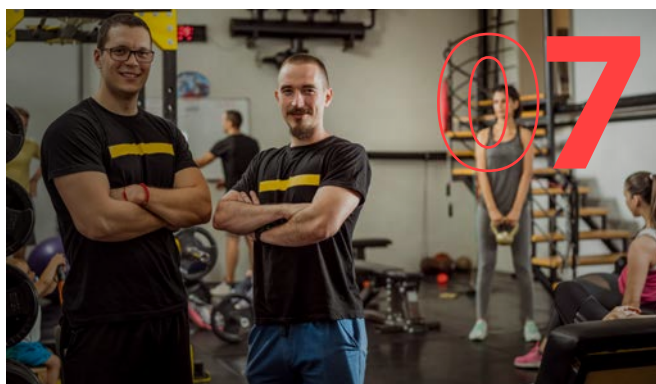
Your clients will need spacing to feel safe. If you look at a typical chain, where treadmills touch each other, can you imagine any client is going to want to stand less than 1.5m away from the next sweating human breathing hard in his space? You'll need to start accommodating a 2.5m rule. Take a tape measure and place the end in the centre of a seat if you have fixed equipment, then measure 2.5m out in a circle. The nearest seat centre needs to be at least that far away for your clients to feel comfortable.

## Even your front door is an issue



I walk up to enter and stand staring at a door handle that's been touched by a hundred other people that day. I walk in and there should be a hand sanitiser unit on a pole right inside the door, and one by each pod or workout area, as well as one in the bathroom, along with the soap. People will be wary, and you need to anticipate all contact areas where a client may cringe.

## Owner operators, not investors, will win



The next years in the gym business will belong to the training gym that can individualise the workout process. I'll go to your gym to get my workout in an exceptionally clean environment, because I can control my contact with the other members. If I feel good about group exercise or boxing I can do it, but if I am uncomfortable then I have options too – this may be something the chains and franchises may need to work harder to adapt to.

The economy is also a fear, but there is hope there too. This recession is self-induced, meaning the government put the brakes on the growth as it has been for the last 12 years. This is not the same situation as the Great Recession in the earlier part of this century that was market-induced.

Gym operators will come out the other side of this with less competition, a different consumer, and a model that fits with what people want, going forward. The economy will stagger a little, but we should be raging in the fitness industry this winter, with the January to May window potentially being a time of records for us.



OPENING  
SOON

### Think of your reopening in three phases

- ▶ What are you going to do now to get ready, before given permission to open?
- ▶ You will probably have about two weeks to a month's notice when you can open again so what is your plan during those two weeks?
- ▶ What will the first three months look like once you are open?

The consumer will be different and expect your gym to change to meet their new needs.

- ▶ You will have to offer a controlled environment where the consumer is part of the socialisation but can be more isolated during their workouts.
- ▶ One-on-one will rise again, but most gyms no longer have the ability to offer this service. These clients will not want to share equipment or be dragged through a gym waiting to share equipment.
- ▶ Group exercise may suffer in many markets. You will have to learn to offer alternatives that isolate the client or divide them into smaller groups. Yes, those in the 24 to 36-year age group that believe they will live forever will not be affected much, but many of the traditional group clients will want different options.
- ▶ Small group training, limited to four and done in pods, or smaller individual gyms within a gym, will be a strong offering for most gyms.

- ▶ Your gym should be redesigned during the down period, adding more isolated training spaces. Think minimalistic when it comes to gym design when you reopen. Stark counters, nothing on the walls in the offices, no exposed storage, sanitising stations throughout the gym, and clutter-free spaces are a must. How does the client even get into the front door without touching the handle? Think it through. You cannot open the same gym you had when you shutdown.
- ▶ Programming will be secondary to the trust factor. If the client believes you are clean, he or she will come back. If you had cleanliness issues prior to closing, you will hurt reopening. Paint the entire gym, get rid of anything that can be tossed, replace worn equipment if you can, and let the clients see a modern, lean and clean gym when they step back through your doors.

At the time of writing this, the Australian industry looks like it may start to reopen in three to four weeks' time. This period is your marketing phase. You need to reopen with a fully launched marketing plan that will reach out to all clients during this last few weeks, and a plan to reach out to all old clients who may now be without a gym.

This is the time to do everything that's needed for the second phase. Snail mail letters should be ready to go to current members, former members going back

***Gym owners expecting their entire membership to walk back in will be disappointed. If you did not do the work while you were closed, there is not much you can do once you have opened.***



to 2018, and missed memberships going back to the start of 2019. People will be shopping for a new gym and you need to be top of mind.

If you are cleaning and remodelling in this last week then you are too late. This should be about last minute staff training, marketing and getting stocked again to open.

The first 90 days will be about the basics. This is where you will also see the second wave of club failures. Gym owners expecting their entire membership to walk back in will be disappointed. If you did not do the work while you were closed, there is not much you can do once you have opened. You are basically starting all over again minus your non-usage clients. Your rent will reappear, payroll starts again, and you will need a fresh 3 months of operating capital to get back on your feet.

Many of those who stumbled during the closure probably now know the need for

reserve capital, membership contracts and why team training alone will not be as effective going forward. When you reopen, go back to the basics of the business.

Online training saved us while we were closed, but it will not save you while you are open. Most of you found online training takes as much, if not more, work than being closed. The client needs and want socialisation, which is why they still connected with you and why online parties and training works. The client is not with you for the training, but for the contact and guidance, preferably done in person in your gym.

The gym as a social centre in the community will never be more important than it will be in the next year or so. Clients want more than a session and to go home. They want to belong to a community, something most owners only discovered once they were shut down.

Getting together with healthy people in a safe environment is what will sell to the client. Socialisation in a controlled, immaculately cleaned environment three or four times a week is what we are really selling the client, not results – and certainly not programming.

