

Checklist for those wanting to be a **PT Contractor**  
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*A PT Contractor pays a weekly rent to operate their business at a fitness facility or fitness studio.*

## THE ABC BASICS - WHAT YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR

**Firstly, The Contract.** There *needs* to be a contract between you and the facility. Read it line by line, ticking off each one as you go, acknowledging that you understand and agree to it.

The following explains some of what you will see in a typical contract:

- A. **Bonds.** A bond is often paid up front and can be the equivalent of between one and eight weeks rent. The amount should be written into the contract together with who holds it, (*Department of Building and Housing is normal*) how you get it back and in what circumstances will you *not* get it back. It is not unusual for instance to lose your bond if you leave the facility without giving them sufficient notice, get behind in rent or damage equipment.
- B. **An induction or start up fee.** This will often cover lots of good stuff to help get you started like initial training, uniform, a photo-shoot, posters, business cards and REPs registration. Depending on your rental agreement you may or may not be charged this amount again. Ask for a list of what is included and whether this amount is charged yearly or is just a one-off.
- C. **The weekly rent.** In the current market, my expectations would be if the facility charges **less than \$150** +gst week you simply get to use the facility premises and equipment and there may even be limitations as to the times and days you have access to it. For this rental fee I wouldn't expect the facility to provide me with leads for example. Alternatively, at this lower rent, it might be a really basic facility but will provide me with lots of leads i.e. it will probably be one or the other.

If start up rent is **more than \$150** +gst a week (and it often is) I'd generally be looking for a 'flash facility' with a guaranteed number of leads per week from day one. By 'leads' I mean situations like when a *new* member is booked in with me, in my role as a PT (not a Gym Instructor) for an initial consult, or an old member that maybe hasn't been in for ages is booked in for a PT consult or even a potential member, all of which will provide me with an opportunity to show off how fab I am and on-sell my services. Leads also include where PT services have been pre-sold by the sales/membership staff, for instance 3 sessions for \$59, which you may get paid for or not, either way I would regard those package generally as quality leads 😊.

If the facility offers *all* its members *regular free or very cheap* consults and I am expected to do them then either I'd want to be paid something for those consults (maybe a third of my PT rate) and/or have my rent discounted.

If facilities are unable to offer guaranteed leads per week and are charging more than \$150 week rent, I'd be asking for 1) ½ rent for the first 3 months to build up my business and 2) the right to bring in non-members to the facility for two or more training sessions with me at a low or free entry fee and/or as part of a free 7 day trial or similar or ideally both.

Some facilities charge rent on a per client or per hour basis. This can be a fab way to start a PT business. A facility like this may cap the charges i.e. you may never pay more than \$300 regardless of how much you then use the facility or clients you bring in, others may not. It's a relatively unusual scenario however as it is often more work for the facility to monitor.

Keep in mind how many hours a week you actually want to work before signing up. If you only want to work between 10 and 15 hours a week then ask about part-time rental rates..

**The 31 Point Checklist:** Other factors, (in no particular order) to consider and which should affect your decision and the rent you pay:-

