

# Old Keys Can't Open New Doors

**What's on your horizon? Here's how to use the process of "dimensionalizing" fitness for career success and growth, with real-world tips that have worked for your colleagues.**

**N**avigating fitness career paths these days can be trickier than ever. Even with most fitness establishments now open, almost all facilities are following new frameworks of safety guidelines and best practices established during the pandemic. These adjustments continue to be a challenge—yet in challenge lies opportunity.

The evolving fitness arena has never offered as many new dimensions to the open-minded group fitness instructor and personal fitness trainer. The key to seeing and seizing these new dimensions—or **dimensionalizing**—lies in embracing a growth mindset.

Here are some creative ways fit pros like you have found new markets, revenue, purpose and passion through dimensionalizing their approach.

## **Lean Into Your Passion and Purpose**

Online events, coupled with today's in-person training, have morphed into hybrid offerings,



bringing new dimensions—and business success stories—for both group ex and personal training. (See “Dimensionalizing Your Class Calendar” on [ideafit.com](http://ideafit.com) for creative tips from fit pros on making the most of what you’re already doing through tiered and hybrid memberships and virtual classes.) In addition to dimensionalizing the

ways their “regular” classes are delivered, some fitness professionals are expanding their subject matter and audiences.

#### FINDING A FITNESS NICHE

Johanna Valencia, MS, works as the senior assistant director of fitness and wellness for Texas Tech University’s recreation department. She boosts her income by using her fitness

competition history to mentor others interested in bikini and bodybuilding posing. In addition to teaching the mandatory poses, she also shows how to boost confidence with posing styles from three different fitness and bodybuilding organizations: The National Physique Committee, the Natural Fit Federation, and the Physical Culture Association.

“Untapped career growth comes from finding a niche within fitness, then marketing to those in that niche who need your expertise,” she says.

#### PROVIDING THEMED WORKSHOPS

Janie Watkins, a yoga therapist, yoga teacher and Pilates trainer who works for Absolute Fitness, based in Gadsden, Alabama, started offering uniquely themed in-person workshops at the club where she holds

otherwise never get the chance to offer, such as pelvic floor therapy, yoga for arthritis, yoga to manage scoliosis and chakra-balancing yoga. I submitted a list of these special one-off events to my manager who agreed to *all* of them, at a rate of one per month. We call them Member Workshops, and they not only bring in additional revenue, but also allow me to dimensionalize my abilities as a teacher.”

#### DOING COMMUNITY OUTREACH

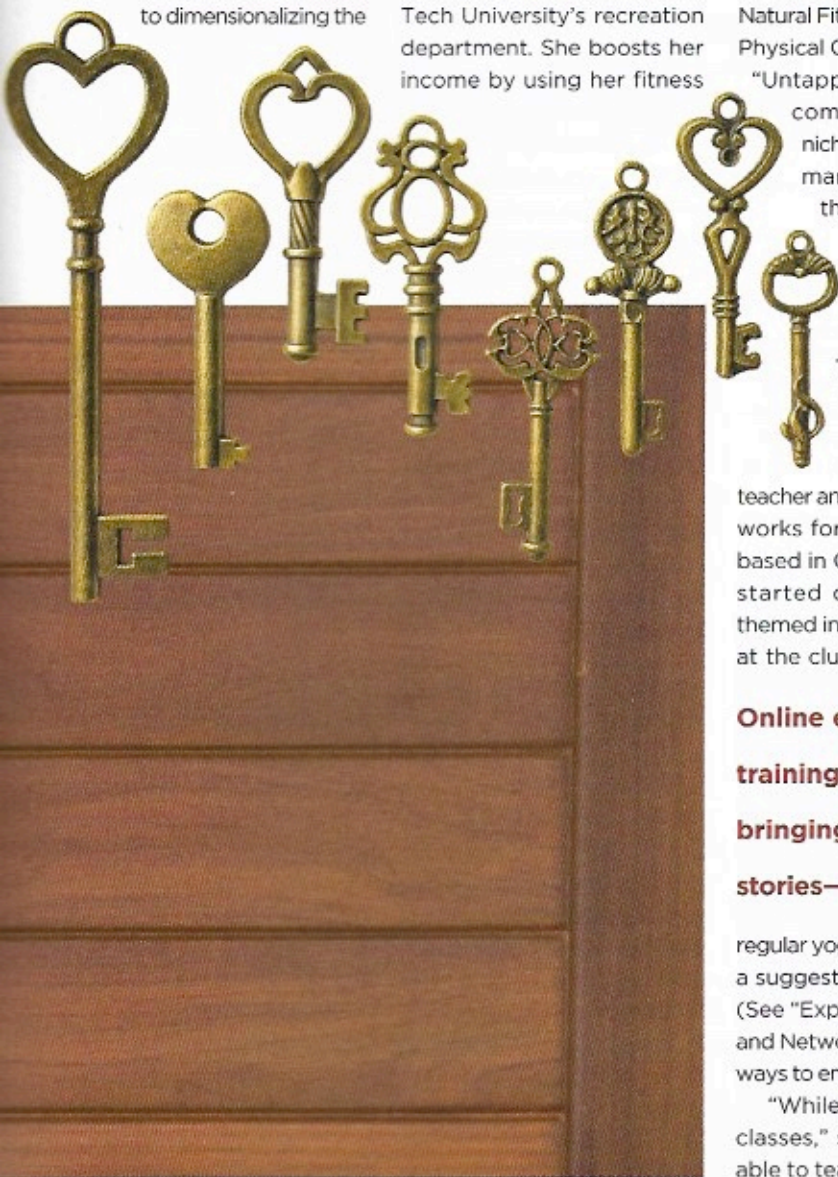
Jennifer Howes is a fitness professional based in central California. She added community outreach to her dimension of fitness income by working with GT Independence, a program that helps people with disabilities self-direct their care and how they live their lives. “I not only provide fitness training; I also provide community outings such as kayaking, hiking, bowling, tennis, going to the movies, etc. If

