

Semi-Private Training Blueprint ©

How to build a Semi-Private Training program that will help more clients, make more money, and build an awesome community!



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1. What is a semi-private training program?

A semi-private training program is simply a small-group exercise program that features individualized programming for each participant. It can be thought of as a small group of one-on-one sessions that take place at the same time.

The important difference between semi-private and group training is that each participant has their own individualized program and there are fewer participants.

Most semi-private programs have between 3-6 participants during each session. This can be determined by factors such as:

- Gym size
- Equipment availability
- Gym layout
- The coach's ability and comfort

Semi-private training models are also usually billed on a monthly recurring basis instead of the usual pay-by-session model. This means that on a set date each month, the client's monthly fee will automatically be charged. This difference can have a dramatic impact on your business's revenue and we will cover that below.

2. The benefits of a semi-private training program.

Starting a Semi-Private training program with recurring monthly billing can have myriad benefits over one-on-one training.

Some of these are:

- Not being locked into session-by-sessions paychecks.
- Developing a more complete community within your gym.
- Less time invoicing clients.
- Leveraging your time more efficiently.
- Better results for your clients due to a more social and interesting atmosphere.
- A more exciting and interesting training environment for you.
- Not having to spend time scheduling clients.

- Not having to worry about filling a time slot if one client leaves or doesn't show up.
- Not having to worry about whether or not to charge a client if they don't show up.
- You make more money per hour while the client pays less, allowing for a larger clientele.

Let's go over a few of these in greater detail.

a. Easier Billing

An important aspect of a semi-private training program is recurring billing. In a traditional one-on-one training program, the client pays on a session-by-session basis. This can create a few problems for the gym owner.

1. Whether or not to charge if a client doesn't show up.
2. Having to keep track of how many sessions each client has attended.
3. Having to fill a formerly profitable time slot when a client leaves or changes their schedule.
4. Taking the time to invoice clients.

Recurring billing is set up in a way that allows you to set up a payment schedule one time and then not have to worry about it any longer.

b. Easier scheduling

You can allow your clients greater scheduling flexibility by holding your sessions at set times and allowing your client to schedule themselves. This places the responsibility to schedule sessions on your clients and they'll be able to do it themselves based on their schedule.

c. Better results for clients and a more interesting atmosphere for you

Assuming a competent level of coaching and programming, we know that great results have mostly to do with adherence and consistency from your clients. These things are greatly enhanced by building a fun and welcoming culture and community at your gym. That comes from your clientele and it is much more difficult to have this in a strictly one-on-one setting.

Most trainers that come from a one-on-one setting also find semi-private training much more interesting due to the busier atmosphere. What to talk about during breaks in a one-on-one session isn't something that matters nearly as much when there are 3-4 clients in a facility at once.

d. Leveraging your time more effectively.

In a busy one-on-one trainer's day, they may see 5-8 clients. A semi-private trainer may see 25-30 clients or even more.

This allows you to make more money per hour while helping more people.

For example, if you charge \$75 per hour for a one-on-one session, you make \$75 per hour.

If you charge \$199 for 2 sessions per week (8 sessions per month) and you have 4 people per session, it breaks down like this:

$\$199/8 = 24.75$ per session
 24.75×4 clients = \$99 per hour

This figure also doesn't take into account the likelihood of a larger clientele with a semi-private program.

It also takes away the pressure of having a small number of clients account for a large percentage of revenue.

As you can see, a well run semi-private training program can:

- Make things more profitable
- More interesting for you
- Take less time scheduling and billing
- Give your clients BETTER RESULTS

Let's get into the specifics.

3. How to set up a semi-private training program

For the purposes of this blueprint, we will assume you are already running a one-on-one program and want to transition into, or add a semi-private program.

Many coaches worry about too many details as they think about setting their semi-private program. This holds things up for no good reason.

Common worries include:

- Filling the sessions.
- Scheduling the sessions.
- Having people with different conditions and goals in the same session.
- Coaching more than one person at a time.
- Ensuring their clients receive adequate attention.
- The logistics of having more clients in the gym at once.

- The perception that one-on-one training is superior.
- Their current client's resistance to change.
- Probably a lot more!

I can assure you that while these worries are natural and to be expected, every one of them will wind up being more of a worry in theory than in reality, and they all tend to be a product of your own limiting beliefs.

