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Lawrence: Lawrence Neal here, and welcome back to highintensitybusiness.com. This is episode 240, and today's guest is Simon Shawcross. Simon is the found of hituni.com, the leading provider of high-intensity training certification courses for personal training. Simon has 20 years of experience in high-intensity training as a personal trainer and has spent about seven years helping personal trainers get certified, creating bespoke certifications for existing businesses, and helping people start their own high-intensity training business. Simon, welcome back to the show.

Simon: It's great to be back, Lawrence.

Lawrence: Great to have you. How are you, sir? How's things? How's HITuni?

Simon: All is well. 's going fantastically well. We just released a new course with Skyler Tanner and we are working away on some exciting new blog posts and some working on looking through some of the latest research to bring some new stuff to the table as well. All is good certifying people on the regular basis, enjoying being part of their learning experience, and getting into a place where they're going to be able to service their clients really effectively and really well.

Lawrence: Yeah. I love the blog. I think I said to you when we were at REC, Resistance Exercise Conference, earlier this year, I said, "Oh, you always make me want to up my game." Because I can tell that you published them relatively infrequently, like maybe one every two weeks or a month if that's fair for me to say.

Simon: That'd be right, yeah.

Lawrence: But that's fine because they're very high quality I find. You clearly do your research and you're very... you spend a lot of time on them and that's quite clear to me. And I always find them quite inspiring. I'm always kind of read them and go, "I need to do better." You know, anytime... Like oh no, I typically always share them because I just think that they're really useful to both our audiences, so I'm always sharing them about.

Lawrence: Excited to do this, to have this conversation with you today because as I was kind of saying before we started recording, is I've got a number of listeners who are, who have become, as many people do become or passionate about something when they learn something about it, they've become more passionate about high-intensity training and starting some kind of high-intensity training business, whether that's alongside their existing jobs, or kind of like a side hustle if you will. Or maybe actually just transitioning over completely because they're so passionate about this that they want to figure out how they can make a living from it and how they can turn it into a business.

Lawrence: And obviously everyone's got their own vision as to what that might entail. Maybe it's just a lifestyle business, a one-on-one situation, maybe it's they train people from their home or mobile or commercial gyms, or maybe they want to have their own studio, and maybe they want to scale way beyond that. So everyone's in their different place.

Lawrence: What we wanted to talk about during this conversation really is how do you become a great personal trainer? Which is going to be

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useful to those starting out, but also those people who are passionate about their craft, but always looking to improve and are keen to figure out how to best do that. So yeah, excited to have this conversation.

Lawrence: The first thing we wanted to talk about is knowing your core knowledge in personal training. Do you want to provide some kind of remarks and your view on how someone should go about that?

Simon: Yeah. First of all, I'll preface this by saying when you mentioned to me what we were going to discuss today, I sat down and thought back to 20 years ago, and what would I have wanted to know then that I've learned since? What could I tell that guy back then? And so these are sort of the seven points that I would have, if I could go back and tell that young Simon 20 years ago, what would be most useful for him, these would be those.

Simon: The first one was know your core knowledge, and that's perhaps the most obvious one. If you are going to start and set up as a personal trainer with a high-intensity training specialism, know your basics well first and foremost. So your anatomy and physiology, your biomechanics, know the physiologic and psychological benefits that a potential client is going to get from training with you. Effectively, what your service is offering.

Simon: Then from those basics, start to look at the scientific research that is out there as well. So your abreast of where the research is going, what is being said, even if it's perhaps an alternative perspective to high-intensity training. It's a good mental exercise to learn to read this stuff, understand it as best you could. Now, not saying

everybody needs to be able to read a scientific paper and know all the terms in it straight away and exactly what everything means and all the different statistical tools you use to process for research, but give yourself an understanding. Which is useful as well when clients ask questions about research or ask questions about exercise to have a solid foundation from which to engage with them on.

Simon: And then, what I would also consider part of your core knowledge is your own direct personal experience and hands-on learning from your engagement with exercise thus far in your life. So everything that you've done, lifting and lowering of weight, using different exercises, what that physiologic experience is, how does it feel, all of those things that you have done already and... A new personal trainer can make the simple error of assuming that other people have had that experience or know what it feels like to go to a certain place during exercise. So it's to really get a culmination of an understanding of that process and how it feels to exercise, and specifically how it feels to exercise in a high-intensity manner, and what I mean by high-intensity manner is effectively working to momentary muscular failure with good form or getting very damn close to that place.

Lawrence: Yeah, I was just thinking about what you said there in terms of reviewing the science, and I remember James Fisher saying that he thought a good place to start with any topic is even though he's not a big fan necessarily of all meta-analyses, and he said it's a good place to start because typically you can find a big body of literature on a specific topic, whether that's training volume or intensity...

Well, intensity's probably not that well researched at this point, but volume and frequency, certainly things like that, and maybe other things related to resistance training or any research around kind of exercise science. So do you agree that's a good place for people to start? Or do you have any other tips in terms of interpreting scientific literature? And learning about it?

Simon: I'd stand by what James has said there, looking at the meta-analysis is great, it gives you a great overview of the research. And then of course, you can dig down into the references from that paper for things that either you go, "Yeah, that sounds something I want to learn more about," or, "That kind of sort of goes against what I was thinking, so I want to learn more about that perspective, why is that being put forward as a case in this example?"