Do not just sit and wait for this to pass through. This is your chance to reset now and open stronger than when you closed; but you, and your gym, have to be different to capitalise on the client who will be standing at your door when it finally reopens. ♦

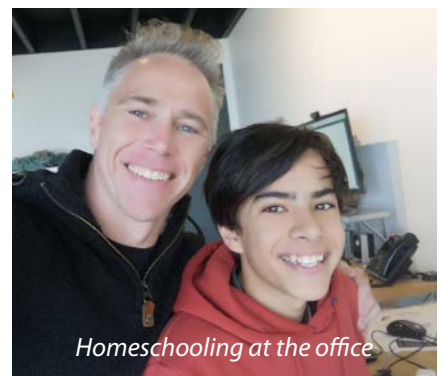


THE TRIBE VIBE

Got a photo from a FITREC event? Share it with us via [editor@fitrec.org](mailto:editor@fitrec.org)



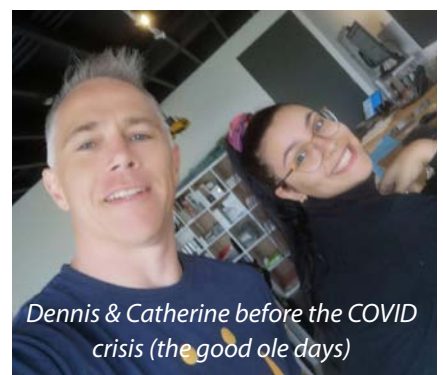
Catherine Santoro



Homeschooling at the office



Dennis & Catherine  
mastering virtual meetings



Dennis & Catherine before the COVID  
crisis (the good ole days)

# 5 TIPS TO REDUCE MEMBER ANXIETY

With clubs looking set to start reopening around the country in less than a month (hooray!), now is the time to start implementing the things your members will need to feel safe and less anxious around returning. Workplace wellness and dispute resolution expert, **Edwina Griffin**, shares these tips to help you minimise anxiety among your returning members.



## TIP 1. Communicate with your members prior to opening

This is a really important step because it forewarns your members that things will look, feel and be different when they come back – which many of them will be expecting and hoping for. By eliminating the element of surprise, your members can adjust their expectations before they step through your doors. Items to address in your pre-opening communications should include:

- ▶ Your planned approach to sanitisation and hygiene
- ▶ New layout to comply with the restrictions
- ▶ Expansion of product offering including digital products
- ▶ Your revised codes of conduct for within the gym/facility based on government guidelines – and remember to share those guidelines
- ▶ Requests for members' signatures to confirm their agreement to follow the new codes of conduct while attending the gym/facility. This collaborative approach should help to reduce the likelihood of non-compliance amongst members which will also reduce the chance of conflict between members and staff over cleaning procedures.
- ▶ Any changes to your timetable and the reasons behind the changes.
- ▶ Depending on the demographic of the gym, you can also conduct surveys with your members to encourage their input into timetable changes. Additionally, you can conduct surveys to identify specific concerns members may have about returning to the gym and the level of anxiety around those concerns.





These important pre-opening communications can be delivered in various ways such as email, social media, telephone calls and printed materials in the gym/facility.



### **TIP 2. Continue with regular communications to your members**

Your regular comms should continue in all forms – online and offline, and should typically include updates to any health department and government recommendations, and how your club/facility will be implementing them.



### **TIP 3. Listen to your staff**

Have open and honest conversations with all your staff members, to ensure they feel safe and happy to be working back at your facility. Listen to any concerns and aim to address those concerns first, as any anxieties your staff have are likely to be felt by members too. It's critical that all staff feel confident and safe to ensure consistency and congruency in the delivery of in-club experiences so that your members also feel equally safe.

Your strategic vision is likely to have changed as a result of this situation. As such, you need to ensure all levels of management have absolute clarity on the strategic vision for the business. Harvard research has found that including middle management in the strategic vision is an important step to ensure greater success in change management and many change management projects fall down when this step is missed.



### **TIP 4. Train all staff prior to opening**

Once middle management are on board with the new strategic vision, then there is the potential to encourage new career development for existing staff with training and mentoring programs under the new business model.

Training on the new business direction, business operations and communications to members to ensure a positive, congruent member experience. Role playing with all staff around the questions that members will ask, is a great idea. This will ensure that the answers are well-rehearsed and consistent throughout the team.

Businesses need to ensure staff are trained on hygiene and PPE procedures as required by the government such as the



## **Edwina Griffin**

Edwina has 25+ years' experience working with clients in the areas of health and high performance. Her company AtOne specialises in technology and training to improve mental health, reduce stress and improve performance for staff and athletes. Edwina is a keynote speaker and trainer on resilience, emotional intelligence and dispute resolution. The AtOne App connects staff and team mates using the latest technology to create happier, higher performing teams and individuals. Visit [edwinagriffin.com](http://edwinagriffin.com) to learn more.

**Safework Australia** website or the online training offered by individual state health departments. With Worker's Compensation claims now allowing for COVID-19, it would be a good idea to have staff sign a contract to confirm their commitment to responsibly follow the new agreed protocols.



### **TIP 5. Make your commitment to cleaning visible**

To ease anxiety among members, make sure you have all cleaning products and equipment visible throughout the club, with the cleaning schedule printed out and visible for all to see.

As Thomas Plummer mentioned in his article in this issue, trust will be a key factor for successfully attracting and retaining your members once lockdown restrictions ease. By following these tips you'll be well placed to ease some of the anxieties in your members (and staff), which will reaffirm their trust in your brand as one that will keep them safe. ♦





# FREQUENTLY ASKED *Legal* QUESTIONS







## Mel Tempest

Mel is an innovative thought leader who turns conceptual ideas into tangible results. She's been doing this instinctively since she was a kid, and now Mel has carved out an award-winning career of applying her superpower to help businesses, organisations and individuals acquire unforeseen levels of success. Find out more at [meltempest.net](https://meltempest.net)

**Mel Tempest recently interviewed Chelsea Davine (Associate) and Michael Castricum (Associate) from Velocity Legal, to cover off some of the most frequently asked legal questions during this uniquely challenging time. Here's what we learned.**

Q

### Do clubs need to have their returning members sign a new membership agreement?

If it is 'business as usual' when a club re-opens, and you are still providing the exact same services as you were before the shutdown, then new membership agreements are unlikely to be required. However, the situation becomes more complex from a legal perspective if there have been any changes to the nature of the services provided after the shutdown (e.g. time limits on access to the gym, members only being able to do outdoor training or members now having access to outdoor training when they previously did not). With this in mind, we recommend that fitness business owners carefully analyse any changes to the nature of services provided

and implement a new membership agreement if there is any doubt.

