

# Prescribing FITNESS

**Jennifer Salter's** keen desire to help others and constant drive to learn provide a new lease on life for clients with health issues

**Can you describe for Can-Fit-Pro members what it is that you do within the fitness industry?**

I am the director of Lifeline Personal Training, a personal fitness training and consulting practice in Toronto. Our focus is helping people use exercise to manage their medical problems. I have a Master of Social Work degree, and realized early in my career that I wished to marry my love of helping others through counselling, with fitness. I consider myself a “health care professional” as opposed to a “fitness instructor”. In addition to working directly with clients, I write articles on fitness-related topics for various publications, and teach continuing education seminars to medical professionals on exercise programming for different medical conditions. I mentor new personal trainers, and recently acted as a consultant for a soon-to-be-published book on “mom-preneurs” – women with children who run their own companies.

**How long have you been active in this role?**

I started Lifeline Personal Training fifteen years ago, immediately after completing graduate school.

**What do you love about what you do?**

I love helping others. The power of physical activity is irrefutable, and results can be remarkably quick. I take satisfaction in knowing that I have helped so many clients achieve their goals. I enjoy the challenge of programming for complex health considerations. Lifelong learning is one of my most important values, and this dovetails nicely with my chosen specialization as I must constantly enhance my knowledge base. I relish the autonomy that operating my own business affords. I like making my own decisions, and setting my own schedule. Being self-employed often means long hours and doing a fair bit of work with no pay, but in my opinion it is well worth it!



**Do you know an expert in the fitness industry who deserves to be PRO-Filed? If you or someone you know should be the next Can-Fit-Pro PRO-File, please send your nominations to:  
Georgia Mattheos -  
georgia@canfitpro.com**

**What is the most memorable career experience for you to date and why?**

I have a couple through the training I have done:  
1. A 74-year-old man with peripheral vascular disease. He was unable to walk ten metres when we started. After four months of training, he could walk 45 minutes.

2. A 71-year-old female client who has multiple health challenges including lupus, double knee replacement, rotator cuff tears in each shoulder, heart attack, and severe migraine headaches. She has increased her strength by 100 percent since we started.

### What is the biggest mistake you have made and how have you learned from it?

Several marketing errors I made when I started my business. I wasted hundreds of dollars placing advertisements in various small newspapers, and on ad mail distribution. Another mistake I made at the beginning was not establishing a specific market niche.

### You've had the opportunity to travel the world experiencing fitness. Are there any interesting stories you would like to share?

I spend a lot of time in Israel, where my husband is from. His family lives in a small city, and built along the city border is a designated walking/running path. Although this path is on a major road, there is no pollution-producing industry in the area

**"Following a diagnosis of asthma in my 60's I was hoping to remain physically active in a safe way. Jennifer gave me the confidence to engage in a weekly workout that balanced safety and progress. I am now in my mid-70's and she continues to motivate me to work out to the best of my ability!"**

and all you smell is the orange blossoms from nearby groves. From about 8:00 p.m. until after midnight, this path is thronged with walkers getting in their daily exercise. I like what this demonstrates about environmental psychology – people will be active if you create an environment that makes it easy for them to exercise.

### What do you believe sets certain people apart from the rest?

- Those who:
1. Constantly improve upon their skills.
  2. Are consistent in the quality of service they offer.
  3. Are prepared, and do not decide on the spot what they will do with a client that day.
  4. Are educators.
  5. Learn counselling skills to help clients

overcome barriers to lifestyle change.

### What advice can you share to those new to the field in order to be successful?

1. Choose a specialization and build your business around it.
2. Provide excellent customer service.
3. Engage the client as an active partner in the process of lifestyle change.
4. Never stop learning.

### Is there anything else you would like to add?

I like the quote by Freya Madelaine Stark: "There can be no happiness if what we do is different from what we believe". Know your core values, and build your life and your business around them. □

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