

## Using social media to promote your business

Social media provides you with the platform and tools to build relationships with existing and potential clients. It's free; it's targeted and can showcase your personality and your PT expertise. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram can be highly effective marketing tools, but they need to be used in the right way. Some general tips to keep in mind include:

1. Quality content over quantity, but...
2. Update consistently – be realistic about the time you can commit to promoting your business through social media. In the beginning, pick one platform (which will probably be Facebook) and focus on updating regularly – at least 3 times a week if not every day. Keep checking in and respond quickly to comments or questions from followers.
3. Cross promote your business – if you have a website, include your website address on your social media profiles and include social media buttons on your website.
4. Keep it professional, but personal – let your followers see your personality, but keep the conversation to fitness, motivation and health.
5. Recruit clients – run promotions or offers to recruit new clients and create a buzz around your business.
6. Be aware of privacy issues. Always make sure you obtain written permission before using clients' photos.
7. Ensure you regularly moderate comments on your social media posts and delete any comments that may be interpreted as being harmful or defamatory. It may be worthwhile implementing your own social media policy. Contact us if you'd like a sample policy.

### What to post?

It's important to remember that your overall aim is to increase your client base, not just to gain a large following. You do this by building your image and reputation as an expert in your field. This means you need to stay on top of new developments in the fitness industry which you can share with your followers. Subscribe to health and fitness blogs, read the papers, share everything you think your clients would be interested in. Fitness can be an emotional issue for some people, so it's important to be sensitive when choosing what to post.

To maintain interest in your page, it's a good idea to mix up the types of posts you publish. Aim to post a combination of motivational quotes, links to relevant articles and daily fitness tips. Instead of asking for new clients, ask your current clients to share your posts with anyone they think would be interested in your services – despite the social media boom, word of mouth and referrals are still the most powerful form of endorsement.



Another type of post that can work well is a challenge. A week-long challenge may be a good place to start, as you start to build your confidence and skills in determining what to post. Ask your followers to share if they're participating and to share their ongoing results. Remember, you may encounter negative comments on your page – this is ok as long as it's not defamatory. Responding to criticism in a timely and diplomatic manner can actually improve your standing among your followers.

### What social media platforms should I use?

Every social media platform has its advantages and drawbacks – there isn't one perfect platform to use. Facebook has long been the most popular platform, followed by Twitter, but Instagram is making rapid and significant inroads into their market share. Below is an overview of the pros and cons of using each of these methods. At the end of the day, you need to use something you're comfortable with, and that you'll be able to update easily and regularly.



Pros	Cons
Most popular form of social media – more than 1.4 billion users worldwide	There's always the risk of negative comments being left, so regular monitoring of your page is required
You can include detailed info or include URLs (website links) to multiple websites	While scheduling posts means you don't have to be posting all the time, you do need to regularly check your page – responding in a timely manner to messages and comments is vital for building your client base
Very high engagement levels – people are highly likely to like, share or comment on posts	Most people's newsfeeds are so busy and crowded, it can be hard to make your posts stand out
If you have a website, Facebook can be used to steer potential clients to it, by including a link on your Facebook page	Facebook has moved towards a paid advertising model. If you have set up a Facebook business page (instead of just using your own profile), on average only 5-10% of your audience will see your posts if you don't pay for advertising.
You can schedule posts days, weeks and months in advance – saves time as you don't have to be posting continuously during the week	
Facebook can be used for creating and inviting people to events	





Pros	Cons
Very simple to use, tweets are easy to create – not a time consuming marketing tool for small businesses	140 characters can be limiting
140 character limit means you can be succinct and less formal compared to other social media platforms	Twitter streams move fast – this means it's easy for your tweet to get lost in the constant deluge of incoming tweets. The average life of a single tweet is no more than 4 hours.
It's highly interactive – allowing for businesses to respond to queries directly	Many users follow many different feeds, so it can be hard to have your tweet 'heard'. Unlike Facebook, you can't measure how many people have actually seen your tweet
Twitter is becoming more visual – images and videos have been shown to increase engagement	Direct (private) messages can only be sent to one user at a time – this may not be a problem for a small business, but can be a time consuming way to communicate if you're trying to reach a large number of followers



Pros	Cons
Fastest growing social media platform	Photos can only be shared from mobile devices
Is very popular in the fitness industry as it's such a highly visual medium	As it's such a visual medium, it can be hard to provide detailed further info
50 times engagement rate of Facebook, 20 times that of Twitter	URLs can't be linked in the comments section – if you're trying to refer people to your website, you are relying on them to go back to your 'bio' on your profile page
Appeals very strongly to millennials (aka Gen Y) – people born from the early 1980s – 2000. Is this the client base you're trying to reach?	
Created specifically for mobile devices	
Hashtags are a targeted filtering tool – they can help you look for people who are actively using a particular term eg #realpeople_realfitness	



### Ideas and inspiration

Want to see how it's done? Have a look at the following PTs' social media accounts, and see how they post on a variety of topics and the differences between their Instagram and Facebook accounts.

Kayla Itsines: <https://www.facebook.com/k.itsines/> and with over 5 million followers, she's known as the Fitness Queen of Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/kayla\\_itsines/](https://www.instagram.com/kayla_itsines/)

Bret Contreras: <https://www.instagram.com/bretcontreras1/> and on Twitter: @bretcontreras

Natalie Jill: <https://www.facebook.com/nataliejillfit/> and <https://www.instagram.com/nataliejillfit/>

Keon Hudoba: <https://www.instagram.com/keonihudoba/>

Girls gone strong: <https://www.facebook.com/GirlsGoneStrong>

Bob Harper on Twitter: @MyTrainerBob

### What next?

Get out there and give it a go! Whether you're a brand new graduate just starting out or an established PT looking to increase your connections and client base, social media can work for you.

[More general marketing information](#) is available in the Trainers Toolkit. Any questions, give us a call at the PAA office – 1300 784 467.

