

PROGRAM DESIGN
TO TRAIN CLIENTS
ANYWHERE

OPEX

Introduction

The fitness industry is at a turning point. How people do fitness has altered dramatically due to lockdowns and social distancing.

With this, there's an increasing demand for the flexibility to train from anywhere.

More and more at-home training apps, online group fitness classes, and templates have flooded the market, challenging the value of the community gym and coach.

To adapt and grow as a coach you need to design and deliver fitness programs that get results, independent of access to a gym.

To stand out, you must offer **personalized** and **portable** training programs tailored to each client's lifestyle.

In this guide, you will learn **six key OPEX program design principles** to help you adapt your coaching service. You'll understand how to coach both in-person and online, without sacrificing the relationships and long-term results that make you stand out from every other online program.



Principles to Coach Any Client, Anywhere

To grow your coaching practice and offer your clients the flexibility to train anywhere, it is important to have a set of key principles to guide you. Keeping these six principles in mind will help you focus on delivering a consistent, personalized, and premium service that you are proud of, rather than engaging in a race to the bottom with generic online templates.

1 Take a local-remote approach

While growing a remote coaching business through social media and coaching clients all around the world sounds great in theory, very few can scale this successfully. The remote coaching game is dominated by a few large companies with big advertising budgets and marketing teams. As a small gym or independent coach, this is very hard to compete against.

For this reason, we recommend growing your fitness business by starting local. This means beginning with your friends, family, and current connections, as well as participating in your community and connecting with other businesses to establish your reputation as a local fitness leader. Over time, this approach will generate referrals and help you to grow organically. This approach is recommended for coaches who coach in a facility and have clients that train at home.

Sustained growth is not the only reason to focus locally. A local-remote coaching service means you can connect in-person with your clients for consultations and assessments, as well as offer in-person coaching for clients who want to train in a gym. The value of in-person coach-client relationships, even if only for a monthly consultation, should not be underestimated.

2 Prescribe what your client is capable of doing

It is important to set your clients up for success when you are not there to support them face-to-face every day. It is easy to fall into the trap of over-prescribing, providing workouts that are too complex, too challenging, or inappropriate for movement capabilities. This leads to failures, frustration, and a loss of trust.

Always begin with a consultation and assessment to determine where your client is starting from. Use this data to construct a training plan that your client can perform with confidence, and gradually progress them over time.

3 Align exercise with behavior and nutrition

One-size-fits-all diets fail because they are unsustainable and don't educate people on the basic principles of healthy eating and living. Offering personalized lifestyle prescriptions that align with training is an outstanding competitive advantage.

Personalized fitness coaching allows you to meet your client where they are starting from and slowly progress them towards higher-order behaviors over time. They will avoid diet burnout, stay consistent, and experience small wins, which compound into long-term success.

Providing behavior and nutrition support that your clients can be compliant with will maximize the results they get from exercise and significantly increase the value of your service. Incorporate these prescriptions (within your scope of practice) into your program designs and use consultations to educate your clients and work together to devise monthly nutrition and behavior action items.

4 Hone your communication skills

One of the most important facets of coaching, whether in-person or online, is building strong relationships. To do this, you need to communicate effectively.

Clear expectations are a must, especially when you don't have the benefit of seeing your client in the gym each day. When you onboard a client, be sure to explain how they should message you, ask questions, and provide training results and feedback, as well as how and when they should expect your response.

Alongside setting expectations and developing trust, communication is how you can connect your client to the why behind their program. This connection creates buy-in and consistency. If the client understands how exercise and healthy behaviors support their priorities, then they are far more likely to stay compliant in the long-term.

5 Use technology to your advantage

Gone are the days of spreadsheets and programs sent by email. We are lucky to live in a world where technology enables us to seamlessly deliver fitness programs in an efficient format for both the client and the coach.

When you onboard a new client, be sure to organize and store their consultation notes, assessment data, priorities, equipment list, weekly training schedule, periodization, and any other important documents. [OPEX Coaches](#) use our client management and program design platform, CoachRx.

You can learn more about how to enhance your program design efficiency in [this free download](#).

6 Create autonomous clients

The final principle of a successful coaching service is to make developing client autonomy your goal. This means educating your clients on the intentions behind exercise, behavior, and nutrition prescriptions, building their confidence to train without constant supervision, and providing them with the self-sufficiency to make decisions that support their priorities.

For example, teaching your client about quality protein sources, the importance of vegetables, and how to determine appropriate portion sizes up front, will mean that they don't always need a meal plan to know how to eat to support their goals. Similarly, helping them reflect on how aerobic training should feel will allow them to develop the ability to self-pace and approach their training with the right intentions.

