

## Preliminary Steps in Self-Management Program with a Holistic Approach in the Gym

Most people today are aware of the importance and benefits of physical activity. The majority of those engaging in any physical activity have visited a gym. All gym members should work according to a personal training program. Surprisingly, many members don't follow a personal training program, or work according to a standard program, or remain stuck with the same program for many months. A significant portion of gym members aren't even aware of the crucial importance of a personal training program and their need for one. Many trainers believe that it's enough to "listen" to their body or work according to "moods" - in simple words: "work however and whenever I feel like it."

During my many years working as a gym trainer, I remember those members who would "hang out" at the gym for hours; when I asked them until when...? The common answer was: until it hurts, I don't stop... Yes, many trainees associate workout success with pain!

Given the above, it's worth asking and especially clarifying the benefits of a training program in general and a personal training program specifically:

- The training program enables efficient use of time in the gym
- Documentation and recording of activity progress
- Reduces risk factors for injuries
- Reflects the trainee's capabilities
- Enables monitoring of effort levels
- Increases persistence and personal commitment
- Serves as a "commitment contract" between the trainee and the club through the instructor
- Educates about order and organization in training
- Enables effective communication between trainee and trainer
- Helps achieve the trainee's goals

Before we begin building the personal training program with the trainee in the gym (or anywhere else), we must complete a personal questionnaire\* with them. The personal

questionnaire will reflect the trainee's data and aspirations. The personal questionnaire is the trainee's ID card reflecting their data, desires, needs, and goals.

During the first two to three weeks (about eight meetings) of gym membership, before writing the training program, we'll introduce them to only relevant machines, up to about 10 machines. The familiarization will include knowledge and understanding of operating the machine technically and ergonomically: identifying the machine's axis of action and positioning against the movement axis (working joint), sitting including pelvic rotation backward as needed; adjusting the seat, backrest, pulley, and resistance arm according to the trainee's structure and size; identifying 1RM (Resistance Maximum) or RM (Repetition Maximum) - in other words, recognizing the trainee's physical capabilities regarding relevant machines.

As part of building a thoughtful training program, it's important to explain and guide gradually. Therefore, in the first visits to the gym, we'll introduce the trainee to a certain number of machines for developing large muscle groups such as: seated bicep curls against upper pulley, seated leg extension against dedicated machine, seated chest press against dedicated machine, and so on. Explaining how to perform the exercise and implementing safety rules takes time and requires patience and tolerance from both the trainee and trainer.

It's very important that trainers provide feedback during exercise execution and emphasize the importance of quality performance, as only quality execution will ensure quality results over time.

Only after the trainee is familiar with and masters the operation of the machine and the alignment of the movement axis (the joint performing the movement) with the action axis (the axis to which the resistance arm is connected in the machine) can we begin maximum resistance capability tests (1RM). The trainer must ensure that during the attempt to identify maximum resistance, the trainee does not use momentum, maintains a slow and controlled work pace, exerts only the relevant muscle group and doesn't rely on other muscle groups ("movement compensation").

In summary, only after the stages of familiarization with relevant equipment, practice in execution, implementation of safety rules during activity, finding maximum resistance (1RM), is the trainee mature (ready and experienced) to fill out the personal questionnaire! Only after completing the personal questionnaire, during which the trainee understood the difference between their wants and needs, can the needs be transformed into training goals with all that implies; including lifestyle changes that will partly be expressed in building a personal training program with a holistic approach to intelligent physical activity in the gym.

\*For further information, see Chapter 7, section "Filling out a personal questionnaire with a holistic approach with forethought." \*The personal questionnaire in the book, "Holistic Fitness Training: The Science-Based, Mindful Exercising Guide to a Healthy and Active Lifestyle".