

GET YOUR MEMBERS OFF TO A
‘SMART START’ + BOOST RETENTION



LesMILLS

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Retention is still one of the greatest challenges we face as an industry.

All too often, people join gyms with great intentions and enthusiasm only to drop out less than six months later*. They leave defeated, discouraged and no closer to their goal of a healthier lifestyle.

*** One third of members stop attending by month three after an average of just one workout per week; 50% of members stop attending by month six.**

- Dishman (2001)

Unfortunately, because members are largely left to build and sustain an exercise habit for themselves, lots drop out in the first few months. Many clubs are simply too busy trying to get new members and running the facility to give member experience as much attention as they would like to.





THE STARK TRUTH?

Many typical fitness facilities are in the business of selling memberships, not fitness.

They are providing access to exercise, rather than supporting members to form and sustain good habits and a positive relationship with exercise.

As an industry we have an opportunity to reset our business model and make it a priority to support all our members, specifically exercise newcomers, to form positive fitness habits – right from the very start.

If we can improve exercise adherence in those first crucial weeks, we can strengthen customer connection to clubs – and ultimately build healthier lives.



THE TOP FIVE DRIVERS OF EXERCISE 'STICKABILITY'

Setting new members up for success starts by taking a close look at your sales process, from your value proposition right through to onboarding.

By making some simple changes to your approach, you can boost newcomers' chances of exercise adherence or 'stickability'.

Here are the top five drivers of exercise adherence and some ideas for how you and your team can help positively influence them – early on.

1

QUALITY MOTIVATION

Over 50% of the market exercise to get in shape or lose weight.

- Les Mills Global Consumer Survey (2018)

While this is an admirable reason for establishing an exercise habit, purely focusing on weight loss can result in a reduction in enthusiasm if results aren't immediately evident.

Using this goal to establish long term behavior change can be achieved by providing the following support.

- Encourage newcomers to be as explicit as possible about their fitness goals.
- Show them how to transform daunting big goals into a series of specific, achievable short-term ones.
- Identify at-risk people at point-of-sale and provide specific recommendations and support for those with lower motivation levels.

2

ENJOYMENT

This one needs no explanation: the more anyone enjoys something, the more likely they are to do it. Be customer-obsessed and provide your members with exercise options.



3

SELF-EFFICACY/CONFIDENCE

Personal belief is powerful. Does your prospect believe they can overcome personal, social and environmental barriers to exercise? You and your team can focus on building confidence as you converse with newcomers throughout the sales process, onboarding experience, and recommended activities:

- Erase fear of failure.
 - Tell them your team are well trained and dedicated to helping them achieve their goals.
 - Don't overwhelm new members with complex exercise plans that may reinforce negative beliefs about not being good at exercise.
 - Don't force them into hardcore workouts or expect them to complete a whole class straight away.
- Encourage autonomy through knowledge – new exercisers need to feel a sense of control
 - Establish a consultative environment. Then provide an exercise plan they are comfortable with that factors in their needs and goals.
 - Help them anticipate a few early challenges – describe what will happen when they first attend and what they need to do. For example: Let me show you where to go on Monday for your first BODYPUMP™ class and what equipment you'll be using.
- Provide reassurance – new exercisers need to feel they are on the right track. Teach your team how to help members recognize and celebrate immediate gains such as 'feeling better' and enjoying the experience versus changing shape.

4

SOCIAL SUPPORT

- A** Social support from friends, peers and spouses, as it helps them integrate exercise into their weekly schedule.
- B** Working out with a buddy or using assisted and social forms of exercise such as group exercise.

5

INTENSITY

Don't go too hard too soon. Research demonstrates that for new exercisers, high-intensity exercise can actually reduce adherence. Instead, encourage new members to pace themselves, and save programs such as HIIT for down the track.

LES MILLS SMART START

SMART AND SLOW IS THE WAY TO GO

Les Mills' SMART START program is designed to get your members off to a great start by gradually introducing people with little to no previous experience to a plan that feels achievable and enjoyable.

It enables you to provide new members with a clear template for achieving a healthy lifestyle in just six weeks, while optimizing adherence and boosting the chances those first few weeks will turn into a lifelong love of fitness.





PROVEN DESIGN

The SMART START program is based on the Get Fit Together research conducted in 2011 by Dr Jinger Gottschall from Penn State University.