Simon: I think it can be a little bit intimidating to start off with looking at research. And I think there's a lot of people perhaps get into the habit initially of getting an abstract, and that'll be the extent to which they look at the research. That's okay, but to see how the research has got to the conclusions they got to, and any questions you might have about well how was that research conducted, who were the subjects of the research, how closely were they observed, the depth behind it, how it was practically done, I think you need to, well you certainly need to go beyond the abstract and start to get an understanding.

Simon: I think look up the terms would be another good piece of advice for somebody new to doing this, would be come across a term you're unfamiliar with, don't gloss over it or assume you know what it

means, go straight to Google, type it in, and get an understanding of exactly what that term means. You're growing your knowledge as well.

Lawrence: Yeah, I agree. And I was thinking there a couple good things I've had in the past is I know that Discover Strength, at least they used to do this, I'm not sure if it's still a regular thing they do now. But they have regular discussions about the latest research. Their trainers, probably their management, and actually have these open discussions, so they'll talk about the research. That's probably very productive because they might show, they might point out flaws in the research, weaknesses, share different opinions and different interpretations, which probably makes everyone else a little bit smarter after the fact. That could be a- [crosstalk 00:11:39]

Simon: Fantastic idea. That's a great thing to do as well as trainers is to get together and talk about this stuff. We do this on where the trainers get to ask questions. I know you do that with the high-intensity business discover obviously you- [crosstalk 00:11:56]. Discover do it amongst their staff, and I believe they put some videos out there as well for general consumption. So yeah, just discussion of this stuff is really valuable as well will help the process of learning.

Lawrence: Yeah, and I think actually at this point if you Google, actually you're not going to be able to Google it because you probably won't know the exact titles of some of the research, but if you look back through a lot of the archives and the podcasts, I've done a lot of research reviews with the likes of Dr. James [inaudible 00:12:29] and other scientists. If you've read a paper and you're not sure about

definitions or some of the information in there, more often than not, I've done these podcasts with people where you can get a better understanding. I won't necessarily link to specific things from the show notes of this one, but I think if you just go to the website highintensitybusiness.com, and you go to search bar, and you search those types... you search the...

Lawrence: Actually, a better way of doing this would be to search the name of the author on the paper and something should come up and, that will help you understand the research better. It certainly helped me, and I've had that advantage, haven't I? Of if I read a paper, and I'm like, "Okay, I don't quite get this." And I can actually get someone onto my show to help me understand it, and I found that to be really, really helpful because it is intimidating, right? It is hard to understand these papers.

Lawrence: I know that Peter Attia, and I'll link to this, did a really good, I think a blog post series where it was called something like How to Study Studies, or Studying Studies. And it was like talking about relative and absolute probability, and just so that you could kind of acquire a few skills to better understand what these papers are kind of showing. I'll link to that as well because that might be useful for people. I'm not sure if you've come across that before?

Simon: Not that specific one, but I've read some outside of exercise as well, some... it's not coming to me at the moment, but some great research on how also research can be twisted and used to present something that isn't necessarily a stronger case as the scientist want, all the researchers want to say it is in that particular case. I

think I was in mathematics, that particular research I'm thinking of, but it was fascinating seeing that stuff.

Simon: Yeah, absolutely. Having an understanding of what weaknesses can be in research as well is really valuable because people can make very bold claims. I'm not talking necessarily about the researchers themselves. Outside individual's interpretations of research can lead to them making very bold claims about something that actually that original piece of research might not be so black and white or so strong as in portraying what that's saying.

Lawrence: Yeah, I agree. Cool, okay. The next point, do you want to go onto that?

Simon: Yeah. And this follows on from the previous one, know your core knowledge. This one is while book learning is great, but also know your craft. And to me, your craft is the exercises that you're using and plan to use with clients. You need to know those inside out. Kind of touched on a previous one as well, but the physiologic experience of the exercises and the form of the exercise. What are you clients going to be feeling? What is their experience of the workout? The physiological experience and the psychological experience of the workout going to be? What is that engagement going to feel like for them because you always need to have the ability to step into the client's physiologic shoes.

Simon: Also, know your equipment. Whatever you're using, it doesn't matter, body weight, free weights, machines, bands, whatever you are planning to work with, know the pros and cons, the foibles, the tips and tricks of using that equipment to best advantage. And I

think this is one of the mistakes or sort of thinking errors that new high-intensity trainers can make is thinking that you've got to have a specific brand of equipment or you've got to have the very best of the very best in terms of equipment to start your business.

Simon: Well, I would say if you can source that and you can justify the expense of that, fantastic. That's great. There will be many people who might well not be in that position where that's a viable starting point, and a great trainer, and I'm pretty sure we discussed this on the podcast before, can make use of whatever tools they have to hand to give the client a great exercise experience.

Simon: Now, there are certain situations where having a great quality machine would be really valuable. If you're training somebody who's a senior, or maybe in firm, or they have stability issues, it would be great to have excellent equipment because it's just going to make that learning process easier for them. By the same hand, if you've got a fairly athletic 25-year-old, relatively quickly you're going to be able to get them getting just as much as they would out of a machine out of body weight exercise or a free weight exercise. So it partly depends on your clientele, but whatever you're going to use, know it implicitly, how to set it up, how to adapt it for individuals. Know the insides and outsides of your equipment that you're using to be able to give the best experience to your clients.