In addition to the above, it would be prudent for club owners to update their membership agreements to expressly acknowledge some of the measures their health club is taking in light of COVID-19, and requiring the members to cooperate with those efforts. As a couple of examples, these terms may require members not to attend the premises with cold symptoms and sanitise equipment after use.

It is also worth keeping in mind that terms in a membership agreement that allow club owners to unilaterally change the terms of their membership agreements may be 'unfair contract terms' under the Australian Consumer Law. These laws offer a baseline level of legal protection for members entering into standard form contracts (e.g. a template membership agreement) by allowing a Court to deem certain 'unfair' terms void (i.e. not enforceable). The practical upshot of these laws here is that club owners should be careful not to rely upon unfair contract terms in order to amend membership agreements, especially if those inclusions would be 'unfair' terms. If in doubt, an easy way to avoid unilaterally amending the contract is to prepare a new agreement for the members to sign incorporating the new terms.

Q

### Are there any other specific legalities that club owners should be considering or taking care of, as they prepare to reopen?

As a preliminary comment, if there is anything that a club owner is not entirely comfortable with from a legal perspective – now is the time to sort it out.

In terms of a more COVID-19 specific comment, health and safety measures are likely to be in the spotlight in the coming months. One of the risks for club owners

in this space is the 'tort of negligence', where inadequate measures to protect the health and safety of members can result in a legal claim. The most obvious example that comes to mind is someone catching COVID-19 while attending the gym and becoming seriously ill or dying as a result.

To minimise their legal risk, club owners should ensure that they are up-to-date and abiding by the most recent government announcements regarding COVID-19 and that appropriate hygiene and cleaning practices are in place in their clubs.

Given that there are a nearly infinite number of legal issues that could arise for fitness businesses, and that those issues are highly dependent on the unique situation, it is always the safest option to get legal advice on any specific concerns that club owners may have about reopening.

Q

### Are clubs legally allowed to reinstate billing at the same fee rate as prior to closing, once the doors open?

This will generally depend upon the terms of the individual membership agreements and any other representations club owners have made to members about



their use of the gym. For example, if a gym owner has promised unrestricted access to the club (such as 24 hour access), and a member cannot get access to the gym due to restrictions on the amount of people allowed in the gym at any one time, it is unlikely that club owners will be able to charge members the full fee as they are not fully providing the service. The same could be said if no classes are available when these are usually provided.

Club owners also need to balance the broader commercial realities of reinstating billing practices against the potential to lose those members that are uncomfortable with going back to gyms immediately, or who are unsatisfied with the modified services offered by the club.



### **Can clubs use COVID-19 as an excuse to increase prices?**

The starting point from a legal perspective is once again the contract between the member and the business. The devil is in the detail, and different businesses will have different options depending on what they have included in their terms and conditions. So, the answer to this question would not be entirely clear cut and would largely depend upon the circumstances.

As a general rule, businesses in the fitness industry are allowed to set their own prices. The most relevant legislation which restricts this ability is the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) which covers (amongst other things) anti-competitive conduct (e.g.

price fixing) and unconscionable conduct. The latter point is likely to be the most relevant to raising prices in the fitness industry due to COVID-19.

To meet the 'unconscionable' standard, the conduct must be against good conscience as determined by societal norms. This has generally required deliberate dishonesty which affects a particularly vulnerable or disadvantaged customer. The upshot here is that if the price charged could conceivably go against the good conscience according to societal norms, the price increase may be an issue. For context, an example of such unconscionable conduct could be blatant price gouging behaviour in relation to face masks or hand sanitiser.

From a more practical perspective, we anticipate that most gyms will run a pre-opening marketing campaign, which will put significant pressure on fitness businesses given that all of these campaigns may be running concurrently. We suspect that this will result in intense price competition and therefore it might be more challenging than ever to raise prices immediately after gyms are allowed to reopen, unless the offering provided by the relevant club has expanded.

To read more frequently asked legal questions relating to COVID-19 and the fitness industry visit the Insights page at [www.velocitylegal.com.au](http://www.velocitylegal.com.au)

**Please note:** This is not advice. You should not act solely on the basis of the material contained in this article as it is of a general nature. Formal advice should be sought before acting in any of the areas covered in this article.

***To minimise their legal risk, club owners should ensure that they are up-to-date and abiding by the most recent government announcements regarding COVID-19.***



## WHY CHOOSE FITREC FOR FITNESS REGISTRATION?



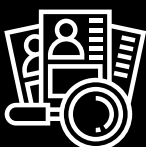
### Put an end to CEC/PDP accumulation

Ongoing development is essential, but let's not focus on points. At FITREC we've scrapped the points system and instead we focus on transparency by displaying your complete learning history. No more scrambling into an educational opportunity merely to gain points.



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### We guarantee accurate information and unbiased support.

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At FITREC you're not "just another trainer". We recognise that fitness professionals differ by qualification, specialisation, experience, further learning, client focus, and peer influence. FITREC is the only provider capable of adequately reflecting your unique background as a fitness professional.



*"I really appreciate their customer service and willingness to help and being part of the community they are building."*

**Greg Jacobs, VIC**

To join the FITREC family or to find out more visit **fitrec.org**

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

SEND US A MESSAGE



We caught up with two **FITREC FitPros** to explore the impact of the COVID-19 situation and how they've dealt with the situation.