THE RESEARCH

- Followed 25 sedentary adults with a an average BMI of 30 through a 30-week program of LES MILLS™ group fitness classes.
- Started with an initial six-week period encouraging the exercisers to ‘dip their toes’ into fitness before building up to a full exercise schedule.

THE RESULTS

- Participants delayed the onset of cardiovascular disease by an average of 3.6 years.
- Over the course of the 30-week study, 20 of the 25 study participants never missed a workout – a compliance rate of 98.8 per cent, which is almost unheard of in exercise studies.

THE KEY TAKE-OUTS

- It is possible to encourage the most exercise-resistant people into a healthy lifestyle.
- People with little to no exercise experience should start smart and slow – steadily building the frequency, duration and intensity of their workouts, focusing on activities they enjoy.
- For new exercisers, working out in a group is a great way to build exercise adherence.

OFF TO A SMART START

WHAT TO DO - AND HOW TO DO IT

1

WHOLE TEAM MEETING

Share the SMART START background and five key drivers of exercise adherence (from page x) with your team.

- Discuss how well you are currently delivering on these five things with new members as a team and what you should start, stop, and keep doing to build a better exercise adherence with new members.
- Compare your team ideas with our suggested approach below, then adapt and finalize your own plan.

2

REVIEW YOUR EXISTING MEMBERSHIP SALES PROCESS AND DEBOARDING

- 1 Consider the purpose/job description/mindset of your membership team. Are they just selling memberships or are they coaching new members to establish new exercise habits and a healthy lifestyle?
- 2 Does your sales process include a member needs analysis? If yes, does your needs analysis cover the following:
 - Goals and motivation – what exactly does the prospect want to achieve and why is it important to them?
 - Availability – when can they exercise and visit your club?
 - Exercise preferences – do they enjoy running or is dancing more their thing?
 - Barriers to exercise – have they dropped out of an exercise plan before? Are they time poor? Do they lack support from family, have low self-motivation or any physical limitations?
 - Ideal weekly budget – what are they prepared to invest in their health and exercise?

Compare your needs analysis questions with the above and adjust where you see value.

TOP TIPS

- Use language that assumes the prospect will join, and clearly map out their weekly plan for them, tying it back to their specific goals while also educating them about what it takes to build a long term habit – frequency is key here.
- Always use a hard copy document and complete it before you take the prospect to view the club or present the membership options and prices. This allows you to prequalify those who are not really interested in purchasing a membership (tours are time-consuming) and, more importantly, it allows you to tailor the tour to match your proposed prescription.

Explore Les Mills' SMART START

- Provide your membership team with the SMART START flyer.

TAKE IT IN STEPS

What it comes down to motivation, our brain's mysterious mechanism that drives us to do things we know are good for us. At this point, the reason starts to come in... motivation! It's what drives you to move.

The questions you can't not answer. The feelings you experience when you're just getting started with fitness and how you feel when you've got a great sweat on. These are a few key things that will guarantee you keep moving forward.

1. CHOOSE YOUR WORKOUT

Start slow and work towards the duration you want. If you're new to fitness, start with 10 minutes and increase by 10 minutes each week. If you're more advanced, start with 30 minutes and increase by 10 minutes each week. You don't have to do the same thing every day, and switch up nearly every class.

2. FREQUENT BEFORE INTENSE

Start with frequent, low-intensity classes before you move onto higher intensity ones. This will help you get used to the environment, the music, and the people. It will also help you build up your endurance and strength over time.

3. CHALLENGE THE IMMEDIATE MIND

Focus on the goals that you'd never even consider before. If you're new to fitness, focus on getting a good sweat on. If you're more advanced, focus on getting a better sweat on. If you're really pushing yourself, focus on getting a longer sweat on.

FOLLOW A PLAN

6X WEEK WORKOUT SCHEDULE

DAY	WORKOUT	STRETCH	CORE	OPTIONAL
1	1 x 20 mins	1 x 10 mins	1 x 10 mins	
2	2 x 20 mins	1 x 10 mins	1 x 10 mins	
3	2 x 20 mins	1 x 10 mins	1 x 10 mins	
4	2 x 20 mins	1 x 10 mins	1 x 10 mins	
5	2 x 30 mins	1 x 10 mins	1 x 10 mins	
6	2 x 30 mins	1 x 10 mins	1 x 10 mins	
7	1 x 30 mins	1 x 10 mins	1 x 10 mins	

THE NEXT 12 WEEK CHALLENGE

DAY	WORKOUT	STRETCH	CORE	PULLUP
1-8	2 x 20 mins	1 x 10 mins	1 x 10 mins	
9-12	2 x 30 mins	1 x 10 mins	1 x 10 mins	1 x 10 mins

The SMART START 12-week schedule is proven by science and research to be the best way to build a strong core and healthy muscles.