Lawrence: Yeah, I often think a really good way, like let's say you are... You don't have access to the best equipment, or maybe you just want to use all sorts of different exercises with your clients in order to focus on specific muscle groups of what have you. It's a really great way

to motivate yourself to try these things out in your own training, right? And because then you can really gain an appreciation for exactly how it feels, and let's face it. Most of us who've been doing HIT for more than five years have pretty much reached most... our genetic peak, and any progress from here is very, very small. And so novelty is probably quite important for longterm adherence, and so with that in mind, it's probably going to... It's kind of win-win.

Lawrence: If you want to start doing manual resistance, for instance, I know Discover Strength really like using manual resistance for shoulder work and tricep work. Maybe in your own personal training, you should have someone do that for you so you know exactly how it feels, and you can then really obviously improvise with your clients. [crosstalk 00:18:49]

Simon: Manual resistance is a very good example of that.

Lawrence: Right.

Simon: Because you do have to know it inside out. And as a trainer playing that force, you need to know when to apply the force to what degree through the range of motion, and one of the key things to do is to avoid getting into an overly competitive attitude with manual resistance training where as trainer, you're attempting to show that you're strong enough to resist them. And you've got some male rugby player who's showing you how strong they are, you know you got to let people know there's give and take that you need to be doing. This is not a competition. It's about fatiguing your target musculature during this exercise and let's not get carried away with this.

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Simon: But yeah, I mean being able to... apply manual resistance safely is one where you do need a lot of experience of just practicing manual resistance, experiencing it, and practicing it, and having a buddy or a partner to go over that stuff, refine it again and again before you were to use that with a client would be exceptionally useful.

Lawrence: How else would you recommend someone hone their craft or continue to do that? How and in what other ways?

Simon: Other ways of honing the craft.

Lawrence: Yeah, in terms of like obviously you've got... people can be very reliant on books and you've kind of put an emphasis on focus on the personal training, on getting that experience, that's kind of what I'm asking about is that latter portion.

Simon: Yeah, so I mean another one that I think, this kind of jumps to point seven. It's cool. We'll get straight into it.

Lawrence: Sorry, sorry.

Simon: Which is always keep learning. Which is always be learning.

Lawrence: Right. Right.

Simon: Take courses, talk with people that you respect in the industry, and I'd say a really, really valuable one is book yourself in for a session with other trainers. And I don't care if they're from, I mean, it would be useful for them often to be from a high-intensity training background. But personally, I would also have that experience from trainers who are not as well because from this aspect, I'm looking at... from a meta position, for what is that experience like in its

entirety? I book a session with a trainer, what is that global experience like with them? From the moment I walk in the door, to the interaction that I have with them, to the way they show me exercises and the equipment, and the way they coach and instruct me during the exercise. How does it feel to be a client?

Simon: Now, you may have this from other things you do in your life. Maybe you book yourself massages. Maybe you play golf and you get golf instructions. So you can be on the receiving end of a sort of instructional service, which is great because that can give you some sort of wide perspectives on that experience. But if you go to personal trainers and have that direct experience, there will be some things you think, "Wow, that's amazing. I love that term or phrase." Or, "I love the way they did this and how they instructed me or taught me about this particular exercise. That taught me something I wasn't aware of or frame it in a way that I hadn't thought of before."

Simon: To just things like, "Oh, they were really courteous about when I... they seemed to notice that I was starting to warm up and they mentioned turning the fan on me at just the right moment. How did they know that?" That whole global experience, what is it like? And you can't have that enough. And I think personal trainers forget to do that sometimes. Maybe if you work for a facility where there are loads of other trainers and that's kind of built in again to the structure of your training and your process of working in that business. But if you're working by yourself, you're just starting out fresh, I would say even go outside your gym. Have that experience

elsewhere. It also tells you about competing services out there as well.

Simon: But to me, what I'm getting most out of that is that experience. What is that experience like? What do I like about that experience? What did I dislike about that experience? How can I adapt what that experience, my experience of that experience, to what I provide my clients? It's such... That one I cannot emphasize enough as being a super valuable tool. You cannot have been trained by enough people. You cannot have had that experience enough, and I'm not saying go out there and experience something dangerous. If you happen to cross a trainer who starts getting you doing something crazy or you begin to feel like, "Whoa, I'm not happy doing this," don't continue that experience. Just put that down as a... extricate yourself from the situation and appreciate, well yeah, I'm so far removed from doing that and that doesn't seem good for my body, so I'm kind of out of here.

Simon: But do that have experience with many different flavors, many different trainers because there's so much to learn from... I mean, I have from go around the globe and training with and being trained by many different trainers. It never ceases me to amaze at... I may come away with just a term or phrase, or I might come away with that whole experience was special, but I've always learned something of value. But...

Lawrence: I have a question on this, and I love that, I think that's great advice. I have a bit of an ethical issue because I'm opening a studio here. Likely open time around January. It's going to be very exciting.

