



# COACHING PROPER FORM TO AVOID CHRONIC INJURY

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WITH FABIO COMANA

INDUSTRY INSIDER | #002

FITNESS **SG**

**EXPRO**<sub>2020</sub>  
FITNESS CONVENTION SINGAPORE



## FABIO COMANA

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Fabio is SDSU and NASM faculty, and medical advisor board member / scientific advisor for OrangeTheory, Core Health and Fitness, and Caloric Responsibility. Previously, with ACE, he was the original creator of ACE's IFT™ model and their live educational workshops.

Prior experiences include Division I collegiate head coach and strength-conditioning coach; opening/managing clubs for Club One, and president of Genesis Wellness Consulting. He is a award-winning national and international presenter; media spokesperson and accomplished author.

## WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT?

The opportunity I worked to achieve to be part of an industry where we can shape the minds and bodies of so many and make a difference is both a great honor and an accomplishment. My career path has certainly zigged-and-zagged, attaining successes through hard work, diligence and overcoming adversity, combined with a little luck and fortitude, and even some dead-ends. However, with every dead-end I faced, it bestowed upon valuable experiences that have helped me become, better and some even presented new opportunities for me to pursue.

However, I think it is my diverse experiences as a trainer, a strength and conditioning, and health coach, a teacher and educator, certification director, researcher, presenter, author and international presenter that have helped me craft my niche as an industry influencer which is perhaps another great accomplishment for me. This diversity did evolve slowly over the past 20 years, but I have loved every minute of it.

# WHY IS COACHING PROPER MOVEMENT SO IMPORTANT TO TRAINERS?

Although we train a diverse group of clients who vary in fitness level and capability, they all share one thing in common; that being the need to move. Unfortunately, much of our preparation in becoming fitness professionals has focused upon teaching exercises rather than teaching movement which creates a major disconnect. The disconnect I speak of is that the public, who are becoming increasingly hypokinetic (i.e., not moving sufficiently), given the many advances in technology, are most likely not prepared (physiologically, biomechanically) to perform the many exercises programmed for them.

Regardless, the body subscribes to the Law of Facilitation which essentially means that it finds a way to get the movement completed – this often resorts in a joint or segment borrowing movement from another/adjacent joint/segment when its own mobility is lacking or by incorporating movement into another plane.



The consequence of this compensation is increased dysfunctional movement within the joint/segment which ultimately leads to the development of chronic overuse and injury. All **we need do** is examine statistical research on the prevalence of chronic injuries in fitness – they are continuing to rise.

## WHAT TRENDS IN FITNESS ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT?


In an era where people are progressively spending less time in the gym (i.e., frequency of visits, duration of a session), coupled with our obsession with expending calories, the most concerning trend I see is related to HIIT training.

First off, this is a nebulous term because most fitness professionals confuse ‘intensity’ with ‘effort’ and they are not the same. Why this has happened is because of a basic lack of understanding of the physiology of how our anaerobic pathways function. HIIT training is not new and its origins can be traced back almost 70 years. Its origins lie in sports performance where the goal was primarily intended to help athletes become bigger, stronger and faster. If you observe top athletes training with a goal of

improving their best performance, they spend the majority of their training session, recovering between sets or bouts of near maximal performance (what HIIT is intended to be). For example, a 20-min sprint session may only involve 1-to-2 minutes of actual sprinting. This certainly does not expend calories and was never intended to. The fitness industry has largely ignored science and created what they call HIIT, which is nothing more than simply high-volume interval training and because of the lack of adequate recovery intervals, the emphasis has shifted to effort rather than performance. That is fine, just call it interval training (Not HIIT) but also recognize that this introduces an increased probability for injury given technique compensation, and also poorer exercise experiences for some.

## HOW CAN A TRAINER ADDRESS THESE CONCERNS?

I always encourage fitness professionals to fully understand their clients' needs and desires. For many it is about some transformation (e.g., 'fat-to-fit'), but this is where fitness professionals need to be more cognizant of the facts. Exercise calories are not the frontier for weight loss and research has been demonstrating this for the past 10 years. For example, the average American male and female consume



approximately 18,500 and 12,500 calories weekly, yet their exercise calories fail to even reach 2,000 calories weekly. What this means is that exercise calories amount to only about 10% of the calories we eat, so why do we keep believing that this is the lynchpin for this transformation?

The reality is the remaining 4-to-16 hours in the day are where you can make the biggest difference (what we call NEAT calories). A differential of 50-to-75 kcal in a workout – perhaps the difference between a good exercise experience and a bad experience can easily be attained by simply standing or moving more for around 15-to-30 minutes each day. This does not mean find more time to be active, but simply changing the way we do the things one chooses to do. This allows trainers to take the pressure of calories in a workout, and to create better experiences and to preserve good form by avoiding excessive fatigue whereby form becomes compromised and the potential for injury increases.

## WHAT AREAS IN PARTICULAR SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A STARTING POINT?

We all recognize that individuals have the expectation that trainers/coaches will make their clients sweat to burn calories. This typically involves what I call loaded training (e.g., using external loads or resistance). However, a good practitioner, like a good doctor will examine underlying factors in order to determine an appropriate course of action.

For fitness professionals, this entails movement screen(s), which help assess one's readiness to participate in loaded training or whether the individual is better suited starting with some corrective exercise modalities to restore stability and mobility within the kinetic chain. This should then progress them into unloaded training (i.e., training movement patterns) before entering loaded training (i.e., exercises).



## IS THERE ANY CONCERN REGARDING SCOPE OF PRACTICE WHEN ADDRESSING MOVEMENT AND CORRECTIVE EXERCISE?

Yes and no. Performing movement screens and then developing and implementing corrective exercise techniques to restore stability and mobility within the body lie well within the scope of practice of a trainer. However, the practice of trying to treat some dysfunction and pain using more therapeutic modalities (e.g., joint manipulation, etc.) exceeds one's scope of practice as a trainer. A concern I have lies with the use of some of these emerging recovery tools (e.g., vibration, percussion tools) which are being used more for rehabilitative means to manage and eliminate pain rather than using them to accelerate recovery post-exercise and help attenuate or shorten post-exercise muscle soreness (DOMS).



## HOW DOES A TRAINER MARKET THEMSELVES AS A MOVEMENT SPECIALIST?

First and foremost, what is needed is credible education and practice to justify the use of such a label. I then suggest learning and understanding the needs of your audience and identifying the passion points that resonate with them. I have often found pain and discomfort, and activities they struggle to now perform are passionate points that are very relevant.

You then craft your narrative (i.e., mission statement or elevator pitch) to touch on these points and speak to your audience following Simon Sinek's Golden Circle approach – start with the 'Why' and not the 'what' and 'how'. Why do you exist in this space – what is your purpose for being a trainer and why are you relevant to me. Address those passion points first as your reason for being here, for being relevant to build that perception in their mind that (a) you can help, and (b) you are competent in your skills sets to help.

## TOP TIP TO PASS TO OUR EXERCISE PROFESSIONALS

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*Look to credible resources in your industry and invest your time and efforts in developing your skills and abilities*

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Perform your own S.W.O.T analysis on yourself (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) – remember, a weakness presents as an opportunity. If your goal is to improve your knowledge and skills in understanding movement and you recognize this as a weakness, then perform a gap analysis on the ‘what’ and the ‘where’. What do you need to learn and master to become more of a movement specialist and where can you find this content?

Look to credible resources within your industry where your money and time will be well spent and invest your time and effort to not only learning, but in developing your skills and abilities to become an effective practitioner.



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