



PROGRAM DESIGN MADE SIMPLE

THE PATTERNS & PACING ROADMAP

ALWAYS
MOVE
WITH PURPOSE
OPEX
ON THE MOVE SINCE '99

OPEX

A balanced fitness program includes both resistance and aerobic training. Knowing where to start and how to progress both of these elements can feel overwhelming if you don't have a roadmap to follow.

That's where the Patterns & Pacing Roadmaps, introduced in this guide, come in. Read on to learn a systematic approach to simultaneously progressing both functional strength and aerobic fitness in a well-rounded program.

At OPEX, we like to refer to resistance training as “Patterns” and aerobic work and “Pacing” to help our clients better connect to the intention of including both types of training in a balanced program. When the goal is fitness for health, longevity, and vitality, these terms speak to the intentions of progressing functional movement patterns and developing the ability to sustain for life.

While this guide just scratches the surface of all there is to know about program design, it will help you simplify your approach to designing with a step-by-step system.

To continue your program design education, sign up for the [Program Design Essentials Playlist](#) and learn the OPEX principles that have helped thousands of coaches design better programs.

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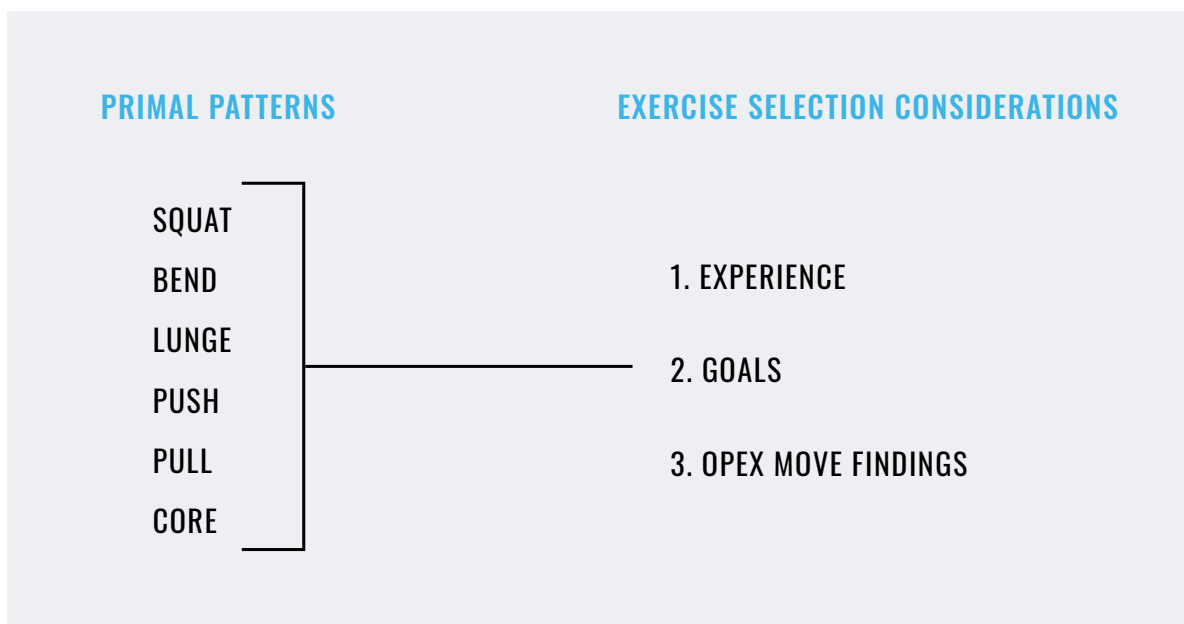


PATTERNS

In the OPEX Method, taught in the [OPEX Coaching Certificate Program \(CCP\)](#), the term patterns is used to refer to the six foundational patterns of movement, namely the squat, lunge, push, pull, bend and core.

Patterns should form the basis of the resistance training portion of your client's program and be practiced three times a week. Specific goals, experience, and schedules may make it appropriate to train patterns more or less frequently, but for the majority of new clients three sessions is optimal for sustainability.

Which patterns your client performs is dictated by how well they perform the [OPEX Move assessment](#), as well as their experience with that pattern. Whether you prescribe patterns using bodyweight, machines, barbells, kettlebells, dumbbells, and more again comes down to your client's skill level and experience.