*"I've started my PhD and work as an exercise scientist and strength coach at Brisbane's original powerlifting gym."*

**Q**

**How has COVID-19 impacted you?**

I'm not going to lie to you, COVID-19 seems surreal and the first day was very hard. I think I consumed my weight in Ben and Jerry's icecream to cope! That being said, I knew it was coming and I had a plan in place so I didn't drop off very many clients. I was able to use the Zoom platform, and this helped me strengthen my rapport with my clients – both those who are continuing to train with me through the crisis as well as the ones who took a break due to the tough times. I was also able to actually grow my business through international referrals. And once

## HANNAH ALTMAN

Queensland-based Hannah is a kayaker, swimmer and national record holder in powerlifting. She specialises in rehabilitation and has more than seven years' industry experience.

my international clients saw what could be done, I received further referrals from them for consults, also via Zoom. Effectively, I've been able to develop a whole new thriving area for my business. I also used this time to upgrade my skillset, so I'm currently in the process of finishing my qualification as a Nutrition Coach through Precision Nutrition. I also started running again, which helps me feel like a better role model for my clients, and I learned as much as I could about good social distancing practice management for my business. All in all, I was lucky not to be negatively impacted by the crisis. I saw the writing on the wall and prepared the business and my clients in advance, so that when the announcement was made we all went straight to Plan B.

**Q**

**What is your best tip for survival during this pandemic?**

Obviously coaching is a business, but we need to remember that we are dealing with real people who might be struggling. I am operating now how I have always operated. In the past, this approach has resulted in a falling out with some male trainers who saw me as a push-over. But, I let my clients make the decision that best suited them, and I empowered them to decide whether or not they wanted to continue to train or take a break. Clients appreciate when they are treated this way, and they reciprocate with referrals and

sometimes even increasing their training volume! I had clients who needed to take a break so I respected this but I continue to check in with them, and I know they will come back when they can. The key is to treat people how you want to be treated – that's my only survival tip. Yes, this is a business but it's a business where you are dealing with people and their emotions. In these difficult and scary times, you need to first and foremost have empathy.

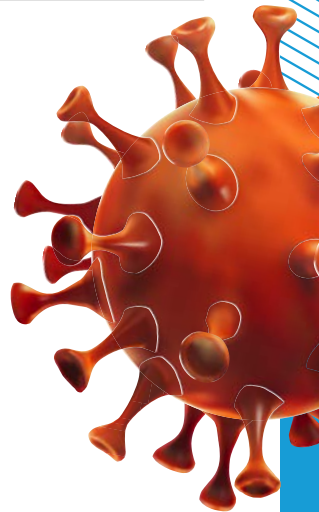
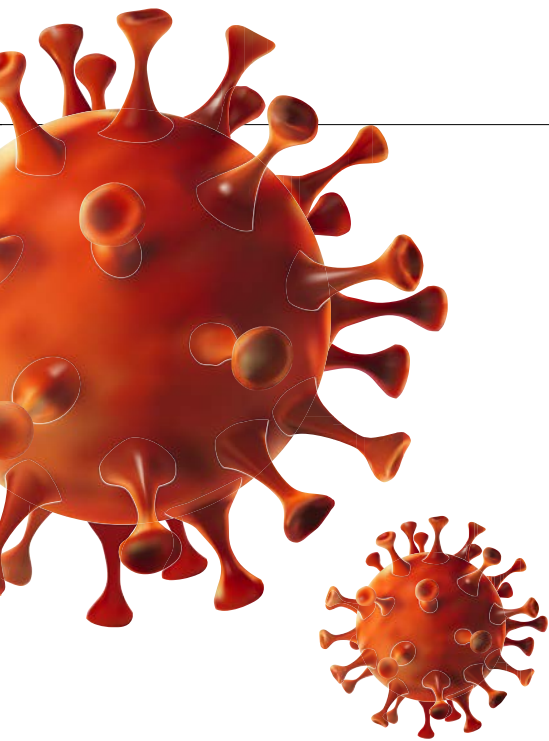
**Q**

**What lessons will you take into the future?**

To be honest I'd made a lot of changes over the past seven months since I started my business and moved it into Iron Underground. So for me, how I handled the impact of COVID-19 was a product of this journey. I added a greater personal focus on best practice and safety during the pandemic. This is what I'll carry into the future. My experience during the crisis has reinforced my belief that you need to be transparent, and provide clients with total control over their journey. As a professional, we need to ensure we're in business with like-minded professionals who put their clients first; and ensure you're at the right gym working with the right people, that is the lesson I'll take away from this experience. ♦

**MORE ABOUT HANNAH**





## GREG JACOBS

Victorian-based Greg Jacobs specialises in strength and injury prevention. He is a PT, strength and conditioning coach, Pilates instructor and the owner of Stable Base Personal Training where he uses different training methods to help people achieve the best possible outcomes.



*"I initially trained as a strength and conditioning coach in order to help my own athletic endeavours. After 20+ years of gaining knowledge and experience in the fields of Pilates, personal training and strength and conditioning, I opened my own studio."*

### MORE ABOUT GREG

**Q**

#### How has COVID-19 impacted you?

Shutting down your business is pretty hard to take and I was like a deer in headlights for a couple of days. But I'm now training people outdoors and via FaceTime. These are both new formats to me, so I have needed to adapt quickly. It's been a blow financially, but I am lucky to have a very loyal clientele and because none of us are rushing off to anything else, I've been able to get to know them better. I am working less hours, which has given me the chance to catch up on reading, and I'm actually learning to play the didgeridoo! I'm also putting together a professional development workshop for PTs and allied health professionals, which I've wanted to do for years.

**Q**

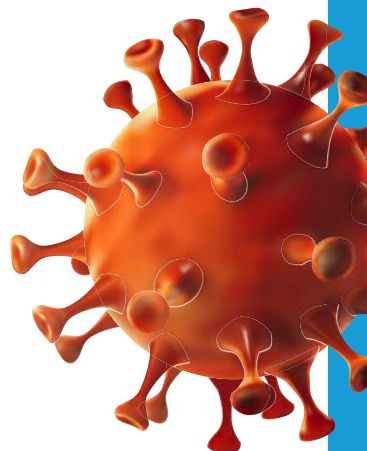
#### What is your best tip for survival during this pandemic?