Click the video below for a bonus video seminar with remote coaches
Sam Smith and Carl Hardwick.



Coach Any Client, Anywhere in Action

Now you've learned the six key principles, we'll show you how to put them into practice with an example client avatar.

Background

Coach Ben owns a small individual design gym and offers a mix of in-person and online coaching to his local community. Client Jacob was chatting with a co-worker during a remote happy hour, who mentioned that he'd been training with Ben for six months and was feeling great, down 10 pounds, and loving the flexibility.

Jacob reached out to Ben, who explained how his gym operates and initial steps for getting started. Ben sent Jacob an intake form, and the two scheduled an initial consultation over Zoom for later that week.

1 Step One: INTAKE + INITIAL CONSULTATION

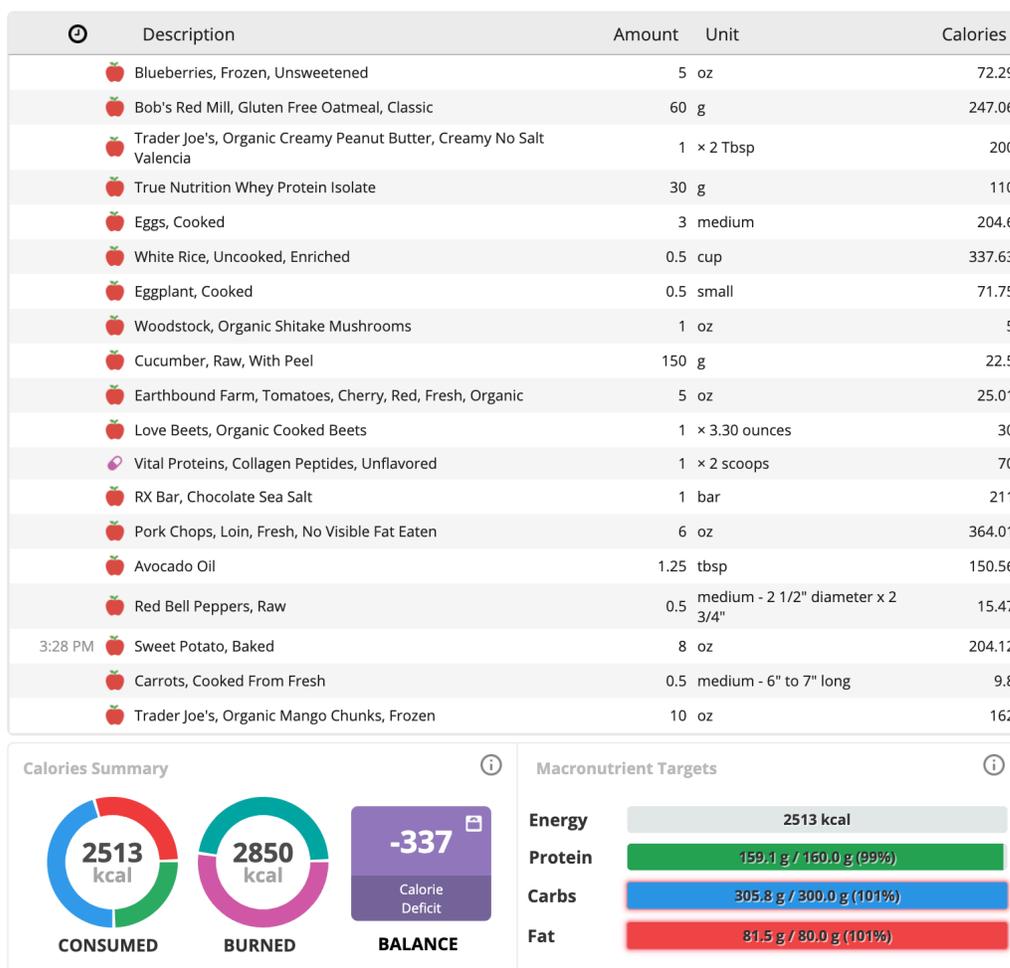
Jacob and Ben meet face to face on Zoom for an initial 60-minute consultation. The consultation is Ben's opportunity to get to know Jacob and his reasons for hiring a coach, ask questions about his background, understand his current behaviors, exercise, and nutrition, and set initial goals.

Jacob explains that he lost access to his work gym when his company went remote 6 months prior and had begun training in his backyard instead. While he loves the efficiency of training at home, he is tired of doing random workouts without a clear purpose and feels that he is not progressing towards his goals.