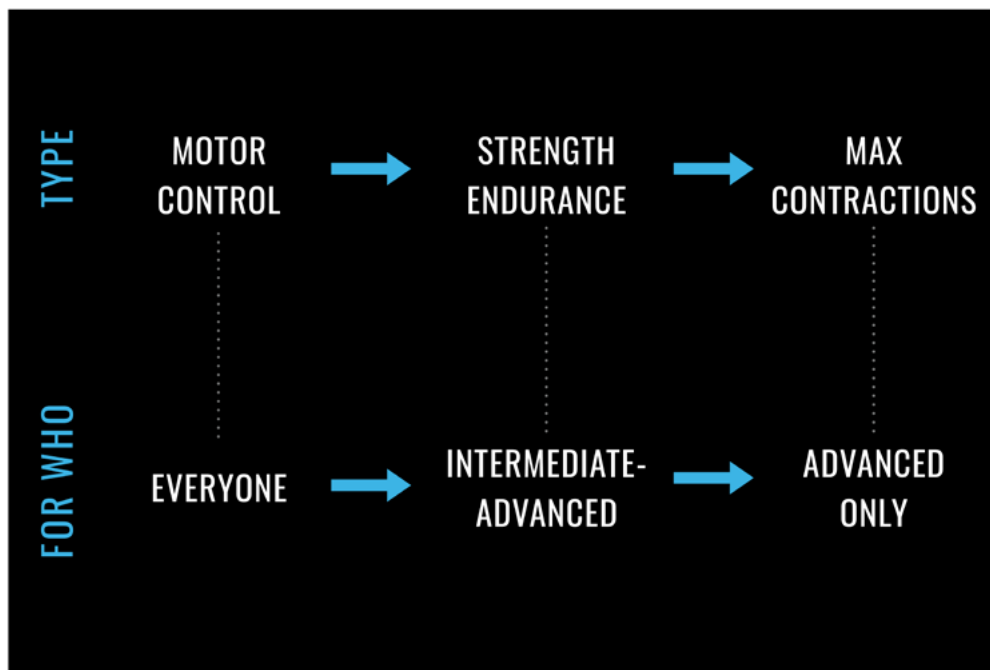
When prescribing patterns an OPEX Coach takes into consideration the results of their client's OPEX Move assessment, as well as their function as identified in the initial consultation.

The aim of prescribing patterns is not to ensure your client can execute each functional movement pattern perfectly, but to take an individualized approach. If for example, a client failed the scratch test due to limited internal rotation in their shoulder, it's up to you to determine, based on their function, whether it's useful to work on improving the pattern.

To improve or progress a pattern, a client moves along the contraction continuum from motor control to strength endurance to max contractions. Motor control means having the ability to move effectively and efficiently in a pattern. This is what is assessed in OPEX Move. If someone passes the air squat assessment, then they have motor control in the squat pattern.

If a client masters motor control, they can move forward to strength endurance. Strength endurance is where motor control is challenged either by load, intensity, or volume. Taking the above example, to further challenge the air squat, one might prescribe a goblet squat.

Max contractions (rep maxes) are the most intense variation of the contraction progression. Again using the above example, the goblet squat would be replaced by a heavy squat variation, such as in a Smith Machine back squat or one-rep max front squat.



Motor Control Example:

Goblet Squat, @3131, 10 reps x 3 sets; rest 2 min

Strength Endurance Example:

