

Lawrence Neal: Simon, welcome back to corporate warrior.

Simon Shawcross: Glad to be back Lawrence, how are you?

Lawrence Neal: I am very good. I have a new dog and she's lovely and...

Simon Shawcross: She's beautiful, I can back that up.

Lawrence Neal: I'm hoping that she doesn't distract me during this podcast. So, this is the first test to see if I can actually do a podcast with her in the back ground. I have plenty of guests with dogs, so I've had to cope with during interview, I'm sure I'll be fine. And so, you've obvious, as the listeners all know, you've got tons of experience as a personal trainer yourself. You've put through...put thousands of thousands of people through high intensity training workouts and now, obviously, you have [HiTuni](#)- where you're creating courses and helping people become great high intensity training trainers or high intensity trainers, I should say. And so, I thought you'd be perfect to obviously discuss the topic of how to instruct the perfect workout. So, do you want to just kick off with giving an overview of how you might instruct a great workout for a client and in terms of the kind of method you would take?

Simon Shawcross: One thing, to practice this with is it is really individual. So, every person you have walk through your door is going to need a slightly adapted coaching style to get the best out of that particular individual who is stood right in front of you. And then you've got things like difference between whether they're a beginner, intermediate, advanced and so on and the instruction style can be very different based on somebody's part of the journey that they're on and their understanding of high intensity exercise. And then you can talk about the differences of working with a 14 years old verses working with an 80 years old and so on. So, it's very individual, depending on who is stood right in front of you; at this moment in time. Now, having said that, I think probably the two key things from just a perspective of getting the best out of the individual in front of you is developing the rapport with the person you're speaking to and you're going to be coaching and then having a calmness about your instruction and about your manner that reinforces the person's belief in you as a trainer. So, one thing I find

new trainers can do a little bit too much, to start off with, is they feel the need to fill space the whole time, they feel the need to be constantly appearing to do something whether that's fiddling with a clipboard or constantly verbally talking all of the time they feel this need that the client doesn't perceive a value unless there's this almost constant chitter chatter and or physical action. Now, to me, when I see that in a trainer, that doesn't inspire confidence. That makes me feel like there's somebody who's a little bit new to this, they don't quite feel their space and feel comfortable within that place, within the environment, within the gym, within the workout that's being instructed. So, one thing that I think super key is, especially for new instructors is to breathe, calm things down, slow things down a little bit and then you will be able to communicate in a manner that really suits this type of exercise. Because this isn't come into the gym and do some jerking around and super-fast reps and need a cheerleader to shout you on through your workout. This is a type of exercise but in many ways when it's do when is very meditative and focus; mentally and physiologically focused as you're doing it. And that doesn't get assisted by somebody who's fidgeting around and verbally excessively talking and or instructing too much. And the other thing that's a mannerism that new instructors can do with this is to look down at their clipboard too much or to...they feel uncomfortable looking specifically at the individual working out and instead I'll notice they're looking at the weight stack going up and down, they know they need to be looking at something in that general direction but they feel kind of awkward staring at a person in front of them, so they're like observing the weight stack or they're observing the movement arm of the machine rather than the individual who's making that movement arm or that machine move or that weight stack move. And that is a big mistake because there is so much to observe in the individual from the joints, from the working muscles around those joints to their face, how you sense that person is feeling in that moment in the workout. So, I think one thing, especially for new instructors, would be to calm down, make sure you're observing the individual in front of you and to be really clear in what it is that you want to say and communicate to that particular individual.

Lawrence Neal: Awesome, I love that, and it was only recently actually I was training someone and I felt these exact force came up for me. It was

kind of like okay, "What do I say now at certain points of the exercise?" And I kind of thought to myself, no, less is more, less is more. They're doing exactly what I've asked them to do, they're form is perfect, there's no reason to say anything and there's only perhaps a reason to say something if I feel like it will help. So, do you want to just elaborate on the type of language that you would use? I mean, I know when you trained me that time is a first time I heard someone describe the turn around that you've render the movement as looping, which I really liked, so just wanted you to elaborate on the kind of language you might use when you train someone and what to avoid as well.