Be careful about listening to people who think they know more than the experts. Revisit why you do what you do, then put your focus and energy into the things you CAN do.

**Q**

#### What lessons will you take into the future?

Being 'lean' has made it easier to move, so I will continue the process of consolidating things on a regular basis. I'll continue to do some outdoor sessions for people who want them. I'll dedicate time and resources to training trainers, and I won't restart the classes I wasn't enjoying and instead, I'll use that time for personal development. ♦



A detailed anatomical illustration of a male figure in a running pose, showing the musculature of the head, neck, torso, arms, and legs. The figure is rendered in shades of red and pink, with white lines indicating the underlying structure. The background is a bright yellow with a diagonal white line.

# THE BODY ACCORDING TO SOMA

**MOVE, FEEL AND LIVE BETTER**



Let's take a well-earned break from the COVID-19 topic, by distracting ourselves with the SOMA perspective of the body, which has been developed by leading sports conditioner, coach and movement expert, *Ian O'Dwyer*.

**S**OMA stands for Self (you), Osteo (bone) Myofascial (muscle and fascia) Applications (tools and techniques).

The SOMA perspective views the body in four primary Osteo-Myofascial Rings, which are all integrated. Each "ring" refers to a region of the body where large amounts of tissue all come together.

SOMA is a self-care, tissue-management process for the osteo-myofascial tissues of the body, using multiple applications to empower you to move, feel and live better.

There are primary tissues that have a huge impact and effect on outcomes and solutions for clients in wellness, longevity, and performance. In this article, I'll focus on the importance of understanding fascia and how it connects and covers the entirety of the body.

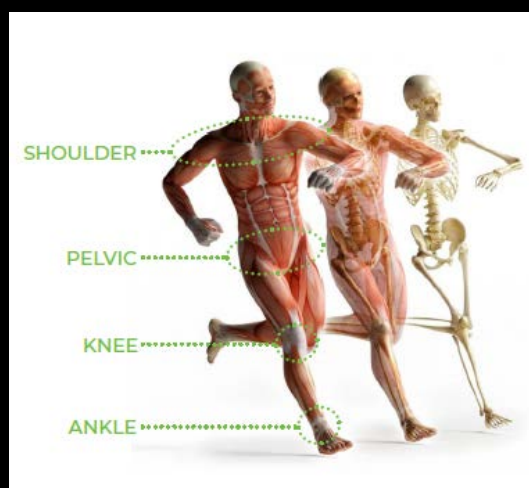
Fascia is nebulous, it comes in many forms and encases and entwines every cell in the human body including nerves, muscles, bones, viscera, heart, lungs, brain and much, much more.

Let's take a look at certain attributes of fascia that have been identified. I am going to stick with what has been observed by researchers (including Ida Rolph, Phillip Schleip, Tom Myers and many more), myself and other practitioners.

Fascia is unitary. That is, it is completely "toes to nose", birth to death. It connects every cell in the body (Shultz and Feitis, 1996). It transmits and accommodates force globally allowing the body to share the stress that is introduced through exercise, daily challenges or occupational hazards. Fascia will respond in many ways and is vital in every form of somatic training; most body sensing is fascial. It is incredibly sensitive with neural receptors.

We need to cultivate our fascial garden intelligently; feed it, hydrate it and move it well. The fascial system takes 6-24 months to make major changes or remodel, so perseverance is essential. Feeding the body with the necessary motion to replicate life's challenges is crucial. Understand that fascia requires a variation of force and movement to allow optimal adaptation (Huijing 2007; Kjaer et al., 2009).

## THE SOMA RINGS



The tissue in each ring consists of both soft and hard tissue whereby:

- ▶ The Shoulder Ring consists of all the tissue associated with the cervical and thoracic spine, shoulders, and ribs.
- ▶ The Pelvic Ring consists of all the tissue associated with the lumbar spine, sacrum, pelvis, and hips.
- ▶ The Knee Ring consists of all the tissues associated with the knee.
- ▶ The Ankle Ring all of the tissues associated with the foot and ankle.

***Fascia is nebulous. It comes in many forms and encases and entwines every cell in the human body including nerves, muscles, bones, viscera, heart, lungs, brain and much, much more.***



### THE ADAPTATION OF FASCIA

Understanding the adaption phases of fascia is important, as it determines how we need to condition it to be successful for the client's goals. Ignoring these phases could mean the difference between positive and negative outcomes.

#### 1 Viscosity

**FRACTIONS OF A SECOND.** In fast movements, different layers move at different speeds.

Just like catching a cricket ball, the hand goes from soft (to be able to move into position) to hard (adaptation to stop the ball) to soft (to be able to throw the ball). Fascia exhibits non-linear viscosity to distribute impact, this is where vector variation is vital (Myers, 2014).

#### 2 Elasticity

**ABOUT A SECOND.** Created by tensile (stiffness) training. Any longer will create plasticity.

Fascia can be trained by storing and releasing energy quickly (quick feet, there is a lot of rapid response through the fore-foot in this drill). This type of training can possibly take years to develop at an elite level. Many athletes who have been conditioned at top-level sports in a contrasctile state (muscular focus) and then been advised to introduce stiffness training have endured numerous injuries. This must be done in a controlled and measured manner (Myers, 2014).

#### 3 Plasticity

**MINUTES.** It doesn't return to its original position.

A great example of this is when you take a plastic shopping bag and gently push your finger into it without perforating it. The bag maintains the position that you have placed force into, much like doing a static stretch and hold to a particular region of fascial tissue in the body. This phase may be necessary in restorative poses or movement challenges to encourage postural changes required to eliminate dysfunction, discomfort or pain for the client (Myers, 2014).