Ben takes detailed notes during the consultation and saves them in CoachRx:

- 30 years old, happily married, desk job
- 10 years consistently lifting weights, high school diver
- Goals to look good and feel good, increase lean mass, especially upper body
- Shoulder pain when pressing overhead and neck and upper back tension while working
- Sleeps 6 hours
- 60oz water daily
- Good understanding of food quality, focuses on eating whole foods and has counted macros before
- Eats at a desk, sitting 8-10 hours per day
- Perceives overall stress as low
- Values training at home and additional time with his wife

Ben also requests a food log of an average day from Jacob, and he uploads it to his CoachRx profile the next day.



2 Step Two: ASSESSMENT

While Ben knows that an in-person physical assessment is ideal, Jacob prefers to socially distance and requests to do this online.

Ben sends Jacob his Body, Move, and Work assessments through CoachRx, with detailed notes in the description and example videos so Jacob can perform them as accurately as possible. Jacob stops by Ben's gym to take his InBody measurements.

▶ BODY

Log your:	Results:
<input type="checkbox"/> Weight	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 162 lb
<input type="checkbox"/> Basal Metabolic Rate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1751 kcal
<input type="checkbox"/> Body Fat %	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 13%
<input type="checkbox"/> Muscle Mass	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 80 lb

▶ MOVE

Perform 3-5 reps of each movement:

1. Scratch Test (film from rear shirtless)
2. Overhead Air Squat (film from 45*)
3. Toe Touch (film from side)
4. Lunge/Split Squat w/ hands in genie position (film from 45*)
5. Active Straight Leg Raise (film from side)
6. Front Leaning Rest (hold for as long as possible, terminate at 60 sec, film from side)
7. Reverse Plank (hold for as long as possible, terminate at 60 sec, film from side)
8. Side Plank (hold for as long as possible per side, terminate at 90 sec, film from side)

**If possible, film non-stop in one take, then upload.*

Results:



WORK

10-minute Assault Bike for max calories

*Note total calories and average rpm.
To get average rpm, ensure you set the bike to 10 minutes and the average will show on the summary screen.*

Results:

110 cal, was exhausted, and forgot to look at RPM.

Redlined in first 2 minutes, pace dropped off, took me 15 minutes to get off the floor

Ben makes these assessment noticings:

- Lack of shoulder internal + external rotation on scratch
- Lack of scapular retraction on reverse plank
- Restricted thorax on scratch, toe touch, air squat
- Inability to pace on Work assessment

3 Step Three: TRANSITION TO DESIGN WITH THE THREE P'S

► PRIORITIES

Ben identifies initial priorities for Jacob from the initial consultation and assessments. He tags these in CoachRx so they are always visible when he programs for Jacob.

PRIORITIES INCLUDE:

- Increase sleep
- Increase water
- Food hygiene
- Improve daily posture and work station
- Increase lean mass
- Address movement noticings relative to function
 - Shoulder and thoracic ROM
 - Scapular retraction

► PLANNING

- 4 OPEX Gain session per week with an upper and lower split
- 2 OPEX Sustain cyclical MAP 10 days per week

EQUIPMENT LIST:

While completing his intake form in CoachRx, Ben also requests an equipment list from Jacob.

EQUIPMENT	NOTES
Barbell	45lb
Flat Bench	
Bumper Plates	2x2.5, 2x5, 2x10, 4x45
Airdyne/Assault Bike	Assault Bike

4 Step Four: INITIAL PROGRAM DESIGN

BEHAVIOR AND NUTRITION

- 7-8 hours of sleep per night, in bed at 10 pm, awake at 6 am
- 80 oz of water daily, including 16 oz upon waking
- Schedule 30 minutes to eat lunch away from the desk, no phone, chewing slowly in a relaxed setting
- Food quality is great, keep it up!
- Order a standing desk and begin by accumulating 60 minutes per day standing instead of sitting

EXERCISE

MONDAY

60-minute bike ride with wife @ MAP 10 pace (something you could sustain for 4 hours)

TUESDAY

- A. [Deadlift](#) @40X0, 6-8 reps x 4 sets; rest 3 minutes
- B1. [Barbell Front Rack Reverse Lunge](#) @30X0, 8-10 reps x 3 sets; rest 90 seconds
- B2. [Staggered Stance Good Morning](#) @30X0, 8-10 reps x 3 sets; rest 90 seconds
- C. [Single Arm Front Plank](#), 30 seconds x 3 sets; rest 30-45 seconds between sides
- +
- 10-minute cooldown Assault Bike

