

Incorporating Nutrition into Your Personal Training Business - You Could be at Risk

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Often times as a personal trainer you follow strict guidelines when it comes to nutrition in order to keep your body physically fit and healthy to sustain the type of workout schedule you like to keep. It's a natural fit, you're into health and wellness obviously since you chose it as a career. Clients trust you and want help in building their bodies to either lose weight or be more toned, so why wouldn't they also ask for advice when it comes to their eating habits, diet and nutrition.

Is it ok to incorporate nutritional advice into your personal training business and coaching sessions?

You could be adding risk to your career and opening yourself up to a lawsuit for many reasons. Unless you have the license of a nutritionist, creating a customized nutrition plan for clients could fall out of the scope of your practice. If a client uses a certain type of supplement or eats according to a diet plan you create for them and it doesn't work for them, then you may be at risk for being named in a lawsuit.

We advise our clients, that if it doesn't fall within the scope of your certification or license, it's best to practice a better safe than sorry rule. So what does fall within the scope of your practice?

How much can you say about diet and nutrition and where should you draw the line?

Talking about healthy nutrition and giving medical nutrition advice are two completely separate topics. Having a conversation with clients about healthy snack alternatives, or discussing the importance of nutrients found in fats, carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins, and minerals is a good conversation to help educate clients on how they can make their own healthy choices. Creating an individualized nutrition plan for a client is suggested to be out of the scope of practice and could open you up to additional risk of facing a suit against your career.

The next time a client asks for help with their eating habits, it may be a good idea to suggest a trusted and [registered dietitian](#) to help them create a plan that is right for their needs. While it may be ok to have the conversation with them about healthy snack alternatives you enjoy such as fruits and vegetables, be clear that you aren't suggesting that what works for you will work for them. In fact what works for one person's body type may not work for the other, it's suggested to have that conversation too.

Don't fear the conversation, just be cautious as to how much "advice" you give or suggest. Educating them on leading a healthy lifestyle such as exercise, taking walks and eating healthy for what their body requires or making a choice to fix their own sandwich versus going through the drivethrough to control

the ingredients is seen as educating and sharing more than as giving medical nutritional advice. Avoid getting into customized diet plans, unless you choose to enhance your personal training business by adding on a license for nutrition too.

[Trainer insurance](#) will only protect you during a lawsuit for services performed that are covered by your license or certification. If you are brought up on a lawsuit for providing services not found within your scope of practice, you may be responsible for paying out-of-pocket expenses to defend yourself and your career against the claim.