1. Is there an office you can use as a PT/book for your inductions/consults etc?
2. What is the induction room like as this is what will help sell you? A pokey cupboard is not going to help you convert people. (Kris Tynan has fantastic resources and runs a workshop about how to make induction rooms really work. Email - kris.tynan@xtra.co.nz).
3. Is there a warm staff room where you can cook your lunch?
4. Is there a cafe close by where you can have off-site meetings?
5. Are there outdoor training possibilities?
6. Who pays for your uniform? Does it include shoes? A jacket? Long pants and shorts? Name badge? Do you need to wear your hair up? Can you wear your uniform when you're not at the facility?
7. Are there opportunities to take small group training sessions and or classes inside the facility?
8. Can you PT, small group train and/or take classes outside and/or at other venues?
9. Are Gym Instructors on-site as well and what is their role? Is it clearly different from the role of a PT?
10. Can you talk to other PTs that have been there for more than 6 months before you sign up?
11. Is the facility located in an environment that has good potential for you? What is in a 6 minute walking radius of the facility? What is with a 6 minute drive of the facility? This may well be where the facility will recruit most of its members from (always exceptions to this , some facilities become destination points like exclusive clubs and/or if you are in Christchurch where there is less clubs to choose from).
12. Are there super hot showers and a change room with hairdryers and mirrors? This is as much about my own comfort as it is for clients. Everything else I can work around but a good bathroom in a facility is out of my control.
13. Is there somewhere to store bikes and free, easy parking for cars?
14. Is there somewhere you can do internet based work?
15. Will you have a locker?
16. Is there a landline you can use to make landline calls?
17. Can your clients pay you using the facilities eftpos/credit card terminal and/or can a receptionist collect payment on your behalf (worth its weight in gold!)?
18. Is there an online booking system for the PTs/rooms etc? Could you end up with no access to areas on a regular basis?
19. Will the club mention you by name and with a photo on their website?
20. Will you be able to post comments on their Facebook page? *(Not being able to do this is by the way not necessarily a bad thing, like many things on this checklist, but still something you should know about in advance).*
21. Do they have a newsletter for their members that you can add articles to?
22. Can you put up posters up anywhere and do they need to be a set format?
23. Can you charge whatever fees you like?
24. How does the restraint of trade clause read? It's not unusual to not be able to train members of the facility when you leave and/or to be able to set up your PT business within a certain distance of the facility you were at, for a certain duration. Make sure you understand this clause or get a legal opinion on it. This is not something worth being in breach of.
25. Are some of the exercises you'd want to do with clients banned or not accepted at the facility? Yep, for whatever reason, some clubs may not want for example, you doing one-one Pilates sessions in their pool, standing on swiss balls or doing barefoot running sessions. While it's impossible to know all the scenarios explain what you do and what you would like to do and be aware, there will most likely be a clause in the contract that to some extent allows the facility to dictate how you train (or not train) people. Mostly such restrictions will be for health and safety reasons and/or to protect other products or services they have in place.

26. Is there an on-site computer program that you can use that will produce flash training programmes and reports for your clients (we used to have Fitness Publisher but sure there's lots of other goodies in this respect)?
27. Are there staff meetings that you are expected to go to? Will you get paid for these?
28. Where is the facility going? Growth is always appealing to me but that requires being okay with their growing pains in return for maybe more of a chance to see your ideas implemented and to jump into career opportunities as they emerge. Established entities like Les Mills and City Fitness are likely to have tried and tested procedures in place which means you walk into what will probably already be a successful support structure.
29. Are you all good with how the manager (or owner /s) engage in dialogue with you? Will there be times and places for you to put forth ideas and give and receive feedback if that's important to you and that in the meantime are you okay with following the rules whether you agree with them or not?
30. Is the facility REPs registered? This will only help build your credibility with affiliates like doctors, physiotherapists, dieticians etc and generally just helps make you look good.
31. Does it provide an environment where you can learn a lot? I have no doubt that my learning curve was reduced from 5 years - had I gone out as a solo PT - to just 1 year because of having:-
  - a. a facility that paid for our ongoing education via yearly fitness conferences, ongoing in house accreditation and free in-house training etc . We sometimes had to commit to staying with the facility for a year after the training, which suited me fine and was a win/win all round.
  - b. other trainers, gym instructors and class instructors etc around. Nothing better than having a fab bunch of people to bounce ideas off every day, meet up with monthly and train with weekly.

If you want to be a PT Contractor in a facility and you aren't one then either you haven't gone around to the gyms and met the PT managers or you are not making a good impression! I don't know many facilities that use the PT contractor model that would turn down a PT (which is a good thing for you!). So either, get out and start knocking on doors or get you and your CV spruced up. If it is sprucing up you need get in touch with a PT Mentors Ish Cheyne or Julz Darroch for some advice on how to make a positive first impression(both google-able).

While the rent may seem high initially I'd say rents are in fact comparatively low considering the expense of the set up and the supportive environment of fitness facilities. In other industries you might be lucky to rent an empty office in a high-rise, a chair in hair-dressing salon or the use of a massage room for a few days a week, for the same amount.

Finally, just a reminder, these are all just my current opinions and could change tomorrow. New things emerge daily that can and should sway how we think about our opportunities. At the end of the day the best thing for you is whatever you decide is the best thing for you and success will come if you give it your all.

All the very best .