

## How to select a lifelong

# Personal Trainer

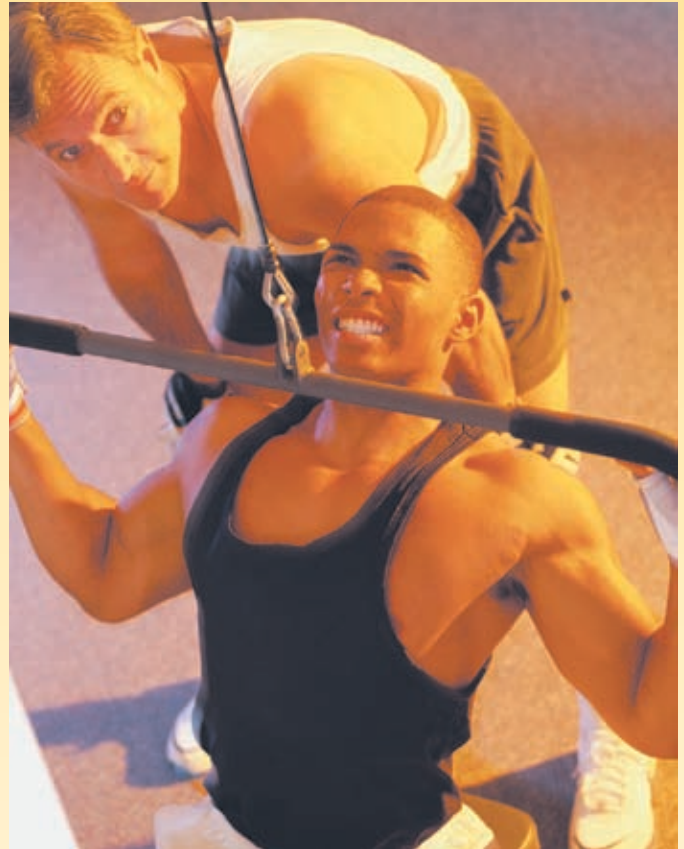
You have finally made the decision to change your lifestyle and begin an exercise program, but you do not know whom to trust to guide you in the right direction. Choosing a personal trainer is a very important decision and one that needs to be explored very carefully. You want to work with someone that will help you reach your goals by designing a safe and effective exercise and nutritional program while still being able to motivate you along the way. This article will help shed some light on the proper selection of a personal trainer. There are a few key points to finding one that fits you and your needs.

### CERTIFICATION & EDUCATION

When selecting a personal trainer the most important aspect is their certification and educational background. This insures that you are working with a professional who can provide you with a customized program for maximum effectiveness. A personal trainer is expected to have a considerable amount of knowledge on subjects such as, Exercise Physiology, Human Anatomy and Physiology, Kinesiology, Biomechanics, Sports Medicine, Health and Wellness, exercise programming and have a basic nutritional background. Although not always a requirement, a college degree in one of the above subject areas is desirable. Be sure your trainer has a certification through one of the various nationally recognized organizations. Among the most respected and well known include the National Strength & Conditioning Association (NSCA), the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), and the American Council of Exercise (ACE). Your trainer should also be keeping up-to-date with new developments in the field through continuing education and certification renewals. (There is also a 6-month, State Certified Diploma program called The National Personal Training Institute, located in NE Phila., that gives you hands on education and a wealth of information, totally preparing you to be an excellent trainer that is qualified and certified.)

### EXPERIENCE

Beyond certification and education, there are other qualifications you should consider when selecting a trainer. Be sure to inquire about their overall experience in the field by asking, "How long have you been a personal trainer," "What types of clients have you worked with," and "Do you have access to allied professionals such as physicians, physical therapists, registered dietitians, and other fitness leaders?" Personal trainers have a wide range of skills and abilities to help you reach your fitness goals. So make sure that your trainer has plenty of experience in the industry.



### INSURANCE

The main goal of a personal trainer is to provide their clients with a safe, progressive and effective exercise program. Along with that comes a great responsibility to offer clients adequate liability insurance. The trainer should possess the knowledge of basic First Aid and be certified to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). This should be a no-brainer when selecting a personal trainer.



Frank and Heather Skerlak are both owners of Optimum Health & Fitness (OHF) based in Ridley Township, Delaware County. Together they have over 20 years of experience in the industry. Both have earned a BS in Kinesiology, Exercise Physiology at West Chester University. While working under some of the industries top professionals, Frank's clientele base has ranged from seniors to Olympic athletes. Frank was offered the opportunity to internship with the Philadelphia Eagle's strength & conditioning team. Frank has also had the honor of being a National Champion on the Marine Fitness Team. Heather has played volleyball for West Chester University and earned the title of one of PSAC's top five athletes on the East Coast. She has also been dedicated to keeping healthy & fit for over 10 years. Together they both strive to create awareness throughout the community on the benefits of exercise and nutrition.