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- Simon: Congratulations, that sounds awesome.
- Lawrence: Thank you. You'll have to come over and visit, Simon. I'll pay you for a workout. You can show us how it's done.
- Simon: I'd love to.
- Lawrence: And I was doing a fair amount of market research in the area, and I won't name names, company names or anything like that, but there was one studio I was interested in just getting a trial workout. But I will be completely honest, it was more for market research, right?
- Simon: Sure.
- Lawrence: And I've inquired, and it's quite interesting because as you say, you can see how quickly they are to respond and actually book that, and they were very, very slow. It took literally a week to come back to me, which was interesting. But this is the thing. Now, I have a little bit of an ethical issue with this because I'm like, "Is that right that I go knowing that I'm... obviously only going to have the one session and that's it, not pay anything." And then it's just I take that knowledge and I help that in our business. I have a, a lot of people-
[crosstalk 00:25:47] Yeah, how do you feel about that?
- Simon: Taking a taste, a session for free, I wouldn't be comfortable with doing that.
- Lawrence: Right. Okay.
- Simon: The way I would approach this is do you offer one-off sessions?
- Lawrence: Will we? Yes.

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Simon: No, no, no.

Lawrence: Oh, I see.

Simon: I'm saying when you [crosstalk 00:26:01] to the trainer or the gym where you want to go and have that experience, do you offer one-off sessions? I want to come for a one-off session?

Lawrence: I can't pay for the privilege.

Simon: I'm paying for that one session.

Lawrence: Right.

Simon: Absolutely.

Lawrence: Yeah, I think that's-

Simon: No, I'm not just going there and take your... Because I know as a trainer when you offer that initial complimentary session, that really is a sales gateway as well as an opportunity to show off what that client is going to have that experience and start to build rapport with that client, and it's so valuable for the trainer to do that. But no, I'm not interested in taking advantage of that from people who are looking to run a business. I'm interested in their skills as a trainer and I would probably prefer to go in without them knowing that I'm a personal trainer because I want to have a genuine experience of it. I would be happy with them knowing I trained a lot, and I enjoy training, and I've done that a lot. If there was a direct question, are you a personal trainer? I'd be clear and frank about it. Yes, yes I am.

Simon: I'm not looking at it as trying to take somebody's business secret. It's more about from the perspective of just learning what the experience of being a client is like because unless the shoe is on the other foot, you will miss stuff as a trainer. When the shoe's on the other foot and you're evaluating an experience that you're having, say you went off to have a massage tomorrow and the person who's giving you the massage, well there's two things that I hate when getting a massage. One is somebody who talks all the way through the massage. I'm great for five minutes at the beginning and five minutes at the end of it, and are you doing okay in the middle. But if you talk to me the whole time, I'm meant to be there to relax. I'm going to come out more stressed than I went in there. And the other thing is [inaudible 00:28:02] massage, and I can't tolerate that. It just feels weird, weak source.

Lawrence: Yeah.

Simon: But you're having that experience of that person's service, and I would encourage people to have the experience of somebody else's service and pay for it, pay for that experience because they're giving you value. They're giving you an experience. Pay for it. I'm not talking about doing sort of [inaudible 00:28:29]. You know an Apple spy going into Samsung on something like that. It's like, you know, but to have a genuine experience rather than that person being on their, sort of their best behavior because they kind of know that you're a personal trainer so they want to sort of treat you as an equal and make sure that they're showing you how good and how knowledgeable they are. I want the genuine experience, ideally. But

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it places the direct question are you a personal trainer? I'd say, "Yeah, but I want you to train me as if I was anybody else."

Lawrence: Yeah, I think that's great. That's a really obvious solution now that I think about it. But no, I appreciate it. I think that's exactly what I'm going to do.

Lawrence: Okay, so step three, know the client.

Simon: Know the individual client, and this is a super key one. Everybody's a little bit different. We've got the same essential physiology but there are difference within the expression of that physiology, but also psychology. One of the first key things to be a great trainer is when that client first comes through your door, find out what the hell motivates them as quickly as you can. What has made them step foot inside your door? And there'll be some underlying reason, and the quicker you can figure out what that is, the more likely you are going to be able to provide them with the service that gives them that and the experience that makes them feel like they are getting what they came for.

Simon: And sometimes they won't say what that is, so it might be... that they want to look ripped but they're embarrassed about it being all about aesthetics or an appearance concern. So they might wrap it up, "Well, I want to be healthy and I want to be fit." Sometimes people don't care about the aesthetics, they just want to be strong. I'm giving an example here. But the more you can dig down to well actually what is this person's motivator because you can help them. Because if it is aesthetic and they want to be ripped in three months time to be on the beach, well you know as a trainer that nutrition is

going to play a huge part of that package. And so you're going to need to be emphasizing the importance of them doing that alongside of the training that you're giving to them. It's knowing so you can tailor your professional advice to that individual in front of you, what is that key motivator.

Simon: Another key area once you've got them on your equipment, once you've started to have them go through exercises is know how do they deal with discomfort. We all are aware that any flavor of productive resistance training is going to feel uncomfortable. It is. The last 20 seconds of that step, 10 seconds of that step are going to be uncomfortable, and some people love that experience. James Steel loves that experience. Skyler Tanner loves that experience. But there are some of your clients who are going to come in who abhor that experience, at least initially, and will want to avoid having that experience, and they'll look to avoid being taken to that part of the set which you know is most productive for them and their results.

