



LONG-TERM EXERCISE PROGRAMMING AND PLANNING

OPEX

Introduction

Programming for specific goals can sometimes seem like guesswork, while long-term planning often leaves coaches feeling overwhelmed.

That's why we created this guide—to show you that with the right systems, long-term program design is possible and fun.

Read on to learn how to balance the art and science of program design with our three-part framework, the **Three Ps: Priorities, Planning, and Periodization**. Implement the 3 Ps and you'll become a more efficient and confident coach and get your clients the results they desire.

What is Program Design?

Program design is the act of writing out workouts for your clients. But to ensure daily workouts are actually progressing your clients towards their long-term goals and not just making them sweaty, it's important to have a long-term plan.

The **Three Ps: Priorities, Planning, and Periodization** is our framework for transitioning from the initial assessment and consultation, to designing training cycles that align with your clients' goals and capabilities.

When you understand the nuances of Priorities, Planning, and Periodization, you will instantly increase your competency and ability to design progressive, personalized training programs.

50% off [PROGRAM DESIGN ESSENTIALS PLAYLIST](#)
with code **PDMADESIMPLE** at checkout...

LEARN THE OPEX PRINCIPLES THAT HAVE HELPED
THOUSANDS OF COACHES DESIGN BETTER PROGRAMS

PURCHASE PLAYLIST NOW

THE THREE Ps

PRIORITIES

Prioritizing is the first step in writing a program and essential to individual program design. This begins with analyzing the intake form, initial consultation, and assessment and defining your client's initial priorities and capabilities, so you can decide what is most important to focus on first within the program. Priorities may shift over time with ongoing reassessments.

AN EXAMPLE OF PRIORITIZING:

In the consultation, you identified that improving sleep quality and protein intake are nutrition and behavior priorities. From the OPEX Move assessment, improving anterior core strength and scapular stability are priorities, while the OPEX Body assessment revealed that decreasing body fat is a priority. Finally, the OPEX Work assessment highlighted that developing the aerobic energy system is a priority. [Learn the OPEX Body, Move, Work assessment here.](#)

PLANNING

Planning is the act of creating a roadmap for the client. In this phase, you must work with your client to decide what it will take to reach their goals. Planning can include but is not limited to the days needed to train, the nutrition needed, the resources a client has available to them, and lifestyle components.

After Priorities are established, Planning is conducted considering:

- The client's goals
- The assessment
- The client's training schedule and resources
- The priorities within the design
- The coach's ability

AN EXAMPLE OF PLANNING:

Your client routinely travels for work on a Monday and Thursday and tends to be jet-lagged on Tuesday and Friday. You plan a training split that uses a high-low method to account for their schedule.

MONDAY: Rest

TUESDAY: Aerobic

WEDNESDAY: Full Body Resistance

THURSDAY: Rest

FRIDAY: Aerobic

SATURDAY: Full Body Resistance

SUNDAY: Aerobic

PERIODIZATION

This is the act of building out long-term and short-term plans to guide your daily program designs. When you periodize, you plan in blocks of time relative to the client's goals, abilities, and training schedule.

Phases of training include:

Accumulation - The main focus of this phase is building volume, skills, and technical ability

Intensification - Decreasing the volume of training and increasing intensity

Pre-Competition - Simulating the structure of a competition.

Competition - The act of competing

Deload - Time off post-competition specifically for recovery

The person's goals, function, training age, and assessment dictate which of the above phases are appropriate. [For a clear method to determine appropriate training phases for individuals, we recommend the OPEX Coaching Certificate Program.](#)

AN EXAMPLE OF PERIODIZATION:

Your athlete has a competition scheduled for later in the year. You reverse engineer from this competition date, planning phases to peak them for the event.

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- Accumulation 1 (6 weeks)
 - Deload (1 week)
 - Accumulation 2 (6 weeks)
 - Deload (1 week)
 - Intensification 2 (4 weeks)
 - Deload (1 week)
- Intensification 2 (4 weeks)
 - Deload (1 week)
 - Intensification 3 (4 weeks)
 - Pre-Competition (1 week)
 - Competition (1 week)
 - Deload (1 week)

Putting the Three Ps Into Action

Read through the client avatar below and watch the accompanying videos to hear OPEX CEO Carl Hardwick explain the application of the 3 Ps.

