

LECTURE 1

Supporting Your Clients

By Cathal Fanning

- **Motivation**
- **Understanding why people start to initially exercise**
- **Stages of change**
- **Why people stop exercising**
- **Goal setting**
- **SMART goals**
- **Reviewing progress**

Motivation

Your role as a fitness professional is varied, and includes programme design, exercise consultations, basic nutritional advice and maintaining motivation for people to train...

Many people suffer with a lack of motivation. There are a lot of people who are happy to exercise without having any real desire for it, but this certainly isn't everybody. A large number of people find maintaining, or even starting a programme of exercise very difficult.

Adhering to an exercise programme can be difficult at times but we must find a way to ensure the client maintains their motivation and continues their exercise and lifestyle changes. We have many tools at our disposal to achieve this...

It is very common that people enjoy an enthusiastic start to their training journey, and then the novelty wears off. This might be due to boredom, plateau or exercise being less of a priority than it once was. We, as instructors need to recognise this and intervene with new challenges and strategies when the self-motivation starts to wane. Self-motivation can come from a variety of different sources...

Peer Group

Keeping up with peer groups can be great for motivation. When a friend starts exercising and begins to see results, it can create motivation for others to do the same.

Doctor Recommendation

A recommendation to exercise from a doctor can be a very strong motivator for people who are either suffering from, or at risk of illness or chronic issues.

Self Esteem

When people don't feel good about themselves, one of the things that can really help to raise their mood and self-esteem is the feel-good nature of exercise which is caused by the release of endorphins when exercising. That, coupled with seeing results can have a profound impact on self-esteem.

Achieving Goals

Lots of people have goals that they want to achieve which can be performance-based. For example, competing in a sporting event, or an aesthetic-based activity such as weight loss. Whatever the goal, having something to aim for and the continued momentum of then achieving that goal can really help support motivation.

Enjoyment

Some people genuinely enjoy exercising and so the motivation to exercise is already high. In others, they develop an enjoyment for exercise over time which slowly increases their motivation over a longer period.

Motivation and guidance, as mentioned, are a key part of the fitness professional's role. However, it is important that we help people to enjoy their exercise and to create a sense of self-motivation. This will be more reliable for the person in the long-term if they can keep themselves motivated to train.

While a talented and knowledgeable fitness professional can develop excellent training programmes and strategies for long-term change, the client has to act on them. A good example of this is the dietary side of things. An instructor can offer sound advice but cannot be there all the time to monitor the client.

It is really important that the client is empowered to train and doesn't form too much of a reliance on the trainer.

Remember, you can design the best workouts in the world, but they won't yield any results if the client isn't consistent with their effort, gets enough sleep, eats well and varies the stimulus occasionally. If they are overly-stressed, eat poorly and have inconsistent exercise habits they are unlikely to see results.

Understanding Why People Initially Start to Exercise

Health

There are so many inherent health benefits that come with regular exercise, and it can assist in so many ways including stress management, weight management, social engagement and disease prevention. People are now much more aware of exercise as a way of preventing illnesses.

Enjoyment

It is often the case that while exercise creates healthier bodies and a myriad of different results, some simply exercise for enjoyment. If people enjoy the exercise programme you have put together, they are far more likely to continue to train.

Aesthetic

Adding muscle, losing weight, improving posture, lowering bodyfat percentage - these are all examples of the ways exercise can assist in changing a person's appearance. Lots of people exercise for aesthetic reasons.

Social

Exercise can be a source of enhanced social interaction. Joining a class or training with a friend can offer a chance for very healthy relationships to form.

Weight

Prevention of weight gain as well as actual weight loss are two reasons that a lot of people exercise. With such a large percentage of the world's population being classed as overweight or obese we have an alarming issue to deal with. Exercising regularly can really help.

Rehabilitation

Exercise can play a vital role in the restoration of full function and fitness following an injury. This is more the province of a sports therapist or physiotherapist although a personal trainer can play a part.