Simon: Find out if they're like that. Do they like intensity or do they strive to avoid it? One of the things for them, it was... Steel and Fisher and talking to them in a piece of research they've done, make me reevaluate my perspective on it, was that discomfort during exercise is higher the longer a set goes on. And so, and often it's the case that people think a lighter load will be easier for a client, a lighter load is more preferable for somebody. But actually, if you're working somebody to failure and you're doing a two-minute set, that's going to be far more uncomfortable than a 50 to 60 second set to muscular failure.

Simon: Now, when somebody's brand new to resistance training and brand new to you, I would air on the side of slightly longer sets initially because I want them to have that time to experience the exercise and not to feel like the load's too heavy for them, so that it's scary. But pretty rapidly, if an individual is not good at going to failure, I would probably look to shorten sets then as they start to get comfortable with loading and good in the performance of the exercise. Just be aware that once strategy to help somebody go to momentary failure who doesn't particularly like it can be to shorten the set and make the load a little heavier.

Simon: Remember, and this kind of ties into this, that there are clients who will try and fly under your radar on the intensity and on the working hard side of things. It made me laugh because there was some clients that I trained, and I know they found the end of the set stuff, and I was really on it with them. When I moved away from the geographic area where I was training them, I arrange to hook up with them about a year after that. I know they'd had a challenge finding a new trainer, they'd gone to a few gyms, they'd been unhappy with the experience. Anyway, they settled on somebody eventually, and they said, "Yeah, training's really good. It's pretty similar to what you were doing."

Simon: One the clients had a little bit of a wry smile on her face. And I said, "Oh, what are you smiling about?" And they said, "Well, he doesn't notice all the stuff that you noticed, and there's like some exercises when I know he can't see what I'm doing." It was on a towards a rotation, "And I know from where he's standing, he can't see when I turn this way. So after halfway through the rep, I'll really grip with my

hands and use my hands more. It makes it easier." And she said with like a knowing little smile. And I was like, "That's so nice about this and to be able to be frank in front of me and tell me this attitude that they have."

Simon: And I think this is the kind of thing, which A, is a reminder of how on it you need to be as a personal trainer, observing everything. Your mental capacity during a session, your processing, your visual awareness needs to be on fire. You need to be observing this stuff all the time and correcting it immediately. At the same time, also don't think that some of your clients at least are not going to look, even though you might have told them 100 times about the value of it, and we want to go to failure, and it's really good for you, there will be people who are coming in and are looking to find little escape routes during the workout. Remember that because that'll help you focus in on them and make their experience better because they will thank you for it ultimately even if they're cursing your name for the last 10 seconds of the set and for the next 30 seconds after that. They'll get over that.

Lawrence: That's so interesting.

Simon: It was fascinating. It was a real good reminder to me.

Simon: The next point leads on from that-

Lawrence: Before you go into that, I just want to say quickly... The first thing I want to say is I imagine that in spite being educated by yourself, there are just some clients who still can't help but look at training like a punching the time card, you know?

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Simon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Lawrence: So they're coming in and that's an achievement for them, and so if they're cheating a little bit, that's okay in their mind.

Simon: Absolutely, yes.

Lawrence: When only they're cheating themselves, but...

Simon: Yes.

Lawrence: Maybe some people it's very hard to ever get them away from that thinking.

Simon: It is. It's instinctive in them and they kind of think they're pulling one over on you a little bit and they might be kind of pleased about that as well in a kind of perverse kind of way. Also I would say outside of safety parameters, if somebody ultimately abhors going to momentary muscular failure, and they really look to avoid the end of the set, there are other ways of adapting the workout for them. If you've spent months and months looking to get into that place and you think, "Okay, they might get more value out of doing a second set." I wouldn't hesitate to do that in relatively extreme examples of people who are really looking to avoid it because if it's a case of they're going to look to cheat at the end of the set always or they're going to... it becomes such an unpleasant experience for them that they would go somewhere else, I would say let them work two or three reps shy of failure, maybe do another set in there as well to give them more a stimulus.

Simon: But that would be my last resort to step down on, but I think you really want to educate them, it's part of an ongoing process. Don't rush them through that if they are somebody who doesn't enjoy that last 10 seconds. Part of that is instinctive and natural, but also educate them, reinforce it, reinforce the learning, praise them as they do get better and do get closer at going to that place. See if you can make that experience a useful one for them first and foremost. It would only be a last kind of resort that I would look to step away from that. But just know that there may be a handful of individuals where it may be more useful to do that and to take that sort of pragmatic approach with those clients so that they're enjoying the experience.

Simon: Is exercise an enjoyable experience in the way we do it? To me it is. I enjoy it, my workouts. There are unpleasant reps in there, but I enjoy those too. Does everybody has that perspective? Not necessarily. Can I get them to that place where they might enjoy that perspective? Yeah, I think nine times out of 10 that's possible, and occasionally it may not be. But it's about working with the client. And I would say that another key point in this category is do make your clients accountable. So a key way of doing this is rectify any flaws in their performance of the exercises immediately. Don't let things fly because the more you let them fly, the worst things are going to be and the harder it's going to be establish a relationship where you're in control and you're saying do this and do this right. The more they think they can get away with, the more they will look to get away with out of the time and it'll be harder to reign that back in. You will have let your standards slip, so rectify in the moment

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and immediately after the set to reiterate the reasons there's value in performing this right and what they did that was slightly offbeat.

