

# EXPANDING INTO THE HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY

Scott Hunt explains how becoming registered with the NDIS has expanded his fitness business.

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There is a huge misconception that the gym is a place for fit people to get fitter. Those who may be larger, older, injured or have a disability often believe that the gym is not the place for them. It's intimidating to walk in amongst bodybuilders and bikini models, to find yourself in a big open space full of heavy weights.

Sure, this stereotype is not applicable to everyone in our industry, but it does exist and it's one of the reasons we're not seen as the health care service we could be. When the media or the government talk about health care, personal training and gym facilities barely get a mention.

An amazing opportunity exists, however, to change this misconception.

### Expanding into disability fitness

In the last couple of years we've become registered with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), which provides people living with a disability, the funding required to help them improve their health and wellbeing by working with a personal trainer.

Our NDIS registration has opened up a whole new market for us, and provided us with more credibility as a health service. As a result, we now receive personal training referrals from medical professionals and disability support companies.

We've also found the goals of our NDIS clients extremely varied and uniquely challenging. Some of these goals include maintaining independence, developing confidence, increasing functional

strength, enhancing recreational activities and being able to do many of the daily things that most of us take for granted.

Most experienced trainers have had a client with a disability in the past, regardless of the NDIS, if that's you that's a great first step.

There's such a broad spectrum of what a "disability" is that it's best to assess each client's individual limitations on a case-by-case basis to see if you have the skills to train them; as opposed to assuming you can train anyone. For us, the majority of our clients' disabilities are minor, which means most of our trainers can work with most of our clients.

The NDIS does not require you to gain any extra qualifications; however, it is a lengthy and costly experience for a business to become a registered NDIS provider. Once you're registered, there's ongoing compliance, service agreements, documentation and billing requirements that we in the fitness industry are used to having to abide by.

The options, therefore, to complete this process are to:

1. Do it all yourself (or have the boss of the gym you're a part of do it)
2. Join forces with a company such as Fitness Enhancement, who will take care of everything, under our own Provider number.

If you choose not to become NDIS registered, you can still do disability fitness work; however you won't be able to make the most of the opportunities that are currently out there. But if

you're happy to just have a few clients with disabilities, it probably isn't worth becoming a registered NDIS provider (or a part of a company that is). If, however, you want to make it a big part of your business, then it absolutely is!

In terms of attracting clients once you are NDIS registered, well that process is much the same as how we acquire our other clients. It's all about good marketing, great relationships and amazing results! To get NDIS clients, it's about great relationships with plan managers and support coordinators as these are the people who recommend service providers to clients.

The fitness industry is not the first industry that springs to mind when people think of health care or disability support. In fact, many of the companies and families that we now work with didn't realise a service like ours was available until they found us! They are often surprised and excited to hear about the role a caring and down to earth personal trainer can play in health care and disability services.

What we have done as a company barely scratches the surface of what could be achieved as an industry. The greater the success we achieve in the areas of health care and disability, the more readily we'll all be seen as an integral part of the healthcare industry. ♦



Scott Hunt

Scott Hunt is the CEO and a Personal Trainer at Fitness Enhancement, whose main client group are people who feel "too scared to go to gyms". With locations in Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Melbourne and Sydney, Fitness Enhancement has spent the past 20 years growing into Australia's largest mobile personal training company that provides PT services in comfortable and private settings – either in our "100 per cent private" studios, or the client's own home. Fitness Enhancement is a franchise that has been providing award-winning personal trainers since 1999. To learn more visit [fitnessenhancement.com](http://fitnessenhancement.com)