## 4 Remodelling

**DAYS, WEEKS, MONTHS, YEARS.** When the fibroblasts devour the old fascia and lay down new fascia.

This is a fascinating process when viewed under a microscope, and goes a long way to explaining why some clients heal faster than others (Myers, 2014). Robert Schleip romantically identified two archetypes in the human being that are very different to each other; the 'Viking' and 'Temple dancer'. If you had observed me when I was in my sporting prime you would have thought that I was a "Viking". However, my fascial tissue, in fact, has the characteristics of a "Temple Dancer" - it's already more elastic so further stretching isn't what my body requires. I have fewer fibroblasts than the "Viking" (a stiffer type of fascial tissue that requires more plastic preparation) and due to this will heal slower, as it takes more time for my fibroblasts to devour the old and lay down the new fascia.

There are multiple challenges we can use to identify the tissue response in clients. Note, SOMA IS NOT a diagnosis but an awareness tool that enables the trainer/allied health professional/therapist/coach to quickly glean what type of conditioning or exercise the client may benefit from the most.

Here are four of the challenges that we use to help understand a client's tissue type:

1. Can you touch the ground with both hands flat? (while standing with straight knees).
2. Do your elbows hyperextend?
3. Can you touch your thumb to your wrist?
4. Can you extend the pinky finger back to 90 degrees or more?

A number of clients may fall into the hybrid category, which means they have a little of both. With this in mind, implementing an exercise or creating a program that blends stiffness (more fascial-based) and contractile (more muscular-based) training, will be most successful.

The majority of exercises designed and implemented for clients in the wellness, fitness and sporting environments are contractile focused due to prior education and an isolated approach. These are not wrong or right but certainly not complete and an inclusiveness of both is necessary for longevity and optimal performance. ♦

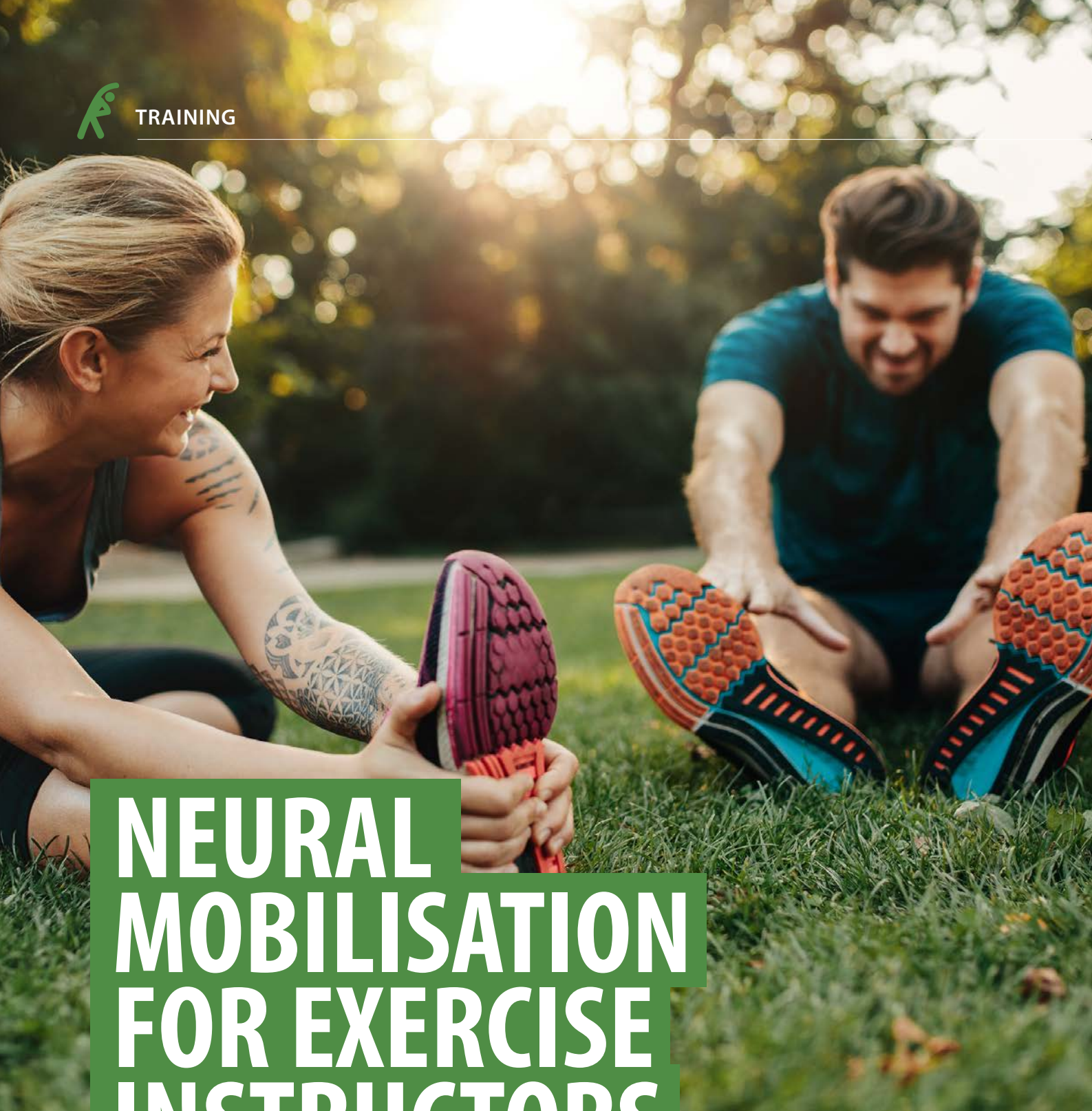


## Ian O'Dwyer

Ian O'Dwyer has 25+ years' experience in the health and fitness industries as a sports conditioner and coach, personal trainer, body worker, international educator, presenter and mentor. Ian owns and runs OD On Movement Performance Studio, consulted and educated for PT on the Net, co-founded PTA Global, and is now co-founder of SOMA. To learn more visit [feelsoma.com](http://feelsoma.com)

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# NEURAL MOBILISATION FOR EXERCISE INSTRUCTORS



## IMPROVING CLIENT MOBILITY

Neural mobilisation techniques are effective, can be safely and easily performed and are an excellent tool to assist in client mobility.