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regular yoga classes, thanks to a suggestion from a mentor. (See “Expanding Mentorship and Networking,” page 78, for ways to embrace mentorship.)

“While I love my regular classes,” she says, “I’m also able to teach on topics that I

an activity requires the use of my fitness expertise, I’m at one pay rate. If we’re just going to a movie, I’m on a different pay rate.” As a bonus, clients pay for all her expenses on these excursions. Howes notes that this USA-based company is



looking for more instructors to get involved. Learn more at [gtindependence.com](http://gtindependence.com).

## PARTNERING WITH PRODUCT MANUFACTURERS

Petra Kolber is a positive psychology coach, podcast host and “digital nomad” (based wherever her laptop is), as well as author of *The Perfection Detox* (Da Capo Lifelong Books 2018) and the 2001 IDEA Instructor of the Year. Recently, she has partnered with a company to make a profit through clothing and community. Kolber says, “I’ve seen how important it is to create income that does not rely solely on trading time for dollars. [so I] help fit pros realize that there is no shame in creating both impact and income.” For fit pros looking to align with other brands in this way—to make “impact and income”—visit [petrakolber.com/impactandincome](http://petrakolber.com/impactandincome).

Fyonna Vanderwerf, owner of the Hive Muskoka in Ontario, Canada, says, “I’ve started offering clients body scans

which brings me additional, repeating revenue using the Styku™ body scans.” These 3D scans offer insights into measurements, body shape, composition and other metrics. “These scans also help my clients answer the question: ‘How do you know how far you’ve come if you don’t know where you started?’” she says (visit [styku.com](http://styku.com) to learn more).

**“While I don’t exaggerate my fees, I do charge a fair price for an hourlong phone consult to help both gym owners and trainers alike . . . find new ways to make money by sharing my virtual success secrets.”**

—Noel Chelliah

## Seek Trades and Sponsorships

With new fitness dimensions come new responsibilities, too: Among them, staying certified and keeping up continuing education. Some fitness professionals have found support for this and other avenues of growth by approaching sponsors or organizations that set up trades.

## INVITING CLIENTS TO SUPPORT YOUR EDUCATION

Teresa Estill, owner of Pilates by Teresa based in Campbell, California, says, “I was saddened to hear that so many of my fitness colleagues let their certifications expire during the pandemic. Keeping up with continuing education and renewals is [especially] important now: First, because it’s ethical and, second, certification brings me more credibility with my international virtual participants.” Estill says she was able to offset these education-related costs in a unique way. “My generous, faithful clients made me ‘love offerings’ toward my recertification fees, just because I told them that I had to renew my certifications to be able to continue to teach them,” she says.