In other words, none of these worries should cause you to stop developing a semi-private training program.

The most important thing to do is just do it!

a. Schedule it.

The first step is to simply put it on your schedule.

Find 1-2 times in the morning and/or 1-2 times in the evening that are popular and that you may have had multiple inquiries about.

Popular times tend to be:

- 7am
- 8am
- 9am
- 4pm
- 5pm
- 6pm

You do not need to worry about completely filling these sessions just yet. Start light and you'll always be able to add more sessions later. Remember that it's always better to add sessions for people than take them away.

b. Figure out how many people per session you can accommodate.

While training multiple people at once may seem difficult at first, trainers soon realize that it's not as hard as they fear. In reality, most exercises can be effectively coached from a physical distance as long as a client can hear the trainer's instructions, and once most clients start to understand their program you may be surprised at how few of them need to be actively coached during much of their session.

Semi-private programs can range from 3-6 participants, but most tend to have 3-4. When trying to figure out how many clients you can accommodate here are some factors to consider:

- Equipment availability

If many of your clients perform barbell back squats and you have only 1 squat rack, that may be a factor, for example. However, if your clients don't all squat on the same day this may not matter as much.

- Square footage

How many people can your facility comfortably hold if, for example, one client is back squatting, one is deadlifting, one is doing band rows and another is doing a plank?

- Facility layout

An open square or rectangular space is ideal to be able to see most, if not all, of your clients at once, which allows you to give them coaching as necessary.

If you do have some angles in your layout take this into consideration when thinking about your capacity.

c. Promote it to your current clients.

Many trainers fear communicating this to their current clients. While it is true that some current clients may be resistant to changing their training habits, concentrate on the positive changes in your communications with them.

- Lower price
- Increased scheduling flexibility
- Better community feel
- The same, if not better, results

Craft your message highlighting these points and also acknowledging the normal "fear of change".

Here is a sample email you can send. You should, of course, customize it to highlight your gym's culture and whatever specifics you decide to feature in your program.

Dear (name),

You know that at (name of your gym) we are always trying our best to improve.

Whether our:

- *Expertise*
- *Level of service*
- *Community or*
- *Value*

Our main goal is always to give you the best experience possible.

As we've looked around the country we've seen what we believe is a better method of training and we are incredibly proud to bring it to (name of your gym)!

I've talked with gym owners whose clients have gotten better results at lower prices all with a better community atmosphere to boot!

Starting on (starting date) we are very excited to be introducing Semi-Private Training to our members.

Our Semi-Private training program will give you:

- *Great results*
- *Lower prices*
- *Better scheduling flexibility*
- *Better community and atmosphere*

What is Semi-Private training?

It's like one-on-one training in a small group. You will be using the same exact program that got you great results before, but now you'll be doing it as a few others do their programs, too.

As I mentioned above, gym owners around the country (good ones, too), have been able to get their clients better results at lower prices all with an awesome community feel.

During your upcoming sessions, we'll answer all your questions and get you scheduled.

WE CAN'T WAIT TO GET THIS GOING!

(Your name)

It is up to you whether to completely eliminate your one-on-one program once you start your semi-private program, but it is our recommendation to phase it in among your current clients.

In your communications, ask them to try it for a few sessions before making a final decision. Once they see for themselves how it benefits them, most will switch.

For those that won't want to switch, you can:

- Continue with your one-on-one program indefinitely
- Continue with your one-on-one program for a specified length of time
- Lose them as clients.

This decision is, of course, up to you.

d. Promote it to your email list and other prospects

If you are truly serious about developing your semi-private program, how you promote it to prospects is very important. It is our recommendation that once you start a semi-private training program you simply market it as “personal training”.

Many trainers take an apologetic tone in explaining the difference between one-on-one and semi-private training to their prospects.

This is a huge mistake!

Trainers make this mistake due to limiting beliefs concerning what they believe their prospects consider “personal training”.

The truth is that prospects are only concerned with getting results in an environment they enjoy. Whether that is in a one-on-one setting or not is almost never a concern once semi-private training is explained.

Again, focus on the benefit of this program to the client. Most prospects will actually be excited to know they won't be the only ones there and will be able to more easily become a part of the culture of the gym.