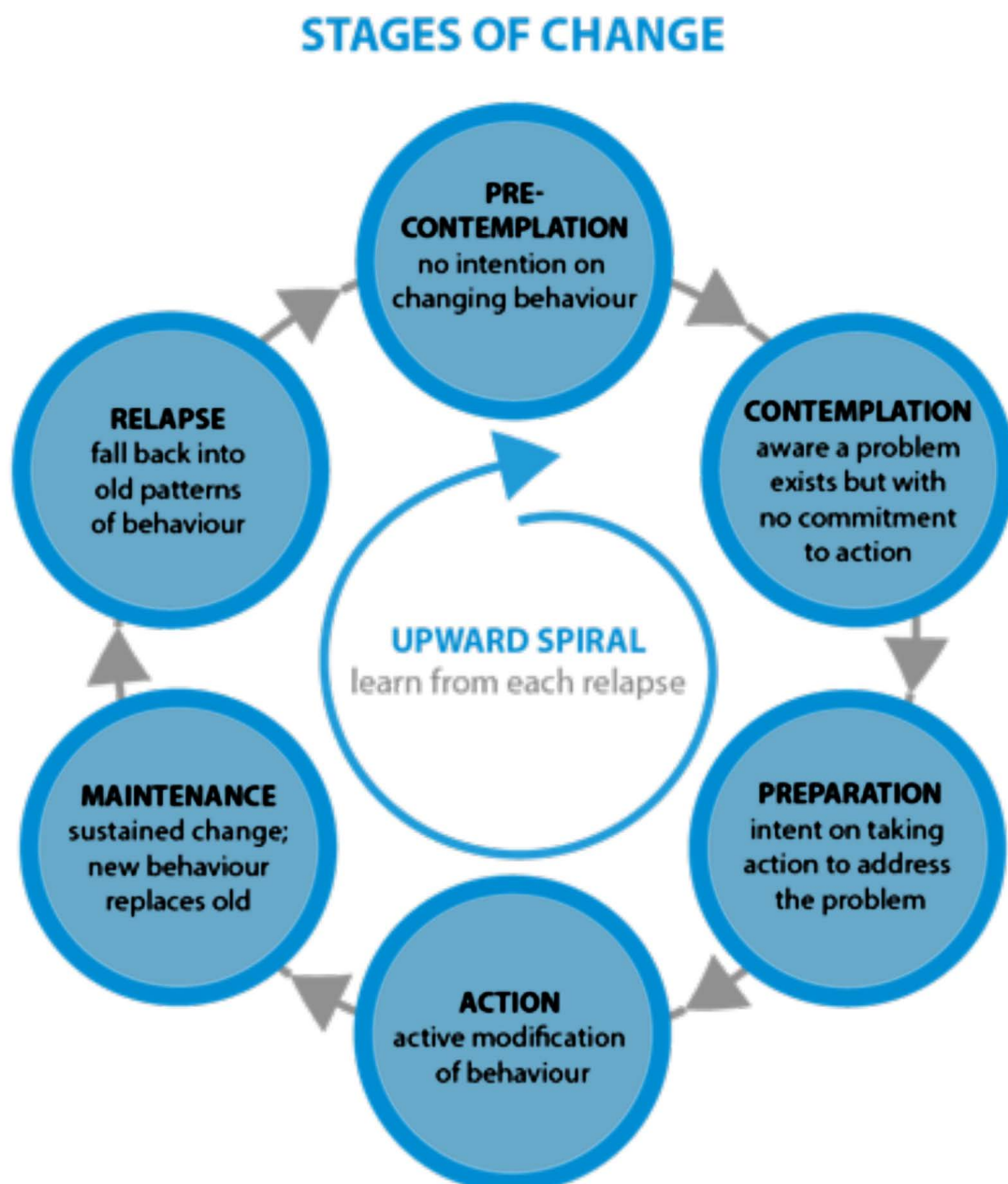
Performance

Fitness, particularly that which can mimic sport-specific demands will play a key role in performance improvements.

Job Requirements

Emergency services, the military, manual labour and athletes are all examples of occupations that demand a certain level of fitness to be achieved and maintained.

Below is the 'Stage of Change' model. It illustrates the process a person may go through when looking to modify their behaviour or adopt new behaviours.



So... with all these reasons to exercise, and so many benefits related to regular activity. Why do people stop? Here are some of the reasons:

- Lack Of Results
- Timetable Doesn't Suit Me
- No Time
- Poor facilities
- Expense
- Boredom
- Other commitments
- Loss of motivation
- Other hobbies

**So what can we do about it?
One of the best methods is...**

Goal Setting

Process Goals

A process goal is all about the step-by-step actions that need to take place for the overall goal to be achieved. If you want to be able to squat your bodyweight you first need to understand how to squat well and master the technique. This would be your first process goal.

Performance Goals

Performance goals are all about achieving a specific performance parameter...

For example:

'I want to complete a 10km run in less than 50-minutes'

or

'I want to be able to perform a set of five pull-ups'

These are both examples of performance goals. To make them SMART, we have to add a deadline (more on this later on), but this is the goal.

Outcome Goals

An outcome goal is all about doing well in an event e.g. winning a race or a competition.

What Are Some of the Benefits of Setting Clear Goals?

- Understanding the 'long-term' – understanding that goal achievement takes time and consistency is a great way to develop long-term adherence.
- Setting a target – having a target to achieve can go a long way to helping your client to maintain motivation.
- Sense of achievement – when achieved, the client can have a tremendous sense of pride that their hard work paid off.

What are the principles of goal setting?

Make goals a challenge - there should be every chance of achieving the goal. You want the goals to be achievable but there should also be some challenge in order that there is some sense of achievement associated with them.

Set goals that promote empowerment - achieving goals should be directly attributable to the client rather than reliant on anyone else's actions. This way there is a greater achievement associated with success.

Is the outcome measurable - you should be able to measure the achievement of the goals you set, otherwise it is hard to know if you are progressing.

Have a deadline - goals without definitive deadlines are still goals, but there is less incentive to actually achieve them. By working towards a deadline there is a built-in sense of urgency.

Incentives & rewards - achievement of goals should be rewarded and celebrated.

Don't forget to make them SMART goals!



Here are a few examples of SMART goals

- 'I want to lose 10lbs in the next 3 months'.
- 'I'd like to add 20kg to my 100-rep squat after 6 months'.
- 'I will compete in the marathon within 12 months of training'.

Finally, you should be reviewing progress against the goals.

It is good practice as a fitness professional to offer the client a chance to review their progress periodically. This way you can see that they are progressing towards their goals and offer any amendments to the training required. This can be done informally during a scheduled exercise session or at a specific review appointment.

If the goal has been met, you can then assign a progression for them to achieve. If they haven't yet achieved their targets, it is a good time to see if you can assist. Maybe they haven't been attending as regularly as they would have liked to, or maybe there are changes you can make to their programme to assist them.

Encourage Your Client to Set the Goal

This gives greater ownership

Goals Should be Written Down

This can serve as an easily-accessible reminder

Develop a Plan & Have Review Points

Understand that it doesn't happen overnight and agree a time to meet and review progress

Identify the Support Your Client Needs

You are way more likely to succeed if you can predict any issues along the way and offer support

Keep A Diary

Seeing how far you've come can offer great motivation