Lawrence: Yeah.

Simon: [crosstalk 00:40:33] By the same notion, I'm just going to add this one.

Lawrence: Sure.

Simon: Do praise and reinforce correct actions as well so you've got that positive feedback as well as the, as well as the being the picky and making sure they're doing it right, really reinforce and praise when they have got a set just right or they did a beautiful turnaround, or whatever aspect you're looking to coach them on at this point in their journey most, they most seem to get. Give them that positive feedback as well as the constructive criticism.

Lawrence: Yeah, that's awesome.

Lawrence: And just quick point, case and point regarding light loads or having loads that are too light for clients, I submitted my video for my [HITuni certification](#), and my client had already had pretty good form strength training. He'd had some practice. So it wasn't really an issue with the skill, and he was using machines that... they weren't MedX or [inaudible 00:44:22], but they were okay, and they were... he had good form on those machines. But I got the loads wrong. They were far too light for him, and what that meant is he suffered so much.

Lawrence: So during the exercise he'd go to me, I could hear him whispering, "Just one more, just one more." Because he was really trying to go for it, but he's still early on in his training journey and he's perhaps not used to that level of intensity and that level of discomfort, and so that was really interesting to me because once I started, as we discussed, once I started picking up on this, by the sort fourth or fifth exercise, I actually increased the planned resistance by sometimes as much as two or three increments. And he still overshot the time and the load I was going for, which was probably like 60 to 90 seconds. And it just shows that, and I think we were talking about this, is that it's a confidence issue. There's a lot of people that are new to this don't perhaps realize just how much load they can lift until they've actually started experiencing and building that confidence over time. So that's huge for me.

Lawrence: And so I think getting the load right, yeah, for me, just helping the client get to a high level of intensity or to failure is key it seems.

Lawrence: So moving onto the next point. Simon, I'm just aware of time. How much can you run over because I've really planned this badly haven't I?

Simon: Okay, so where are we at? [crosstalk 00:45:38]

Lawrence: We're at the hour.

Simon: I can go another 20 minutes.

Lawrence: Okay, great. I'll stop interrupting you so we won't take too much time. So yeah, next one, soft skills.

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Simon: Okay, and I'll pick up the pace a little bit as well here.

Lawrence: It's okay.

Simon: This kind of follows on again from knowing the individual client, this is the soft skills. Your coaching and communication, so the way in which you can explain concepts to the client, the way that you can communicate what you need for them to understand. And that needs to be adapted to the individual in front of you. So you may have like a training style, your personality, who you are. That will need to be adapted to the individual.

Simon: One of the things I like to do is to use a frame of reference that that client can understand. So if I were a golfer, I might use terms like drive through the rep because it's a word that has a connection, a mental link for them. And so you can use your motivational language and your instructional language, you can adapt to the individual client, and that's of huge value because it gives them visibility, it makes them feel like they understand you, and it creates a rapport between you and your client.

Simon: Another key thing is figure out whether that person is an introvert or an extrovert. They might be somewhere in the middle which is kind of super easy to deal with. If they're an extrovert, and let's say you're more of an introverted type person, you're going to need to ramp your energy levels up when you're instructing them. You may be the type that's more comfortable sort of behind the tablet or writing the routines in the back room and pouring over endless hours of research. But when you're face-to-face working with an extrovert, you need to ramp up your game. You need to be more

confident in your delivery. You may need to be a little bit, you get a little bit better at the banter pre and post workout as well, a little bit of a conversation. Keeping that client engaged in your training.

Simon: On the other hand, let's say, let's take the other two extremes. If you are naturally an extrovert individual and you're training an introvert, dial that, dial down to a seven out of 10. That will be more than enough for the introvert. They're going to feel uncomfortable if you're in full-on extrovert mode during the workout, which may feel totally natural to you. But my advice would be to just dial that down. If you're aware that that person's a little more self-conscious, a little bit more introverted in their personality type, adapt your presence. So again, you're tailoring the experience to the individual in front of you.

Simon: Read people. Anticipate their needs. And outside of that discomfort of exercise that we talked about previously, that client should be super comfortable in your environment and in your presence. They should feel like they've got a great mentor, a great guide taking them through this experience, who cares about them, who's nurturing them through this experience, who's pushing them when they need to be pushed, who's giving them words of wisdom when they need words of wisdom. Somebody who holds them accountable and cares for their process through training and their outcomes.

Simon: So having those soft skills, as much as you might know the anatomy and physiology, the biomechanics, the protocol, all the ins and outs and the research, unless you can translate that to

communication, and interaction, and coaching an individual person, things are going to fall short. And you could know that stuff better than anybody else in the world, and unless you can communicate it, you're not going to be a trainer unless you can communicate it to a broad variety of people and individuals, you are not going to make a great trainer. If that is a weakness for you at this moment, that is an area that you do need to focus on, that you need to hone, and part of that can only come through practice and repetition and working with different people. But it's something to be aware of for sure.