Lastly, don't promote semi-private training as an alternative to one-on-one. Make sure it is promoted as simply “The Way” your gym does personal training.

4. How clients should be scheduled

This is where one of the main benefits to you, as a business owner, comes into play. You did not become a personal trainer to spend your time scheduling. Semi-private training will allow you to hand off that responsibility to the clients themselves.

There are two different types of scheduling options here. Both have their advantages and disadvantages, but the important thing for you is that you will no longer have to spend any time managing schedules.

You will have to decide which of these work best for your business and your clientele.

a. Clients on a set schedule.

With this type of scheduling, your client has the same schedule each week. For example, every Tuesday and Friday at 9am.

Advantages to this include:

- Many clients like to have the same schedule week after week, particularly those who work set hours.
- It's easier to communicate availability to new clients that have to schedule themselves.
- You can market specific time slots.
- Assurance that they will see the same people week after week can make some people more comfortable and ease some anxiety.
- You won't need an online scheduling app or website.

b. Clients on a variable schedule

With this type of scheduling your client can change their schedule each week depending on their personal schedule and session availability.

Advantages to this include:

- Clients have more flexibility to schedule themselves around their own variable schedule.
- It allows the community in your gym to grow even larger as clients meet a larger circle of your members.
- Using an online scheduling system allows you to remain almost completely out of the scheduling process, and makes it easy for your clients to schedule at will.

Using variable scheduling does warrant the use of an online scheduling system and there are many out there that you can choose from. It also makes it a little harder to communicate specific availability to new clients, but you will find that whichever system you use, most of your clients will tend to schedule themselves at the same, or very similar, times each week.

5. How clients should be billed

Along with taking scheduling responsibilities off your plate, semi-private training can take away billing responsibilities as well. Eliminating these two tasks can free up hours of your time.

Your semi-private clients should be billed on a recurring basis. That means that on the same day each month, their billing charge will automatically be taken from their bank account or credit card.

Most online credit card processing companies will support recurring billing. It is recommended to have their charge taken out on the date they start their sessions. For example, if they start their membership with you on the 5th of the month, then their charge will be taken out on the 5th of each month.

6. How to run your client's sessions

The main difference between semi-private and other group training modalities is that each semi-private client has their own customized program.

Each client must be provided with their workout for that day. You can do this in any number of ways.

- Provide a paper printout on the day of the workout.
- Give them access to their entire program beforehand and have them bring their workout either on paper, their phone, tablet, or some other device.
- Have electronic devices such as tablets at your gym for your clients.

Whatever method you choose to deliver your client's workouts, it is extremely important that they are able to take notes of how to perform their exercises as well as the weight or other kinds of load they use. Giving them this ability will allow them to learn their workouts more effectively, which will free up your time during each session to better coach the clients that need it.

It will also empower your clients to better apply the things you are trying to teach them.

As the trainer, you must be sure to cue your clients directly and appropriately and start each cue with their name so they know that you are talking to them, not any of the other people there. It will also help to identify places at your gym that allow you to see as much of your gym at once as possible. This will allow you to coach people almost no matter they are exercising.

7. How to introduce new clients

How to introduce a brand new client to an already established session time is a common question.

New clients won't know the names of exercises or how to do them. They will have to be taught those things during a session with other clients who also need to be coached to varying extents.

There are three ways to handle this situation.

- a. Let the other clients in that session know that you will be spending most of your coaching time with the new client during that session.

You will find that your other clients will understand as long as you are still there to answer their questions as needed.

- b. Bring another trainer into the session to coach the new client.

This is a preferred method although you may not have the staff or budget to do this.

- c. Use a separate onboarding session to introduce the client to the fundamentals of their new program.

This may be done in either a one-on-one or group setting depending on your programming and preference. You can include it in their package or have a one-time charge.

You will find that even clients very inexperienced with exercise catch on to their programs within just a few sessions.

We hope that this gives you a great starting point from which to introduce a semi-private training program to your gym. The advantages of this kind of program over a one-on-one setup are very clear.

If you have any questions, need further clarification, or need additional information about anything in this blueprint, please contact us. We would be happy to help you get your program in place.

One last point:

There is no need to make this perfect right from the start. You will find your own best practices as you become more experienced and comfortable with this new program.

As long as you remain open to improvements, and dedicated to your clients' success, your program will be a success.