CARDIO is great for burning calories and important for heart health.

STRETCH working out is great for muscle tone and helps with long-term health.

CORE strength is key for building a strong body by creating the best platform for all other exercises.

PULLUP great for upper body strength, increases core strength and improves your posture.

- Discuss the Penn State University research behind the development of this plan on page x.
 - Using group fitness as a base for new exercisers.
 - Building volume progressively i.e. recommending that to start with they attend classes for just the first few tracks only.
 - Mixing up different types of workouts/classes based on enjoyment.



WHAT TO DO - AND HOW TO DO IT

- Discuss how to design a getting started plan for a new member, keeping in mind the above recommendations and your group exercise schedule – the programs you offer when the member is available. Get your team to consider some specific examples, e.g. how to design a getting started plan for a member who can only come twice a week at lunchtime.
- Make sure the team understands that they can:
 - Prescribe a mix of workouts both in your club and at home, for example a BODYPUMP and CXWORX™ class in your club could be complemented with 30 minutes of jogging outdoors or with an online BODYCOMBAT class using LES MILLS On Demand.
- Provide your team with a blank getting started plan template.

SMART START WORKOUT PLANNER							
WEEK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							

Follow the SMART START Six Week Fitness Schedule as a guide to gradually increasing your workout times – lesmills.com/smartsstart **LES MILLS**

Club tour

Finally, discuss how you and your team could adjust your club tour to build confidence and establish social support for new members, for example, by introducing them to staff or to other club members.

WHAT TO DO - AND HOW TO DO IT

Build specific product knowledge

(You may choose to make this a follow-up meeting with the membership team.)

- Provide your team with the talking points for each program. The Les Mills Workout Guide and program-specific Getting Started brochures will be valuable here.
- Check your team's understanding of the information by running a few drills i.e.
 - Get them to list the main features and benefits of each program
 - Give them different member scenarios to work on.

Ask them to come up with a program prescription, then role play how they would explain the why, how and what of their recommendation to a member. Make sure they understand they can describe the same program in a slightly different way to tailor to different people and needs.

