

WORKING IN SPORT & FITNESS



Name
Heather Gillam

Job Title
Freelance Personal Trainer

Organisation
Fitbiz

Can you briefly describe what your job involves?

Working on a one-to-one, partner or small group basis with clients to help them achieve their health, fitness and nutritional goals

Can you describe a typical working day?

I get up pretty early to do my horse, then usually have a client in the morning. I go to the gym a few days a week and work it around my clients. I usually work with 4 or 5 clients a day and I'm almost never home before 9pm. You have to be quite flexible with times, as people want to train when they're not at work.

What are the typical working hours?

I tend to start quite early (about 6am!) and have clients dotted around the day, it suits me to work like this as I can fit in everything else I want to do, rather than being rushed off my feet at one end of the day and having nothing to do at the other end! My last client is usually 7.30pm, and I'm generally with each client an hour and a half.

What's the pay like?

Pretty good. I earn more from Personal Training for 5 hours each day than I did working 8 hour days in an office. The going rate in my area is around £35 per session.

How did you get into the industry?

Via a training course with Premier Training International Ltd. It was really hard work but definitely worth it!

How did you reach the current point in your career?

Through speaking lots of people and writing in local magazines so my name is known locally – that way, when people do decide they want to change, I'm the first name to come to mind!

What aspects of your work do you enjoy the most?

Being able to help people! I also enjoy being able to do what I want to do and not being chained to a desk all day.

Are there any aspects of the job you dislike?

It can be quite unreliable – if a client goes on holiday I don't get paid! Also, fairly obviously, I don't get paid if I take time off, or if I'm ill. It

can also be really hard work finding new clients.

What makes someone suitable for this kind of job?

To a degree I work when I want to, but you do have to be really self motivated, and really interested in what you're doing as it's all too easy to switch the TV on and take an afternoon nap.

If I wanted your job how would I go about it?

Come up with some new ideas before committing yourself to anything, then go through the training and at the same time do some marketing, so you have a few clients straight away once you've done the training course.

What has been your best career decision?

Training to be a Personal Trainer! And since I've done that, the best thing I decided was that I didn't want to be in a gym.

What has been your best piece of luck?

Coming up with ideas other people haven't (yet!) – being in the right place at the right time with regards to getting editorial space in local magazines. Also, I've learnt that I'm good at getting on with pretty much anyone. I think my enthusiasm rubs off on my clients, and keeps them motivated!

Have you had any recent training?

Only the Premier Training course. I've found lots of areas I'm particularly interested in since starting out, so I know what courses I want to do to keep my REPs membership up to date.

Have you ever had any careers advice?

From Skills Active – very helpful friendly people!

Any other points or advice for someone who wanted your job?

This was such a HUGE move for me, but I decided I wasn't happy doing what I was doing and that I should just take a chance. I had loads of ideas about how I was going to get to where I wanted to be, and what gaps there were in the market and just went for it. If you're considering training to be a PT and you have lots of ideas then go for it! Just not in my area please....