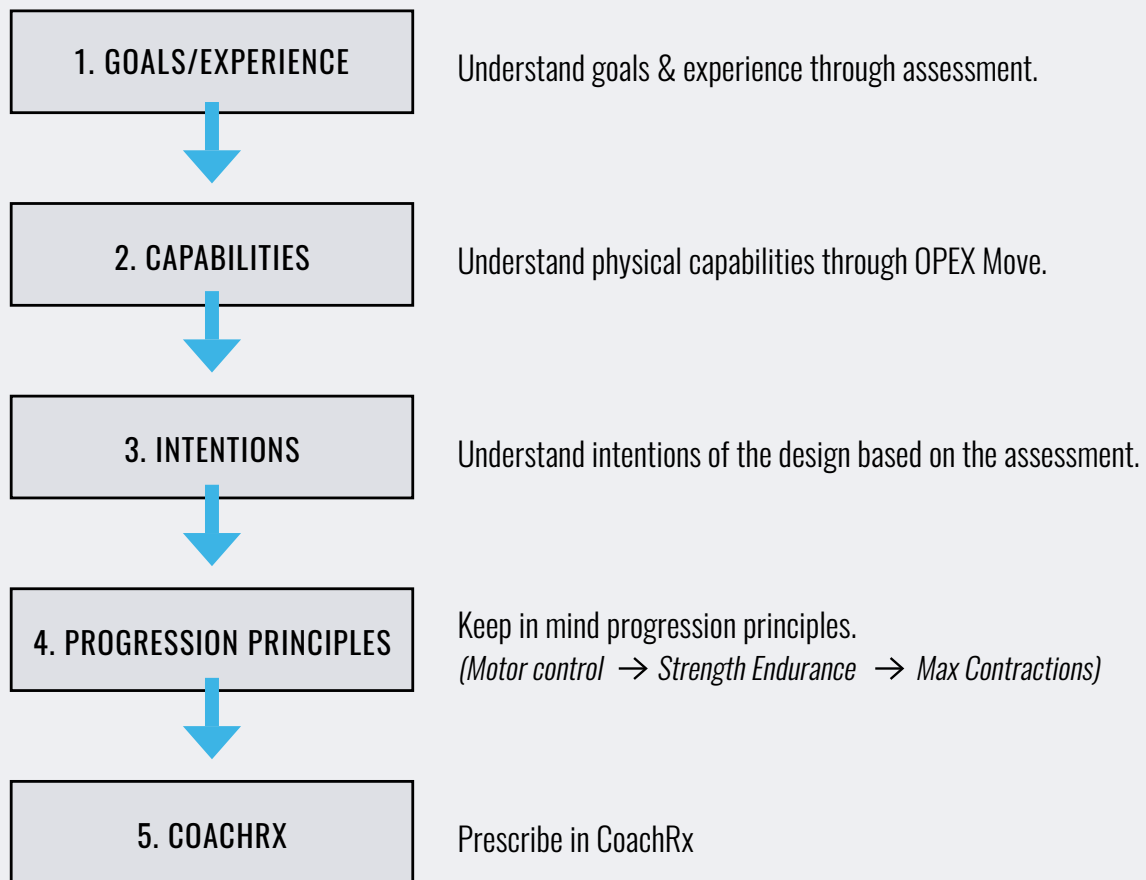
Cable Cyclist Squat, @20X0, 12-15 reps x 3 sets, rest 90 sec

Max Contraction Example:

Back Squat, @20X1, 2,2,2,1,1,1; rest 5 min

Patterns should be prescribed within **CoachRx**. For ease, the platform breaks down exercises by pattern, providing you with hundreds of options for each. If you're unsure what to prescribe, go to exercise selection, sort by pattern, and choose exercises relative to your client's OPEX Move assessment results and their function. Be sure to observe how your client performs with your program and feel free to change it if it's not effective: such is the freedom of individual design.