**Mark Davis** explains.





## MARK DAVIS

Mark Davis is a physiotherapist with an extensive background in gym-based rehabilitation and over 30 years' experience in the fitness industry. A former master coach with the Australian Institute of Fitness, Mark has been involved with the preparation of thousands of fitness professionals. Mark is also the co-founder of mSwing, which was developed to make fun and effective movement experience accessible to as many different people as possible. To learn more visit [mariettamehanni.com/education](http://mariettamehanni.com/education)



**E**xercise instructors routinely perform targeted stretching and mobility work with their clients, and a good program can improve mobility in muscles, joints and connective tissue. Many types of mobility techniques are available to instructors, with static stretching and dynamic stretching being the most common. The type of stretching used in a class or PT situation is determined by the style of class, the nature of the participants and the skill and judgment of the instructor. Here's how neural mobilisation techniques can enhance client mobility.

### NEURAL MOBILISATION

Neural mobilisation techniques have been used for many years by physiotherapists and other allied health professionals to assist in restoring normal mechanics and optimising function in their clients. Neural mobilisation:

- ▶ Improves the tensile environment of a nerve to provide less restricted movement.
- ▶ Increases the available range of motion by allowing the neural tissue to accommodate to the range intended prior to overload taking place.
- ▶ Is similar to dynamic stretching in that it involves movement.

### THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

The nervous system is a mobile beast. The nervous system continually moves relative to tendons, muscles, bones, inter-vertebral discs, viscera, fascia and blood vessels. For the nervous system to be able to accommodate movement it needs to be able to deal with:

- ▶ tension
- ▶ slide
- ▶ compression

### TENSION

Due to nerve being attached along its course, neural tissue is subject to tension. The perineurium is dense fascial tissue that helps the nerve to withstand tension. A nerve can withstand 18 to 22% strain before it fails.

There is a degree of movement available at either end of a nerve and also along its course. If tension is created in one spot the nerve slides toward this area to provide slack and equalise tension. Up to the point that the slack is taken up the nerve remains under low tension.

Movement of a single joint does not evoke much tension. Large increases in tension occur however, when several joints move causing the slack to get taken up over the entire course of the nerve. Movements that increase the distance between two end points of the nervous system will increase neural tension.

- ▶ Phases of a neural tensile event that occur during movement
- ▶ Taking up the slack
- ▶ Rapid sliding
- ▶ Full capacity with large increases in tension

### NEURAL ISCHEMIA

Lack of blood flow is called "ischemia". Neural ischemia has been shown to cause inflammation within nervous tissue. This

***Fitness professionals have good scope to be able to implement neural mobilisation techniques.***



can lead to neural symptoms even in normal subjects in as little as ten seconds. If the nerve were not capable of sliding, neural ischemia would happen often.

### VISCO-ELASTICITY

The nervous system is visco-elastic. Nervous tissue initially behaves in an elastic manner when strong tension is placed on it. In other words when the tension is decreased the nerve goes back to normal. As the duration of held tension increases though, the nervous tissue deforms and becomes more fluid-like and intra-neural ischemia increases.

### EFFECT OF SPINAL POSITION ON NEURAL TENSION

#### Spinal movement effect on lower limb tension

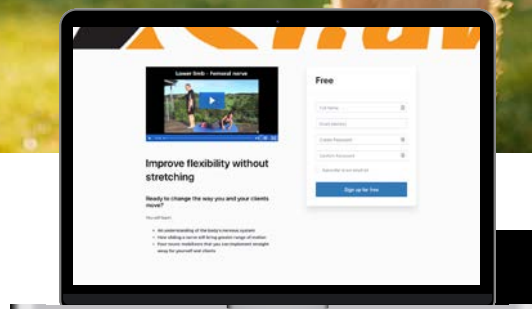
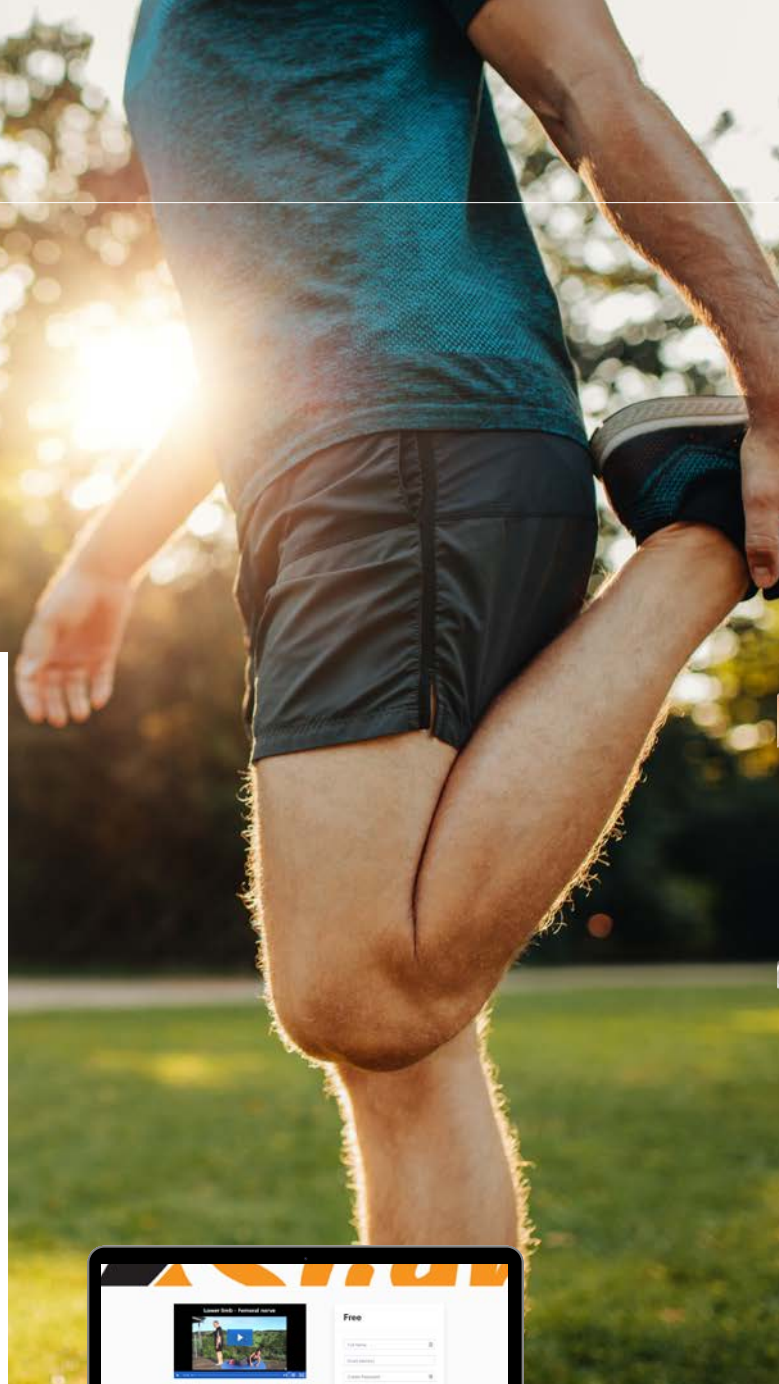
- ▶ Spinal flexion *increases* neural tension
- ▶ Spinal extension *decreases* neural tension
- ▶ Spinal movement effect on upper limb tension
- ▶ Scapula depression *increases* neural tension
- ▶ Scapula elevation *decreases* neural tension
- ▶ Cervical side flexion – increases neural tension contra-laterally and decreases neural tension ipsi-laterally