	DESCRIPTION	DURATION	INTENSITY	EQUIPMENT	RESULTS
LES MILLS BODYPUMP	BODYPUMP™ is a weights class for absolute beginners. Using light to moderate weights, you'll learn how to move and tone your body with a variety of moves that combine aerobic and strength training.	55 Minutes	Moderate to high intensity	Barbell, dumbbells & resistance bands	Develop strength & endurance while burning lots of calories. Great for muscle tone & definition.
LES MILLS BODYCOMBAT	BODYCOMBAT™ is a martial inspired full-body workout that fuses咏春拳 (Wing Chun) with Aerobic Interval Training. It's a high intensity cardio and strength class.	55 Minutes	High intensity	N/A	Great for strength & endurance. Perfect for those who like to move to music.
LES MILLS BODYBALANCE	BODYBALANCE™ is a new gentle class for pregnant and everyone. It uses a range of yoga and stretching techniques to help you feel strong and balanced throughout your class.	55 Minutes	Low intensity	Yoga mat & pilates ring	Improve joint flexibility & range of motion. Great for strength, balance, coordination & overall well-being.
LES MILLS RPM	RPM™ is an indoor cycling class, set to the rhythm of motivating music. It's become a bit of a cult-class phenomenon.	45 Minutes	Moderate to high intensity	Stationary bike	Improve heart & lung fitness. Develop leg strength & endurance.
LES MILLS BODYATTACK	BODYATTACK™ is a high-energy fitness class with moves that combine aerobic and anaerobic intervals. It's a great way to burn fat and build muscle at the same time.	55 Minutes	High intensity	N/A	Improve agility, coordination, strength & endurance. Develop heart & lung fitness.
LES MILLS BODYSTEP	BODYSTEP™ is a full-body cardio workout that gets everyone from very novice to intermediate level moving. It's a great way to burn fat and build muscle at the same time.	55 Minutes	Moderate to high intensity	Step machine	Improve heart and lung fitness, agility & coordination. Develop heart & lung fitness.
LES MILLS BODYVIBE 3.1	BODYVIBE™ is 3 hours for optimal mix of strength, cardio and core training. This is a group class designed just for people who get it!	55 Minutes	Low to moderate intensity	Resistance tube	Improve heart & lung fitness. Develop core strength. Burn fat.
LES MILLS BODYJAM	BODYJAM™ is the ultimate combination of music, culture and dance. Everyone who loves to move will love this class.	55 Minutes	Moderate to high intensity	N/A	Develop heart & lung fitness. Improve coordination.
LES MILLS SHIBARI	SHIBARI™ is a fun, flowing, mystery workshop that combines traditional Japanese knot-tying with fitness. You'll learn how to tie knots, make loops and wrap your body.	45 Minutes	Moderate intensity	N/A	Develop strength & endurance. Improve coordination.
LES MILLS CXWORX	CXWORX™ provides the right ingredients for a complete body-shaping programme. One. A stronger core makes you better at all the things you do... (Ok the glue that holds everything together).	30 Minutes	Moderate to high intensity	Resistance tube	Develop & tone. Core muscles improve. Functional strength. Gut health. Strength & bone protection.
LES MILLS GRIT STRENGTH	LES MILLS GRIT™ Strength is a 30-minute high intensity interval training workout. It's a fast-paced, high-intensity interval training class that uses a variety of single piece and long weight implements in place of large multi-piece groups.	30 Minutes	High intensity	Barbell, dumbbells & resistance bands	Develop strength & endurance. Develop core strength & tone.
LES MILLS GRIT CARDIO	LES MILLS GRIT™ Cardio is a 30-minute high intensity interval training workout that requires cardiovascular fitness, strength, speed and maximum calorie burn.	30 Minutes	High intensity	N/A	Develop improved cardiovascular fitness. Maximum calorie burn during the session.
LES MILLS GRIT PLYO	LES MILLS GRIT™ Plyo is a 30-minute high intensity interval training plyometric based workout, designed to make you stronger, leaner and faster.	30 Minutes	High intensity	N/A	Develop improved athletic performance. Build a lean, athletic body.

WHAT IS BODYPUMP™?

BODYPUMP™ is a weights class for absolutely everyone. This form of weight training will make you toned, lean and fit. Using light to moderate weights with lots of movement, BODYPUMP™ gives you a total body workout that burns lots of calories. It'll also tone and shape your body, without adding bulky muscles. The rep effect – a scientifically proven Les Mills technique – helps to develop lean athletic muscle without the need for heavy weights.

The encouragement, motivation and great music you get in a BODYPUMP™ class will help you achieve much more than you would be able to on your own. Instructors will show you all the moves and techniques to make your first class safe and fun.

JUST GETTING STARTED?

You can adjust a BODYPUMP™ workout to your current fitness level:

- Start with light weights or even just a bar.
- Build up from four or five tracks to a full class.

BENEFITS OF BODYPUMP™

- Shape and tone your body
- Improve bone health
- Improve your core strength

FIND OUT MORE:

Working out together works wonders. Read more about the effect that working out in a group can have on your fitness goals by visiting lesmills.com/smarter lesmills.com/bodypump facebook.com/bodypump

LES MILLS BODYPUMP

3

Make sure you offer:

- High quality programs that you trust and can promote confidently.
- Variety – ideally your timetable will include a couple of strength options, three different cardio fitness options, and a couple of engaging flexibility /core options. For example:

Strength and core: BODYPUMP and CXWORX

Cardio: RPM, BODYCOMBAT, BODYATTACK™

Flexibility/core: BODYBALANCE™ / BODYFLOW®

HIIT: LES MILLS GRIT™ and LES MILLS SPRINT™

- Highly motivating classes – do all your programs have great music? Are they delivered with mastery by well-trained instructors who have what it takes to get people returning again and again?
- Optional duration – ideally your timetable should include a mix of 30-minute, 45-minute and 60-minute classes.