Simon Shawcross: Okay, I think a key thing both from a psychological perspective and from a taking action perspective in terms of the client physiologically taking action is to always use positive language. So, instead of saying to somebody, "Don't go so fast," say, "Slow down," so you're not using the negative. The negative a) is negative and b) it takes a translation in the mind to turn that into an action. So, when a person hears don't go so fast okay, Lawrence is telling me don't go so fast which means okay I need to slow down, especially in the heat of the moment of the high intensity set where fatigue is building up, you're getting the sensations of discomfort, your mind, especially in a beginner, might be looking for distraction and to get away. Having to process this sort of extra mental pattern instruction and turn it into an action, just delays everything and the client may be beyond in capable of making that change at that point or it comes a little bit later than ideally, you'd want as the instructor. So, always use positive language. So, tell them directly what it is you want them to do in that moment and then their brain goes Lawrence wants me to slow down, boom, done, that happens in a second; in a microsecond. In terms of language, like you mentioned like phrases like looping, I think it's finding words or using words that visually describe what you physiologically want to happen, and you might find certain words work better for certain individuals. And you'll see it because you'll see them translate what you're asking them to do into action really, really effectively, and you might use an instruction that you've used on another client and it's a good instructor potentially should be a good instruction but doesn't have the same impact on the client. So, another thing to do is to be really aware of the instructions that you see the client in front of you

getting and being able to turn into action. And if you see there's an instruction that doesn't work for them you another one with the same message. So, you're creating a palette, a verbally and auditory palette that specifically works for that person that you're training, and you have to write it down, you write all this stuff down for each client you have you just store in your brain and you have it to go to the next time somebody trains. So, in terms of the language or the specific words for different parts of the movement, I think it's just finding things that people will go, "Oh yeah, like a loop, that makes sense." I know a loop doesn't stop, it's not jagged there's no pause. A loop like the infinity figure; figure eight. It's like you loop at one end, you flow back, you loop at the other end. So, these types of words just make sense to the protocol or the style of exercise we're performing. And, there's tons of them for different parts, for movement and for different exercises and we've got list of them in the [HITuni course](#) and it's learning to become comfortable with those words and that language because it will feel a little bit awkward sometime if it's a word you're not used to saying. You will say things negatively sometimes just because you do and when you catch yourself doing that, the best thing to do is like just remind yourself, next time I want to say it direct. Instruction that's direct, clear and verbally accurate and concise will get the best out of a client.

Lawrence Neal: Love it, yeah. Adapting one's lexicon to the client and getting them the best results is definitely the aim. And one thing I've noticed is obvious people that start high intensity training for the first time may struggle with the type of breathing that we advocate, the natural breathing that we talk about, because people are kind of used to, in a lot of case especially if they come from more traditional weight lifting background, they're use to the exhale on the concentric and the inhale on the eccentric which we don't necessarily want to do because especially if the cadence is slow it's not going to really make a great deal of sense. And so, when you see that type of breathing happening when you see a breathing pattern that's too much like that and you're trying to make it a bit slower and a bit more productive, how do you instruct that in the moment?

Simon Shawcross: In the moment, so let's just run that back so somebody who...what are they breathing to fast or they're starting to valsalva and hold their breath in the moment what specifically...?

Lawrence Neal: They're probably...well, not necessarily but they might be...yeah, they might be at times doing a valsalva maneuver or getting close to doing that but if they're not doing that they might be doing like a just like for instance, on the concentric they might be just moving a little too fast and then doing kind of a full exhale rather than a bit more just a phew. And actually, I kind of might be answering my own question because if you do slow down the exercise, the breathing you'd hope would sometimes correlate with that, but I just sometimes notice, I find that it's sometimes that's quite difficult to get people to breathe naturally. I think first straight away think [Doug McGuff](#) and a lot of his [body work science videos on YouTube](#), he's very stoic face, slack jaw, breathing in and out very deeply and rhythmically and natural and then as the set builds up where he's more fatigue then obviously focus hyperventilation sets in in order to get the most out the end of the set. So, I guess...