Simon: So onto the next point. Let's keep on a roll. Number five, you're always selling your service, and again, this ties into the last one that you notice a pattern, they build on each other. You're only as good as your last workout. So no matter how high you set the bar as a trainer and how great an experience, if they come in one day and you've had a sleepless night because your kid's been up all night, or you've had unexpected bills to pay, or your car's gone into the garage and there's everything's wrong with it and it's going to be out of action for two weeks, and the bill on that's climbing. And you take that attitude into the workout, clients are very good at picking up on subtle signals if they've had good experiences with you, and the moment they have that, they're like, "Oh, well it wasn't... that didn't feel right today." Look, I'm not saying that that can't happen. We're all human.

Simon: That will happen to an extent, but if you catch yourself in that moment, a really good way is to treat your work as a meditation. Step out of all that crap that's going on elsewhere. Snap back into training mode. Find that internal motivation, you know you need a

sunny disposition as a trainer. Nobody wants to come and spend time with somebody who's a misery for half an hour once or twice a week. They want to come with somebody who they feel motivated by, they feel the passion of, they step into your environment, they're around you. They feel your passion for this stuff. That's what's going to keep them with you over the long haul. And give that client that experience, no matter what else is going on.

Simon: Another thing about always selling your service is in the HIT world, I think there's a tendency to oversell the benefits of exercise to start off with in terms of oh, it does this, it does both bone density, strength, cardiovascular fitness, flexibility, enhances... Which we know is right, right? But there is something called the dilution effect, which is where if you mention too many benefits, the core one that clients come to see you about actually feels like it's been weakened in the client's perception, and it's really interesting.

Simon: This is why when if a drug is advertised and it says, "Side effect: risk of cancer." Okay, that seems really scary and puts people off taking that drug. But if it says, "Side effect: dry mouth, nasal congestion, cancer, mildly aching joints." That cancer gets diluted, and drug companies use that, so they'll often put loads and loads of side effects, potential side effects, including some big ones, but hidden amongst lots of little small ones. And that's a positive way that it dilutes something for them in a descriptive way. But for us as trainers, if we dilute the core thing somebody's come to see you about, that's actually going to weaken your proposition in their mind in the first place.

Simon: So do have that in mind, and I would suggest have one or maybe two USPs. Now, you can adapt those to each individual who comes through your door. I'd say find like strength is perhaps the best all around USP for what we provide as high-intensity trainers, and I would tend to focus on that, unless you have information that said, "Well, this client is going to be particularly concerned about the cardiovascular impact to this type of exercise." Well we're going to be particularly concerned about joint integrity or bone density, then you might want to adapt what we're saying slightly because we know, we have these benefits. But tally it to the individual.

Lawrence: Because I know Discover Strength will, like you were saying earlier, they'll understand the client's motivation, their goals, and then they drip feed the benefits aligned with that during the actual workout session, the free session itself. And I imagine they are mindful about what you just said, so they wouldn't overwhelm them with all of the benefits of high-intensity training, but just those that are pertinent to that particular client and that particular time, which is logical and makes total sense. And I'd never heard of the dilution effect but that makes complete sense to me.

Simon: Yeah, and it's a race, and because we love what we do and we know that it can benefit so many people in so many different ways, it's fascinating for us to talk about this stuff amongst ourselves and so on, but remember somebody walking in off the street for the first time doesn't care, give a damn about protocol, give a damn. But they just want a good experience and they want this result, X result, make sure if that is something you can provide to that individual, that you are selling to that.

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Simon: Number six is... We're getting there Lawrence, we're getting there.

Lawrence: No, it's fine. Fine.

Simon: Two to go.

Simon: Number six is actually just a refresher of what are the really important things as somebody who teaches resistance training, and for me there are only three key things. The first is safety. The second is progressive overload. And the third is engagement of the client and giving them a good experience. If you've got those three things covered, you are doing your job. Make it safe. Make sure there's progressive overload because we know that's what produces the results, make sure that client stays engaged. Everything I've said before now can be diluted down to those three factors.

Simon: And my last point is always be learning. So take courses, take some [HITuni courses](#), learn from those that you respect, listen to your podcast, find out about what people saying. Learn, learn, learn, learn. And like I said before, book yourself into sessions with other trainers in an ethical way. Learn as you're going. This is something to pour your passion into, so we're talking about people becoming high-intensity trainers.

Simon: If you're going to do this, don't half-ass it. Don't do it half-heartedly and think, "Oh, it might be an easy career, or it might be fun, or people in the gym will look up to me. I'll be attractive to the opposite sex," or any of these other things. If you're going to do this, if you're going to take that step off this cliff, go in full. Give me absolutely everything. It needs to be you're guiding passion to make

this work because the best trainers are there because they're passionate about what they do, they're able to communicate that passion effectively, and with high-intensity training, we have such a powerful tool because it's low-time investment for the client. It's low-frequency, relatively low-frequency investment for the client.

Simon: Most people who are going to hire a personal trainer just want to get on with their lives and they want to be more capable physically of getting on and extracting all the pleasure that is possible to get out of life. Most people don't want to spend hours with you, as long as you may be. Most people want to come in, get the job done, and we have a tool, we have a protocol that can provide that super efficiently, safely, and effectively for people so that they get huge value out of the service you're providing, which gives you a really nice unique selling point compared to most of the fitness industry.

