

Are You A Size-Friendly Trainer?

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Weight loss is a perfectly acceptable goal of fitness, especially if it'll improve a person's overall health. As a fitness professional, your role is in helping people make peace with their bodies. Through your work you help clients combat negative body image, which is linked to poor self-care and overall life quality, eating disorders, depression, anxiety, self-harming behaviors, substance abuse, weight cycling, and relationship violence. Although media has often associated thinness or ripped abs to health, you can't gauge someone's level of fit by their body size or shape.

Your clients do not have to train under people who believe that health and fitness can look only a certain way.

As a fitness professional, you should be prepared to answer these questions for your clients:

What are your views on diets?

A size-friendly trainer won't push restrictive eating or focus on weight reduction as the sole marker of success. He or she will be more focused on overall strength and fitness performance.

Do you have experience with size-diverse clients?

You've thought through every exercise in your program and have knowledge of and experience with the mechanics of larger-bodied clients. You know how to modify a workout to ensure success for your client.

How do you make accommodations for larger-bodied clients?

A size-friendly trainer will understand that doing a workout with a heavier load is more strenuous than the same routine would be for lighter clients. The workout should be tailored to the client and his or her own fitness level or body size, not yours.

Do you understand the barriers people of size face when approaching fitness? How do you help clients with this?

Trainers should be compassionate and understanding that fitness culture can feel unwelcoming to many. Welcome your client at the door, have a well-thought-out plan, ask if they're comfortable, and never push them beyond their limits.

Motivation never comes from shame, pain, or strain.

The [American Fitness Professionals Association \(AFPA\)](#) suggests a combination of nutritional guidance and coaching, non-intimidating exercise environments, body weight exercises over exercise machines, and low impact cardio. Fitness plans should be relatable – not holding people to a standard that for many may be unattainable.

Fitness culture has conditioned us to believe that the primary goal of all larger-bodied clients is weight loss. A size-friendly trainer will take the time to listen to their client's goals and help achieve them. The body, at every size, is amazing and the fact that your client is in the gym giving everything they've got deserves to be met with nothing short of positivity and respect.

References:

How To Find a Size-friendly Personal Trainer

Louise Green-Louise Green – <https://www.self.com/story/how-to-find-a-size-friendly-personal-trainer>

Welcome To The Body Positive

<https://www.thebodypositive.org/>

6 Tips For Training an Overweight or Obese Client

AFPA Fitness – <https://www.afpafitness.com/research-articles/6-tips-training-overweight-obese-client>