Simon Shawcross: In Doug's case that's years of practice.

Lawrence Neal: Right, well that's a good point so maybe that's something to think about that, it takes an experienced trainee to get there. But how would you...okay, better question it might be, how would you best instruct a trainee to breathe in the most appropriate manner? What words would you use to instruct a training?

Simon Shawcross: I think the key thing is when it's somebody new, before they even get on the equipment, this is would be one of my absolute key teaching points is the breathing pattern you're expecting them to use and you need them to use during the exercise or the exercises they're going to do in the routine. And that would be one of my absolute fundamentals of an initial session; explaining that really, really clearly to them, how I would expect them to breathe. Now, it's a completely uninstinctive thing to do, to breathe in this manner, when you're using a load that feels heavy to you instinctively all you want to do is shut down, brace up and valsalva to get that load to move. So, when somebody's brand new to exercise it...they just doing what's hard wired into their physiology, into their central

nervous system, that's how the body...unless somebody has been doing this type of exercise or something similar perhaps a yoga practice or something where they've learn to be a little bit more in control of their breathe and physiology at the same time, is going to tense up and look to shut down their breathing rate. So, I would just be like super observant and remind them pre-reminder them, if that's a thing, before they start an exercise that about half way through when things start to feel a little bit challenging, one of the things I can pretty much guarantee you're going to do is to want to hold your breath to start with and what I need for you to do is to always keep breathing, to always be breathing. And just to reinforce that instruction before they...in your initial chat with them, before they get on the particular exercise and then you pre-warn them. So, the moment you mention it when they start to do it in the exercise, they're primed for you to tell them that and you're telling them that right then. Okay, Lawrence said this was going to happen, it's happening okay, I know what I need to do to please my trainer right now. So, yeah, it's pre-warning them, pre-preparing them (preparing them) and then getting them to do that in the moment and then reminding...and then never letting it fly during the exercise. It's like the moment, as a trainer, you let that kind of thing fly then it's a road to all sorts of shenanigans happening which you want to avoid as a trainer and as the client.

Lawrence Neal: So, just to elaborate on that, if you see it once, you see bad breathing habits once and you check-in and say...let's say you've already, you've instructed at start and you've also remind them throughout the workout and then towards the end of the set thy resume bad breathing habits, you would continue to remind them, you won't back off because it's obviously a pretty important thing to try and improve.

Simon Shawcross: No.

Lawrence Neal: No?

Simon Shawcross: No, I won't back off. I think to the extend where if that continues to happen after the corrective instruction, I'd say let's stop the exercise, gently bring that load down, do you remember that thing I was talking about before we started the workout about the breathing?"

The moment that's not happening and what that's going to do when you start to hold your breath it'll make it feel easier in the moment, it is making the exercise easier for you muscularly. So, it's not doing what we want it to do and you're kind of taking a little bit of a risk because you're driving that blood pressure. One of the purposes of this type of exercise is that we're keeping the risk factors really low and we're keeping your blood pressure at a fairly normal level during the exercise. But the moment you hold your breath, that's going to spike and so this is really important that we keep you breathing through the exercise. So, re-impress why you're having...or the reasons for them doing this type of breathing. It's not just something that you're being a stick in the mud about it's something that has a very real physiologic impact on the person, on the training style. And it's one of those things, to me those first, depending on the individual, four to ten sessions, there's so much learning and so much sort of instinctive behavior that needs unpicking with high intensity training. That all of these things you can expect to have for the vast majority of people and your roles in those first four to ten sessions is to unpick and remind and improve or change those behaviors and the load and then...so you're bypassing the instincts you're helping the individual bypass their instincts and once they've got...for some people they might get it in two or three sessions, for others at the other end of the spectrum you might be going on longer than ten sessions just because some people are not as in control of their physiology, sort of almost not in their physiology at all when they start with you and they...some individuals will take longer but you just need to stick on with all of your clients.

Lawrence Neal: I like it so you're kind of beating dog tracks into the mind.