PATTERN PRESCRIPTION ROADMAP

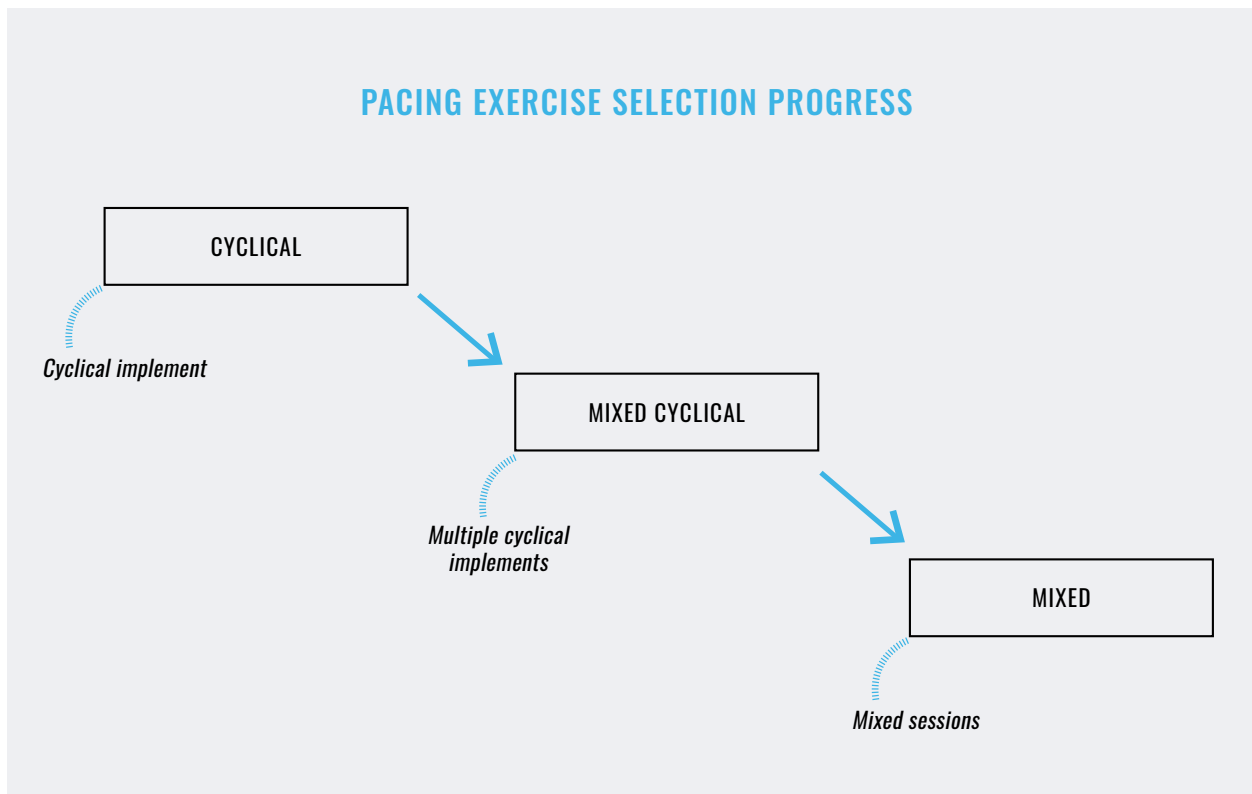


PACING

In the OPEX Method, taught in the [OPEX Coaching Certificate Program \(CCP\)](#), the term pacing is used to refer to aerobic work. The term is preferred as it encourages the client to approach aerobic work with the goal of repeatability and sustainability.

Pacing should be performed by clients four times a week on the days they are not practicing patterns. What pacing exercises you select for clients is based on their ability, experience and the [OPEX Work assessment](#). Some possible exercises include walking, hiking, running, biking and swimming, as well as exercises using machines such as the rower, Assault Bike or Versa Climber. Pacing may include sessions in the gym, as well as simple prescriptions like going for a 30-60 minute walk.

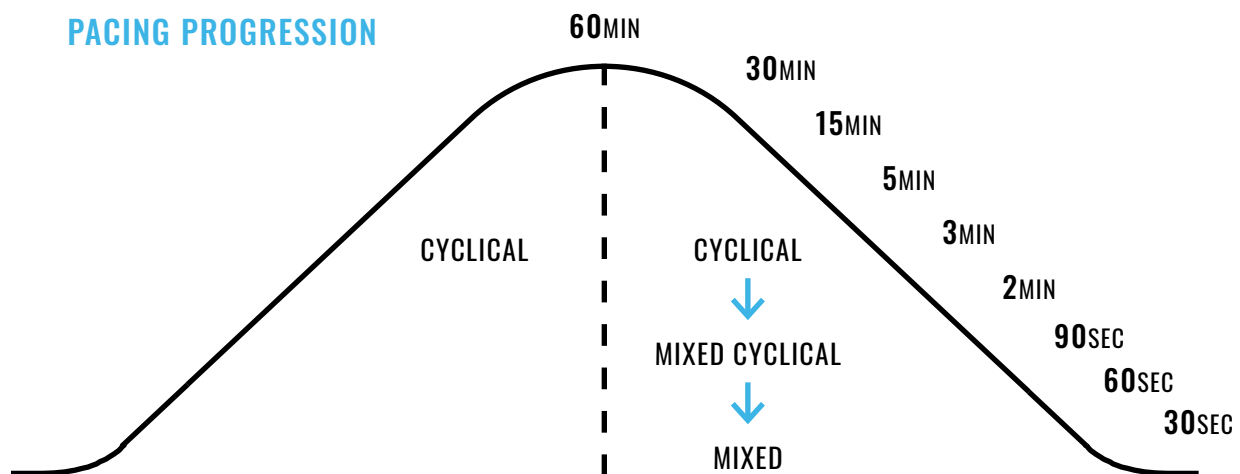
When it comes to pacing progression, the initial goal is for all your clients to be able to do 60 minutes of aerobic work in a sustainable way.