WEDNESDAY

- A. 3 rounds not for time
- [Box Shoulder Stretch](#), 60 seconds
- [Dead Bug Floor Angel](#) @3131, 10 reps
- [Reverse Scapular Push-Up](#) @1110, 10 reps
- B1. [Single Arm Landmine Row](#) @30X2, 10-12 reps x 3 sets; rest 2 minutes
- B2. [Floor Press](#) @20X1, 10-12 reps x 3 sets; rest 2 minutes
- C1. [Landmine Rear Delt Fly](#) @20X1, 12-15 reps x 2 sets; rest 90 seconds
- C2. [Barbell Curl](#) @30X0, 12-15 reps x 2 sets, rest 90 seconds
- C3. [Diamond Push-Up](#) @20X0, 12-15 reps x 2 sets, rest 90 seconds
- +
- 10-minute cooldown Assault Bike

THURSDAY

60-minute unplugged walk outside with wife

FRIDAY

- A. [Power Clean](#) + [Front Squat](#) @31X0, 1+6-8 reps x 4 sets; rest 3 minutes
- B1. [Barbell Hip Thrust](#) @20X1, 8-10 reps x 3 sets; rest 90 seconds
- B2. [Alternating Pistol Squat](#) @30X0, 16-20 reps x 3 sets; rest 90 seconds
- C. [Side Plank Clamshell with Hold](#), 30 seconds x 3 sets; rest 30-45 seconds between sides

+

10-minute cooldown Assault Bike

SATURDAY

- A. 3 rounds not for time
 - [Reverse Plank](#), 45 seconds
 - [Dead Bug Dumbbell Pull-Over](#) w/ plate @3131, 10 reps
 - [Arm Bar](#) w/ 5lb plate, 30 seconds per side
- B1. [Bent-Over Barbell Row](#) @30X1, 10-12 reps x 3 sets; rest 2 minutes
- B2. [Landmine Half Kneeling Press](#) @20X1, 10-12 reps x 3 sets; rest 2 minutes
- C1. [Barbell Drag Curl](#) @3030, 12-15 reps x 2 sets; rest 90 seconds
- C2. [JM Press](#) @30X0, 12-15 reps x 2 sets; rest 90 seconds
- D1. [Pinch Plate Carry](#), 50m x 3 sets; rest 30 seconds
- D2. [Arms Forward Hollow Body Hold](#), 45 seconds x 3 sets; rest 2 minutes

+

10-minute cooldown Assault Bike

SUNDAY

Weekly Reflection

Score each on a scale of 1 (terrible) to 5 (great) and record any observations

- A. Sleep Quality this week
- B. Training Quality This Week
- C. Nutrition Quality This Week
- D. Energy This Week
- E. Wins/Losses; What were some wins this week? What were some losses this week?
- F. Goal Alignment; Do you feel like you are moving towards your goals? If not, why? What can I do to help you this week?

5 Step Five: ONGOING COACHING

Jacob receives his workouts daily and is an ideal client, always updating his training results and leaving feedback on his weekly lifestyle reflection. This helps Ben adjust his program each week to gradually progress Jacob towards his goals.

Every month, Ben and Jacob meet to reflect on his exercise, behavior and nutrition, reassess goals and priorities, and make changes as needed. As he feels comfortable, Jacob comes to the gym to meet Ben face to face for these monthly consultations and to do an InBody to track his body compositions.

Jacob also comes in to train on the days when he is doing [Fitness Monitoring Exercises](#) (ongoing resistance and Energy System Training assessments), providing Ben the opportunity to see his movement in-person.

For both the coach and the client, the OPEX model balances the flexibility of training at home with the personalized relationship and programming they desire.



Ready to Coach Any Client, Anywhere?

The case study above illustrates how a coach can successfully adapt to the changing fitness landscape of 2020, but it is based on principles that have stood the test of time.

While new technology is making the local-remote coaching process even more seamless, OPEX Coaches have applied and refined these principles for the last 20 years.

OPEX Coaches have the skill set to effectively coach any client, anywhere, but only thanks to education and in-the-trenches practical experience. The OPEX [Coaching Certificate Program \(CCP\)](#) provides just that.

Taught by industry leaders, CCP is the most comprehensive online coaching education and mentorship program. The future is bright for OPEX Coaches because they are prepared with the knowledge, tools, and systems to adapt.

Download the [Curriculum Guide](#) today and see what it takes to become an OPEX Coach.

DOWNLOAD NOW

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