Simon Shawcross: Yeah, it's really instinctive. It is, it's like training your dog, it's like you need for this to happen. In many ways I...a trainer's role is to become the individual's brain during exercise. You are taking a meta-position to them, you're outside their physiology, you're outside the workout, the direct physical experience of the workout, you can be a much calmer voice and somebody with years of experience giving the advice that's needed, you can become the brain that enables them to have the kind of workout you want them to have.

Lawrence Neal: In those moments where you do have to stop them because they're not following instructions very well and it could be dangerous, for instance holding their breath, and you stop the workout, you tell them to sit the weight down, what type of...will you use quite a stern turn or will you be very kind of polite and relaxed in your kind of reiteration of the principles you've already said and trying to really hammer that home before you commence the next set? Because I imagine for some instructors and I've been in this position it can get a little bit frustrating when you're dealing with someone who's particularly hard to instruct and it could be tempting to kind of be a bit stroppy with them. So, what might your tone be when you're in that type of situation? How might you deliver that?

Simon Shawcross: Like we started off this conversation saying I think the key thing is to remain calm and to have a clam manner about your instruction at all times and then adapt that baseline state to the individual in front of you. So, some people might be almost apologetic that they've done that and need just a very gentle coaxing to get it right. Other people might be annoyed that you point to that or annoyed that you stopped their set, that you've point that, and you might need to be a little bit more brusque with that type of individual; a little bit more direct. Some people might be testing you as a trainer, when people first come in they sometimes they want to almost show off what they can do or they have other motivations that might be subconscious motivation but they have other motivations for coming to you other than wanting the best possible training experience or wanting the best trainer and these are things you know it's like the teacher's pet verses the naughty kid at the back of the class. It's like there all these different mindset that clients could come to you with so I would say remain calm and then you change your tone or your pitch or your attitude to a degree to that individual in front of you. Some individuals might almost need a sharp shocked of like. "Come one you need to focus on this, this is really important and if we don't get this right we're going to need to just continue doing the leg press until or just continue doing the pull down (this one exercise) until we crack this." Something that...not that I'd necessarily do actually follow through on that but it's something that makes you think oh God I want to do other exercise, you want to have a proper workout, because that's the other thing

with new clients is they have a tendency to be in a rush to do everything. They want to have...especially if they've heard about high intensity training and they come to do high intensity training rather than just coming to you because you're a trainer and they don't know anything more about you than that. They come to you with that perspective of I want a HIT workout, what they'll typically do is wants to have that experience almost in the first session and they'll attach themselves to the intensity part that they've read and heard about rather than the safety and efficiency aspect of this type of exercise, which come, to me the intensity part comes because of the safety and the efficiency factors of a workout; not the other way around. And if you go about it from the other way around then your workout's going to resemble something more like cross fit whereas if you come from it from the high intensity training perspective it's going to be this cleaner, more focus, more efficient type of protocol, which is really what the individual...you want the individual to have; that's the experience that you're looking for them to have during this very clean, precise focus and that intensity at the end of the exercise that last 10/20 seconds of the set, getting them to that place calmly and then them enjoying or learning to tolerate if not enjoy that part of the set I think that's the key thing as the trainer, is to get a person to that place and that's what needs to be done from your perspective as a trainer. And the client might not always get that when they first come to you but that's part of your role as a coach; part of your role as an instructor is to get them to get why that's important so they understand the purpose. You're not being, you're not asking to do these things for fun or you're not looking to be a stick in the mud about it. It's just like you are going to have a better experience. It's like I wouldn't walk into a Michelin star chef's kitchen and start telling him how to prepare my meal, I want to experience what this guy, who's dedicated his life to creating awesome meals, I want to experience what his interpretation of food is. That's kind of a relationship I'd be looking to foster in clients, particularly new clients.