When prescribing pacing, an OPEX Coach takes into consideration the results of their client's OPEX Work assessment, as well as their experience with aerobic exercise.

Whatever their starting point is, the initial goal is to be able to do 60 minutes of pacing work in a sustainable fashion. This might look like starting them with a 30-minute hike, progressing them to a 40-minute hike the next week, and so on to 60 minutes. Alternatively, this could be 15 minutes on an Assault Bike at an easy pace, coupled with a small period of rest, and another 15-minute block. Blocks of work are extended over a period of time until the client can comfortably ride the bike for 60 minutes.

Once a client reaches the initial goal of 60 minutes, the MAP continuum begins. MAP is an acronym for Maximal Aerobic Power, which is a classification framework for aerobic training phases. MAP progresses from MAP 10 to MAP 1 with specific time frames for cyclical work, rest, and guidelines for the number of sets. In principle, as individuals progress from MAP 10-1, they are progressing from aerobic endurance to aerobic power as the pace of work progresses from slower to faster. In practice, this looks like progressing from longer and slower intervals to shorter and faster intervals.



1. First, get to 60min of cyclical, sustainable activity.
2. Next, progress through the MAP continuum with cyclical modalities.
3. Optional, progress through the MAP continuum with mixed cyclical modalities.
4. Optional, progress through the MAP continuum with mixed modalities.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER: PATTERNS & PACING EXAMPLE

Client Hannah
39 years old
5'7", 175 lbs

GOALS

Improved body composition and improved energy

EXPERIENCE

Beginner (12 months group fitness training, 1-3 x week inconsistently. No regular movement on non-gym days.)

CAPABILITIES

OPEX Move:

- Lacking motor control in the squat - torso leans forward
- Lacking core endurance in the side plank - could not hold for 90 seconds per side

OPEX Work:

- 10 min Airbike for max cal = 64 cal
 - Very challenged by effort - low ability to do work
-

INTENTIONS

- Increase core muscle endurance through exposure to the side plank
- Improve squat motor control with front-loaded squat variations and controlled tempos
- Exposure to all patterns of movement each session
- Improve aerobic fitness, starting with ability to sustain 60 minutes of work
- Develop consistency with 3 days per week in the gym

PROGRESSION PRINCIPLES

Initial Training Cycle:

- 8 week Accumulation phase (lower intensity, moderate-higher volume, focus on technical ability)
- Patterns:
 - Develop core motor control before progressing to strength endurance contractions in all other patterns
 - Develop squat motor control before progressing to strength endurance contractions in the squat
 - 3 full body resistance sessions per week in the gym
- Pacing:
 - MAP 10, progressing volume from 15 minutes to 60 minutes of cyclical activity. Adding 5-10 minutes to daily walk per week
 - 4 walking sessions per week outside the gym

Long-Term Progression Notes:

- Patterns
 - After motor control is achieved in core and squat, assess strength endurance and prioritize increasing strength endurance across all patterns
- Pacing
 - After initial 8 weeks of MAP 10 build, shift to 8 weeks per cyclical MAP, progressing from MAP 9 to 1. (80 week progression total from 10 to 1.)
 - Intentions to learn pacing and build volume at each MAP
 - 1-2 pacing sessions performed in the gym after the initial 8 week MAP 10 walking progression (if 90%+ compliant with the initial 8 week program)

PRESCRIBE IN COACHRX

Daily Plan:

