

Why a coached workout?

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A coach is a valuable asset for any part of your life where you seriously seek improvement. People at all levels of maturity and experience value coaches. When we go to church, a pastor leads the service for the spiritual novice as well as the spiritually mature. The same thing works in sports. The coach helps to get you there, tells you what to do with a certain level of expertise, and helps you challenge yourself.

Accountability is an important reason for seeking out a coach. This is especially true for structured workouts. There are many times that I have woken up and not wanted to go to a workout; however, knowing there will be others expecting to see me has gotten me moving. As with many things in life, showing up is half the battle. The power of the group is an exceptionally powerful motivator. The coach is the touchstone and helps you look forward to being part of the group.

Direction keeps the individual and group moving forward together. From the novice to experienced, having guidance from an “expert” is something we all seek. The coach can adjust the workout appropriately for different ability levels to ensure completion of particular sets in a fairly uniform time. With direction about what to do, it is easier to stay on task. The coach creating the workout helps prevent you from shortening your self-made workout because you start to get tired and remember you need to stop at the grocery store on the way home.

Expertise is an essential attribute of a successful coach. A lot of people know the basics. However, knowing how to improve skills and incrementally improving is another matter. By providing appropriate technical pointers, a coach can improve skills – the coach must identify the most critical deficiencies and effectively communicate how to address them. It is hard to be your own critic – especially when considering changes in technique – because you cannot look at yourself as you go through the motions. If too much is given to think about, then it can become very confusing and actually result in worse performance. As well, by drawing on different drills and skills, the coach can help to improve your understanding of what is possible. The coach can tie this all together by emphasizing those skills in a varied workout setting that keeps the mind active and learning.

Motivation ties this all together. By adding enthusiasm to the workout, the coach makes you glad you came. The coach wouldn't be there if s/he weren't passionate about what they do. Passing on that enthusiasm at the right moment can be the difference between drudgery and excitement, between wishing that you had toothpicks jammed under your fingernails rather than feeling good that you came. By putting the right people together, a competitive situation causes all of the participants to push each other; there is nothing more inspiring than staying with or beating someone else who is an equal, pushing you outside your comfort zone.

If you are serious about what you are doing, look for competent coaching. There is no way to teach yourself everything you need to learn to make yourself as good as you can be. It is extraordinarily difficult to reach a high level of performance and maintain or improve it over the long haul if you do it alone.