## SEEKING SPONSORSHIP FROM LOCAL BUSINESSES

Zoraida Sepúlveda, MBA, a corporate wellness consultant based in Puerto Rico, shares, “I used the idea of building community and went to the administration of my local shopping mall—Mayagüez Mall—and of the large healthcare provider, MCS, [and asked them] to sponsor my online classes in

exchange for promotion like wearing their clothes and displaying their logos virtually.” Today, she is teaching in the mall rotunda, where many of her virtual students now join her in person. The stores have continued sponsoring her, and she has a camera set up to record and broadcast her classes. “This allows the rest of the world to pay and attend virtually. Because now I reach even those outside of my island, I’m doing business globally from my iPhone locally,” she says.

## TRADING LESSONS FOR LUXURIES

Patricia Kolberg, who works as a group fitness instructor based in Gresham, Oregon, added the concept of trading services to her fitness dimensions. “I reach out to all-inclusive high-end resorts and offer to trade my services as an instructor in exchange for a stay for myself and a guest,” she says. “Then, when I’m there working, I network to find opportunities for future trades at other locations.” Fit Bodies, Inc. ([fitbodiesinc.com](http://fitbodiesinc.com)) is just one of the companies that helps connect fitness pros with destinations in the Caribbean, Central America and the Asia-Pacific region.

## Expand Your Mentorships and Networks

“Paying it forward” is no longer expected to always be a free service. The need for fitness mentors and consultants has risen to an all-time high with the huge influx of daily queries for ways to navigate the new reality—and charging for these services is now the norm. A mentor can save



## Build a Verified Network

A WIN-WIN FOR EVERYONE INVOLVED

Promoting new types of offerings oftentimes means relying on social media for promotion. However, fitness professionals can be judged by the company they keep, including on Instagram, Facebook and other sites. Bren Crowson, an ACE-certified personal trainer, yoga teacher (RYT 200) and fifth-degree black belt in San Shin Kai karate says, "It's easy to get lost in the social media craziness of everyone posting apparent fitness success stories as what I call FFIs, or Fake Fitness Influencers.

During the downtime of the pandemic, my mentor encouraged me to fill out my full professional profile on IDEA FitnessConnect to stay connected only with other professionals who are verified like I am." This approach may not deliver immediate dollars, but surrounding yourself with valuable connections is a long game that can pay off for you and everyone in your ever-expanding circle.

the mentee time, effort and money by fast-tracking their success, usually by helping the mentee make valuable career connections online.

### MONETIZING YOUR BRAINPOWER

Noel Chelliah, owner of DailyMuscle, an independent gym based in Kuala Lumpur, says, "While I don't exaggerate my fees, I do charge a fair price for an hourlong phone consult to help both gym owners and trainers alike think outside the



pre-pandemic box and find new ways to make money by sharing my virtual success secrets. More often than not, it's just a question of someone outside of one's circle looking in and asking 'Have you considered this?' or 'Have you tried adding that dimension to your career?'" This can open clients' minds to possibility, he says, and help them "get out of their own way."

Phyllis Hanson Anusinha, a freelance personal trainer, group fitness instructor and author based in Bangkok, Thailand, began doing something similar in her early 60s. "Since my body no longer can do what it did even a few years ago, I dimensionalized my course a bit. I now use the phone, charging [fitness professionals] to 'pick my brain,'" she says. "Each call lets them fast-track their career to success because they trust I've most likely 'been there and solved that' already." She uses the free app calendly.com to set up appointments. "Sharing

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what I'm learning is also a great way to pay myself back for my huge financial investment in my own mastermind groups," says Anusinha, who recently added additional certifications to expand her knowledge base. "Too often, fit pros don't realize how they could monetize their own educational process."

### Dimensionalize!

Career paths for group exercise instructors and personal trainers keep evolving to add new dimensions that can extend

one's reach both locally and globally. Keeping an open mind to these new possibilities can help today's fitness professional keep revenue flowing from untapped sources, while inspiring even more of the world to fitness and health.

*Lawrence Biscontini, MA, has won multiple awards from IDEA (2004 IDEA Group Instructor of the Year and 2010 Inner IDEA Inspiration Award), as well as from ACE, canfitpro and ECA. He serves on the advisory board for the International Council on Active Aging. You can @find Lawrence on all the socials and at findlawrence.com. Send him an email mentioning this article, and he'll send you a digital version of his fitness textbook, Cream Rises: Excellence in Education.*

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