Monday - Squat, Push, Bend, Pull, Core, Lunge

Tuesday - MAP 10

Wednesday - Squat, Pull, Bend, Push, Lunge, Core

Thursday - MAP 10

Friday - Lunge, Push, Squat, Pull, Core, Bend

Saturday - MAP 10

Sunday - MAP 10

WEEK 1 PROGRAM DESIGN

| MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY |
|---|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Squat, Push, Bend, Pull, Core, Lunge</i> | MAP 10 | <i>Squat, Pull, Bend, Push, Lunge, Core</i> | MAP 10 | <i>Lunge, Push, Squat, Pull, Core, Bend</i> | MAP 10 | MAP 10 |
| <p>A1. Goblet Squat @3131, 8-10 reps, x 3 sets; rest 90 sec</p> <p>A2. Incline Push-Up @3211, 8-10 reps, x 3 sets; rest 90 sec</p> <p>B1. KB RDL @3111, 10-12 reps, x 3 sets; rest 90 sec</p> <p>B2. Dual Dumbbell Prone Row @3111, 10-12 reps, x 3 sets; rest 90 sec</p> <p>C1. Side Plank AMSAP/side x 3 sets; rest 90 sec</p> <p>C2. Dumbbell Walking Lunge @3010, 20-24 alt steps x 3 sets; rest 90 sec</p> | 15 minute walk outdoors | <p>A1. Cable Cyclist Goblet Squat @3131, 8-10 reps x 3 sets; rest 90 sec</p> <p>A2. Lat Pulldown @3111, 8-10 reps x 3 sets; rest 90 sec</p> <p>B1. Goblet Good Morning @3111, 10-12 reps x 3 sets; rest 90 sec</p> <p>B2. Dumbbell Bench Press @3111, 10-12 reps x 3 sets; rest 90 sec</p> <p>B3. Lateral Box Step Down @3111, 10-12 reps/side x 3 sets; rest 90 sec</p> <p>C. Ring Plank Hold AMSAP x 3 sets; rest 90 sec</p> | 15 minute walk outdoors | <p>A1. Goblet Split Squat @3111, 8-10 reps/side x 3 sets; rest 90 sec</p> <p>A2. Single Arm Dumbbell Press @3111, 8-10 reps/side x 3 sets; rest 90 sec</p> <p>B1. Leg Press @3010, 10-12 reps x 3 sets; rest 90 sec</p> <p>B2. DB Pullover @3111, 10-12 reps x 3 sets; rest 90 seconds</p> <p>C. 3 Sets 50m Single Arm Farmer's Carry/side Rest 60 sec 30 sec Sorenson Hold Rest 60 sec</p> | 20 minute walk outdoors | 20 minute walk outdoors |

GETTING PERSONALIZED

Oftentimes, the simplest progressions are the most effective ones. This is especially true for the 95% of clients you'll encounter who are starting with a low level of fitness and who want their training to help them live healthy, long, and vital lives.

Even for more advanced clients with specific goals, program design can be simple if you adopt a principle-based approach to designing training programs. Patterns & Pacing is just the tip of the iceberg of the complete OPEX Method of program design.

Continue your education with the [Program Design Essentials Playlist](#) course bundle and learn the OPEX principles that have helped thousands of coaches design better programs.

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PROGRAM DESIGN ESSENTIALS PLAYLIST

CONCURRENT TRAINING PRINCIPLES

MUSCLE ENDURANCE TREE

CIRCUIT METCON EXECUTION

TAKE YOUR COACHING CAREER TO THE NEXT LEVEL

The Program Design Essentials Playlist is a great introduction to programming, but the [Coaching Certificate Program](#) (CCP) is right for you if you want to learn the complete OPEX Method and stand out as an elite fitness coach.

In CCP we go both deep and wide into program design, exposing you to an entire system of principles and frameworks for resistance and energy systems training.

- ✓ Conducting assessments and identifying faults & priorities
- ✓ Exercise selection with a pattern-based approach
- ✓ Progressing energy systems— aerobic and anaerobic
- ✓ Understanding muscle contraction types
- ✓ Progressing strength training based on training age
- ✓ Building long-term and short-term plans
- ✓ Organizing weekly splits with concurrent training principles
- ✓ Adjusting reps, sets, tempo, and rest to get the right dose-response
- ✓ Designing workouts for beginner, intermediate, and advanced clients

And that doesn't even include the nutrition, lifestyle, consultation and fitness business principles rolled into our system of coaching!

By building this base of knowledge and gaining hands-on experience with our mentorship groups and case studies, you'll graduate with all the tools you need to design personalized programs that get your clients predictable results.

Make the complex feel simple with a proven program design system used by thousands of coaches.
START THE OPEX COACHING CERTIFICATE PROGRAM TODAY AND FIND YOUR PROGRAMMING FLOW STATE.

[APPLY 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?

LEARN MORE

OPEX CCP