#### Recommendations for fitness professionals

Fitness professionals have good scope to be able to implement neural mobilisation techniques. The use of mid-range neural mobilisation techniques can effectively prepare an area for movement and also restore range of motion once a workout has finished.

- ▶ The safe range to work within is the neural sliding zone
- ▶ Exercise Instructors should perform techniques as movement.
- ▶ Mobilisation speed should be slow (i.e., four to five seconds from start to finish).

Sustained, end-of-range neural tension positions are considered unsafe as they can compromise client safety whether neural symptoms are present or not. These positions should be avoided by exercise instructors. ♦



## LEARN MORE

To learn more, Mark and his mSwing co-creator Marietta Mehanni, have a special FREE online course to help you learn how to improve flexibility without stretching. Visit [www.mariettamehannieducation.com/offers/FJfFWsFk/checkout](http://www.mariettamehannieducation.com/offers/FJfFWsFk/checkout) or for more education go to [www.mariettamehanni.com/education](http://www.mariettamehanni.com/education)







1

## HOW EXERCISE SUPPORTS MENTAL FITNESS

### The research

Researchers at the University of Basel in Switzerland and their colleagues at the University of Tsukuba in Japan analysed 80 individual studies on exercise and cognitive performance to help identify what type of sporting activity (including the duration and the frequency of the activity), can help improve cognitive performance.

### The findings

The studies showed that although exercise and sporting activities can bring about long-term improvement in cognitive performance across all age groups, not all activities deliver the same results, nor do they affect men and women in the same way. Although endurance training, strength

training or a combination of both, improve cognitive performance, coordinated sports with complex movement patterns and with other players involved are more effective. Also, a longer activity session over a long period of time gets best results.

### What this means

The good news is that whether you are training clients who are in the cognitive development phase (kids) or in the cognitive degradation phase (older adults), fundamentally, the activities don't need to be too different. Male clients will benefit more from a hard workout with a gradual increase in intensity over a longer period of time, whereas, female clients should perform low to medium intensity activities ensuring that the intensity isn't increased too quickly. ♦

THE STUDY

THE SOURCE

THE MATERIAL

2

## REGULAR EXERCISE BENEFITS IMMUNITY

### The research

A study from the Department of Health at the University of Bath in the UK analysed studies investigating exercise and immune function. Researchers looked at the immune system and whether it can change in a negative or positive way after exercise, and whether athletes (due to the high volume of training) are more susceptible to infections than those who do moderate exercise.

### The findings

The research established that regular exercise plays an important role in helping to maintain a healthy immune system rather than suppressing it, with little evidence found to suggest that exercise increases the risk of individuals becoming susceptible to viruses. It also found that

exercise could help the body deal with pathogens, and in the long-term, slow the changes that occur with ageing. So rather than exercise being the culprit, researchers suggest that infections are more likely to be linked to poor diet and sleep, stress and exposure to pathogens.

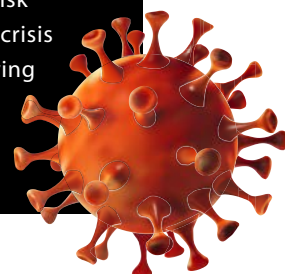
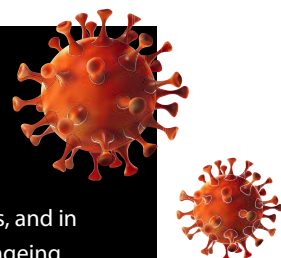
### What this means

With the recent closure of the fitness industry, our immune systems need all the help they can get, and regular moderate intensity exercise is one way. On the flipside, if you train too hard and too often, it can suppress immune function, increasing the risk of catching a virus. With the recent coronavirus crisis event still fresh in our minds, we know that staying fit, active and healthy has a positive effect on health and wellbeing. ♦

THE STUDY

THE SOURCE

THE MATERIAL



# THANKS FOR READING!

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**Phone:** 03 9021 0836

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