



Fighting Fit

Fitness Gym and Martial Arts Academy

Is your Fitness Instructor really qualified to do their job?

I'm going to reveal a secret...not all Fitness Instructors are equal in terms of knowledge, skill and helping you to reach your goals. In fact many of the Level 2 or 3 qualified instructors are just down right terrible! Whilst it may seem strange to make such claims, it is one of the unfortunate truths of our industry. It seems these days that there are fitness instructors popping up everywhere, and whilst this in itself may not be a bad thing, you would be making a huge mistake to assume they are all equally suited to train you, the paying consumer.

I have qualified with, and indeed worked with, fully qualified fitness trainers that have made me cringe with their approach to fitness training and fat loss. In my opinion many of them should never have passed their exams! Poor quality programming, bad exercise technique, poor knowledge of anatomy and physiology...the list of problems just goes on and on. How can this be you ask? Surely if they have earned their qualification, they must be half-decent, right? Well unfortunately, no, not necessarily.

The reality is that many of the fitness instructors you see these days know very little beyond what their course has taught them. They lack interpersonal skills, and can only design very basic and rudimentary programmes straight out of a text book. There are reasons for this however. Firstly, to teach up and coming fitness instructors and personal trainers how to write quality programmes and actually adapt them to a clients needs can be a very time consuming and expensive process. Instead, many course providers choose to take the cheap option and teach a very basic method of programme design, and merely tell their students to replicate this with every client they have. The second reason is lack of desire to progress on the part of the fitness instructor themselves. They make no attempt to question what they have been taught and see if there is a better way to achieve results with their clients. Instead they just carry on with the basic approach they were taught when qualifying and never develop or get any better (or even any good).

The problems begin however when good willed people who want to make a difference to their lives and feel good about themselves come along and are unaware of this fact. They see the certificate of qualification as assume that the instructor knows what they are talking about. All too often it ends with frustrated clients who become fed up with lack of results and become disillusioned with Personal Trainers and Fitness Instructors in general. But just like some doctors are terrible whilst others are very good, not all Fitness Instructors are as bad as this.

There are many fitness professionals that are very good at their job and are the complete antithesis of what has been described above. The issue is how do you tell them apart?



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My advice would be first and foremost to look through the qualification and understand that all a qualification does is prove that someone is not stupid, NOT that they are an expert in their chosen area. When you meet a potential trainer, ask them about their experience level - how long have they been training people? Do they design their own programmes or just implement someone else's? (This can be fine if the trainer works as part of a team with a separate programme design department, but they should still know a great deal about the programme). What is their track record like - do they have any proof such as photographs of previous clients who have achieved great results? Do they have any further education beyond their basic qualification, such as a degree or other more advanced qualification?

How do they respond to being questioned? Does it make them uncomfortable (a bad sign) or are they happy to answer your questions? A good instructor should be. If possible, try and see if you can watch them in action with another client. Does the client look like they are enjoying their workout? Do the exercises look safe and is the instructor actually coaching or just standing there filling in a clipboard? Ask them why they include certain exercises - what do they do and why are you using them? All of these questions should be answered easily by a good trainer and they will not feel threatened. A poorly qualified trainer will feel threatened however, will come across as being uncomfortable and uneasy and will try and skip over the issue or change the subject. Try and talk to some existing clients if possible - are they happy with the level of service they receive and have they made substantial progress? All these factors are the really important and significant ones that matter when you hire a trainer. Not that they are qualified, but that they are experienced and know what they are doing.

At Fighting Fit, all our trainers are at least level 2 qualified, but also contain vast levels of experience in terms of exercise technique and programme implementation. All programmes are designed by myself, a Level 3 Personal Trainer and Advanced Fitness Instructor, and university graduate in Sports Coaching. We have been operational for over 4 years and I have been in this industry for over 8 years. But most importantly, we have a whole host of happy and successful clients who have achieved great results and are happy to share their experiences with any other potential clients. Our clients and their results speak for themselves. It's not about our qualifications, it's about our results and success rate.

Be sure to challenge and thoroughly assess any potential trainer you may consider hiring, as there are a lot of charlatans out there just waiting to take your money. With a bit of savvy and a bit of forewarning, you should be fine and will hopefully find yourself one of the many good quality trainers that exist, so long as you look past their qualification. You deserve not to be ripped off, especially if you are going to pay your hard-earned cash and bring your lot in terms of effort and dedication. Hopefully this article will have gone some way to improving your chances of picking a good quality trainer to help you achieve your physique and fitness goals.