4

- Explain the Smart Start approach and benefits by using the education videos available. You can access these here: <https://brandcentral.lesmills.com/home#!/collections/14224?serviceCode=club.marketing.material.collections>
- Discuss what SMART START means for them and their classes – what to keep doing, what to change:
 - Ideally instructors should encourage newcomers to take it easy through the first few weeks, starting with just a few tracks before progressively building up to full classes.
 - Some instructors may need help to shift from a ‘no pain, no gain’ mindset to the ‘step by step’ approach that’s fundamental to SMART START.
- Discuss the logistics – for example, where new participants should stand in class so they can easily pack up and go after the first four tracks, without feeling subconscious.

5

- Support your membership team with the right resources:
 - A Provide the team with the SMART START flyer. You tailor this flyer with your logo and contact details, simply download the open files here: <https://brandcentral.lesmills.com/home#!/assets/22097?search=Smart%20start%20flyer>
 - B Design a six-week new member plan using your club’s branding for your team to complete when people first join.
 - C Provide your team and members with Getting Started brochures for all the Les Mills programs available in your club. You can access these here: <https://brandcentral.lesmills.com/home#!/collections/26442?serviceCode=club.marketing.material.collections>
- Launch to members using the Les Mills Social Media Plan. You can access this here: <https://brandcentral.lesmills.com/home#!/assets/12948?serviceCode=club.marketing.activity.launch&search=social>.

Remember, the SMART START approach is not just relevant for new members, it also provides a great opportunity to reach out to existing members (and their friends).

APPENDIX

GOAL & MOTIVATION QUESTIONS

- 1 What brings you here today?
Any specific motivations?

I need to start exercising again. I want information on your prices and activities.

- 2 Great. Any specific goal?
Why do you want to exercise?
I want to lose weight.

- 3 What exactly are you seeking?
What does success look like to you?
I would like to lose 5 kilos to be able to fit into my jeans!

- 4 Any secondary goals?
I want to be able to enjoy playing with my kids, going up the stairs, going for a run without struggling as much as I do now!

- 5 These results are important to you. Why?
I don't feel good, I don't like what I see in the mirror and I feel tired all the time. My kids are frustrated because they want to play with me more over the weekend but I struggle keeping up with them. I feel I am letting them down.

- 6 So, losing these 5 kilos is really a way to access a better quality of life, isn't it? To feel happier and to have better quality time with your love ones.

- 7 And why today? What made you decide to come?

I was very tired this morning and angry with the kids because I got frustrated and couldn't catch up with them in the park.

- 8 So you told yourself it has to change – is that correct?
Yes

- 9 Okay, we can definitely help you and I will show you how in a minute. Do you have a specific goal in terms of time?

Yes. I want to be there before Christmas. We are going on holiday ...

- 10 Great. This means losing about 1.5 kilos per month, which is very reasonable if you have a good plan. Then, I assume you will want to maintain your results? Great. Would you like me to show you how you can achieve your goals?

AVAILABILITY, SELF-MOTIVATION, PREFERENCES & BUDGET

- 1 Let's first have a look at your availability to exercise and any possible barriers that could prevent you from reaching your goals and that we need to factor in.

- 2 What are all the opportunities you have in your usual week to exercise for let's say 30 minutes?

I would like to use my lunchtime. It is hard in the evening with the kids.

- 3 And over the weekend?

I could find some time but, as discussed I live quite far away so would prefer to avoid coming into town.

- 4 That's not a problem. We can provide you with Les Mills On Demand to use out of the club over the weekend if you want. Or you could simply go for a walk or play soccer with your kids, it counts!

Exercising is not only about coming to the gym you know.

- 5 Ideally, you need a mix of three types of training stimulus in your week – cardio, strength and flexibility. We have a wide range of activities we can suggest here.

Is there any types of activities you feel attracted to? Or that you really don't want to do? Do you see yourself exercising with others, alone, doing cardio exercises, dancing, or doing cycle ...?

- 6 Great, I will factor this in as well. Tell me, what stopped you from starting/sticking to exercise in the past?

- 7 How motivated are you to achieve these goals and get back onto a healthy lifestyle?

What level of support do you think you will need to stick to your exercise routine? On a scale from 1 to 10?

- 8 Are you going to come alone or with a friend? Often, it is easier to stick to a plan when committed to somebody else.

- 9 Last, ideally, what type of budget were you thinking on spending on your goals per week?

- 10 Perfect. This gives me great clarity about your needs and I am confident we can help you get there.

Would you like me to show you how you can achieve your goals and get back on track with a healthier lifestyle?