CLIENT AVATAR

JULIE

Female

Age: 30

Height: 5'5

Occupation: Fitness Coach

ASSESSMENT DATA

BODY

- 158#, 19% Body Fat

MOVE

- Failed scratch with restricted scapular gliding in external rotation
- Hip shift in squat

WORK

- 10 minute Assault Bike for max calories = 116 calories

GOALS

- Lose 5-10lb
- Feel good doing aerobic training, resistance, and gymnastics when demonstrating them for her clients



PRIORITIES

- Stabilize hormones, energy, and mood with autoregulation-style resistance, daily movement, and personalized macronutrient profile
- Fix scapular function and gliding with motor control and range of motion work
- Fix hip shift with RNT, motor control, and time under tension

PLANNING

- 5 sessions per week with auto-regulation and high-low approach
- 3 resistance days (absolute strength and strength speed)
- 2 aerobic days (1 cyclical and 1 mixed modal)

WEEKLY TRAINING SPLIT:

- Monday: Full Body Resistance (FBR) with Squat focus
- Tuesday: Maximum Aerobic Power (MAP) - cyclical
- Wednesday: FBR with Pull focus
- Thursday: Active Recovery
- Friday: FBR with Push focus
- Saturday: MAP - mixed modal
- Sunday: Rest



PERIODIZATION

- **ACCUMULATION 1** (5 weeks) - Insights and Rhythm
- **ACCUMULATION 2** (8 weeks) - Resistance: Motor Control (15 reps) + Aerobic: Longest MAP (30 minute intervals)
- **TRANSITION** (1 week) - Fitness Monitoring Exercises
- **ACCUMULATION 3** (8 weeks) - Resistance: Motor Control (12 reps) + Aerobic: Longer MAP (20 minute intervals)
- **ACCUMULATION 4** (8 weeks) - Resistance: Strength Endurance (10 reps) + Aerobic: Long MAP (15 minute intervals)
- **TRANSITION** (1 week) - Fitness Monitoring Exercises
- **ACCUMULATION 5** (8 weeks) - Resistance: Strength Endurance (8-10 reps) + Aerobic: Medium MAP (7 minute intervals)
- **ACCUMULATION 6** (8 weeks) - Resistance: Strength Endurance (6-8 reps) + Aerobic: Shorter MAP (6 minute intervals)
- **TRANSITION** (1 week)
- **INTENSIFICATION 1** (3 weeks) - Resistance: Maximal Contractions (4-5 reps) + Aerobic: Short MAP (5 minute intervals)
- **INTENSIFICATION 2** (3 weeks) - Resistance: Maximal Contractions (2-4 reps) + Aerobic: Shortest MAP (3 minute intervals)



DEVELOP CONFIDENCE IN PROGRAM DESIGN AND PLANNING

To seamlessly put the 3 Ps into practice takes both education and experience.

The OPEX Coaching Certificate Program (CCP) provides just that. Throughout the curriculum, you'll practice conducting assessments, implementing the 3 Ps, and designing training programs for a variety of client avatars.

Taught by industry leaders, CCP is the most comprehensive online coaching education and mentorship program. This course teaches you how to design long-term training programs for any client so you can grow your in-person or remote coaching business.

On top of learning a scalable system of coaching, all CCP Coaches get access to our coaching platform, CoachRx, which will help you make long-term planning and designing a breeze.

CCP not only bridges the gap between the classroom and the gym floor, but also gives you the opportunity to develop your own coaching flair with live mentorship calls and case studies.

Spots are going quickly and our next mentorship group won't be open until the next quarter, so act now and apply to speak to a coaching advisor today to see if the CCP is right for you.

[APPLY NOW](#)

THE PROGRAM DESIGN ESSENTIALS PLAYLIST

If you're anything like most coaches then you've felt that all too familiar writer's block creep in. You waste 15 minutes going back and forth in your brain on the best squat variation to choose for your workout or the perfect rep range to prescribe... and that's only A1. of the session you're designing.

You want to design the best workout possible, you want to strike a balance between enjoyment and effectiveness, and you want to get predictable results for every one of your clients. While that process may feel like starting over every time you sit down to program, it doesn't have to.

Even for the most difficult clients with specific goals, program design can be simple if you adopt a principle-based approach to designing training programs. And the principles in this guide are just the tip of the iceberg of the complete OPEX Method of program design.

If you're not quite ready to commit to the complete OPEX CCP, then dip your toes in continued education with the Program Design Essentials Playlist course bundle. You'll learn the OPEX principles that have helped thousands of coaches design better programs. Use the code PDMADESIMPLE for 50% off your purchase.

[BUY NOW](#)



READY TO BECOME A CCP COACH?

COACHING CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

An OPEX CCP Coach is a trusted fitness advisor and a partner in delivering results to clients. They are leaders on the front lines, making a real difference in the lives of people in their community. Ultimately, what makes OPEX CCP Coaches stand out is their ability to meet their clients where they are at — regardless of age, training history, lifestyle, or goals — and design a comprehensive personalized fitness program.

ARE YOU READY TO BECOME A LEADING FITNESS PROFESSIONAL?

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