Lawrence Neal:

I love that analogy; that's perfect. Yeah, I completely agree. Final question Simon for this kind of, I guess, part one because there's a lot we didn't cover and maybe we could do a part two to cover that off, and last question really is how do you, at the end of the set we want reach momentary muscular failure obviously in the safest way

possible because we know that that's probably the most potent part of the workout and most important in terms of triggering a lot of the positive adaptation that we want such as increased muscle mass, strength and bone marrow density and all the rest of it. So, how do you...in your experience what kind of language instruction do you use at that final section of a set to really make sure your clients are using absolute maximum intensity?

Simon Shawcross: Go faster, go as fast as you possibly can. It's not an instruction I would typically use with somebody who's new. I think you have to develop the skills to use that instruction but ultimately what you want a client to be able to do in the last seconds of the workout is to attempt to move the load as fast as possible. When you get your timing right on that instruction the external speed won't change, it'll still be slowing down if anything, but that instruction is what will help, and the following through that instruction is what will cause the motor units to be engaged and all of them to be firing optimally before fatigue sets in which means that you can no longer produce force but will keep movement going with the given load that you've got. So, that would be my key instruction is when somebody's...when I know they've got the behaviors, when I know they've got the breathing, when I know they've got the ability to perform the exercise with smooth control turn arounds and to contract the target musculature and to be really mentally focused in on the targeted musculature we're performing the exercise for then my encouragement at the very end of the set would be to move as fast as possible but you got the timing of that instruction right, you do it too soon, they are going to go faster. You judge that moment just right, they're going to maybe continue to get another third half even whole rep perhaps, concentric part of the rep, by doing that. And they will have optimized the firing rate of all the motor units involved in the exercise. That would be my...but I would...that typically wouldn't come, I think, on an average client I would start to use that instruction for maybe 10 workouts or so because I...those initial workouts they're having with you and again it's very individual, it could be two workouts for some people who just really tuned into their physiology, their central nervous system is awesome. And they're mental engagement, physiological engagement of the process is awesome, when you've got those two factors combined, might only take them two or three/ four workouts

to get the fundamentals right verses somebody at the other end of the spectrum who might take much longer. But when a person is capable that's what I'd be looking to instructed at the end of the set. Until that point, this is what I was getting around to, until that point its practice for me, it's practice, it's refinement of the skills that are going to keep you safe when you are...but will get you to become capable of executing the end of the set in that manner.

Lawrence Neal: Yeah, no, I love that, and I do the same thing and I do the same thing when I train myself. I think it's really important to underscore something especially for those that are perhaps new to this type of training or instruct in this type of training is that if you're so fatigued which you will be by the end of a high intensity set by moving fast you're very unlikely to yourself because you won't be able to move fast; you'll be trying to move fast but you're actually moving very slowly. And just to also underscore we're still advocating smooth turn around during this latter part of the set, it's just really that kind of middle portion.

Simon Shawcross: Well, that instruction will specifically be used on the concentric. You wouldn't use that instruction, that certainly wouldn't be a goal of the eccentric portion of the movement. So, absolutely really good point. It's like that instruction would be used on the concentric to enable somebody to get to the end or as much of a way through that concentric as possible. When they turn around and by the time they get to the turnaround it needs to be as controlled as any. So, that instruction really, it's almost like you'd be surprised for them to get to the end of that rep and if they do, and this is where you need to sit down with the person in advance and talk about this style of technic is...by the time they do get they need to be as in control of that turn around as on another rep. And like you mentioned Lawrence, it's the speed external shouldn't be actually increasing at all even though the instruction is to move faster; the speed should be remaining flat and as you hit closer to full fatigue that slowing even slowing down and then controlled turn around, controlled eccentric absolutely critical.

Lawrence Neal: Awesome. Simon, thank you so much for joining me today to talk about how to instruct a high intensity workout, it's been really valuable I'm sure for those listening and definitely for myself. And

what's the best way for people to find out more about you and your services?

Simon Shawcross: Best place to go is [HITuni.com](https://hituni.com) or the [HITuni Facebook page](#), yeah, Twitter account all of those places; [HITuni.com](https://hituni.com).

Lawrence Neal: Cool and don't forget guys, if you want to [purchase one of Simon's courses](#) don't forget to use the coupon code CW10 for 10% discount and thank you very much for listening.