Simon: Who can get results with other types of styles of training? It might be less safe in certain circumstances. It might be less efficient, but they can still get results by clients often. But you have a tool where you can give people results with such a minimal time investment that it's a huge value, and it's a value that probably hasn't... enough people haven't been exposed to or extracted the benefits of yet, and I think over time, more people will because when... when people are youngsters and in their 20s, some people who are into fitness and into going to the gym, they want to be in the gym there four, five, six days a week. The majority of the people, and as you're about to discover Lawrence, when you start a family and other commitments, unless that's your profession, and Skyler mentions this in the course we've done with him as well. Unless that's your

profession, you're not getting paid to do this. You're not getting paid to be in the gym as a client. So actually people's perspectives change. They want something that fits their lifestyle as an adult with work commitments, family commitments, child care commitments, everything else that's going on, and we have, I would suggest, the best tool, the best protocol to help those individuals, and that's why you will get huge value from being a high-intensity trainer.

Lawrence: Excellent way to get towards wrapping this one up Simon. It's no secret I'm an enormous fan of what you're doing, your work over at [HITuni](#). It took me a while, but eventually I passed the personal trainer course.

Simon: Thank you. You did great.

Lawrence: Thank you. And I really appreciate obviously all of your support during that journey, and I loved it. The only reason it took me so long as I probably said before in the podcast is just because my priorities shifted. Obviously I built a membership last year, and that was really my core focus and took most of my time, so really glad to finally getting around to completing that. As terms of how online classes go, it was just such an enjoyable experience because the way you set it up, the user experience, and the fact that it feels like as you complete each module it's really satisfying because you kind of tick that one off, the level of detail is just right. It is very detail in places, but that's important I think in order to... If you haven't got like an exercise science background, you do need to understand the biochemistry physiology, the biomechanics. This stuff's really important, and I'm looking forward to actually going back to

because a lot of it is going to, I'm going to need to review it as I go start training people.

Lawrence: And also I really love... I mean, there's tons of stuff I love. I wanted to highlight these key things. I love the expert interviews that you did. If you listen to this podcast and you enjoy hearing from the likes of Dr. Doug McGuff and Dr. James [inaudible 01:01:38] and James Fisher, you will love the issues in the [HITuni courses](#) and because they are totally exclusive, you cannot access some of those unless you purchase a course, and they're well worth it. There's some really good wisdom in there. And I just, I like the fact and I appreciate having obviously taken... I've probably been your slowest student of all-time, and having come back to the course four of five... I think it's four years later, I could see so much new stuff in the existing programs. And I was like, "Wow, he's actually updating and he continues to improve in this over time."

Lawrence: I'm an asset supporter. I want you to be so successful because I think that this is so valuable what you're doing. And so do you want to just, I mean, I've probably described it a bit there, but for people that don't know, do you want to just give a very quick kind of what is [HITuni](#), what are the courses, and how do people go about getting those?

Simon: Sure, so [HITuni](#) is an online educational platform for people who have an interest in learning about high-intensity training or want to become a client facing personal training teaching this approach to exercise. We have three key certification courses.

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Simon: We have [Master Personal Trainer](#), which covers absolutely everything, including quite a few additional special populations and business approaches, and how to set up in the first place, and other aspects like nutrition and stress management and looking after yourself as a personal trainer, and advice for looking after your clients too. And that's the biggest course and the most comprehensive course for somebody who wants the whole package.

Simon: And then there's the personal trainer course, which really for somebody who's new to high-intensity training is a great one to go to because you can always add the [Master Personal Trainer](#) modules on later should you so choose to. But this one, it starts off... So the personal trainer I'd say is our flagship course in many ways. And it starts off with professionalism and personal training, which looks into the ethics behind being a personal trainer, the sort of duty of care aspects that you need to look after, and the health and safety aspects. Then we go into the benefits of exercise, so we're really building this thing from the ground level up. We're looking at the benefits of exercise to the muscular and skeletal systems, to the metabolism, the cardiovascular system, psychology.

Simon: We then move on from that, which is a nice entrée because it's not too technical. If somebody needs to exercise, that'll give you a really nice broad understanding and creative to the next... module, which is the Human Body and Exercise, which is really an anatomy and physiology-based module, which will take a deep dive into the muscular system and the skeletal system. It'll look at things like anatomical axis planes and joint movement potential.

Simon: One of the ways we make this topic really sort of palatable and easy to learn is that we use some really nice animations throughout this part of the course, which takes what for some people can be quite a dry topic and makes it interesting and visually appealing, easier to understand. We look at things like stabilization of the body during exercise, flexibility, the cardiovascular system, the nervous system, so it's a deep drill down into anatomy and physiology.

Simon: From that, which has now given you that sort of broad underpinning of the system, the human physiology, we move into okay, so what is high-intensity training? How does it address that physiology? We look at the key fundamental facts to this approach of exercising like momentary muscular failure, parameters like time under load, repetition, tempo, speed, cadence, repetition technique, duration of workout, rest between workouts, interval rest and different types of exercises, whether you're using body weight, free weights, we talked about or machines. How to formulate routines once you've got that understanding of the exercises, and how to vary routines over time is as appropriate once you've built somebody beyond the absolute beginner stage.

Simon: Then we have a huge resource of exercise demonstrations. These are filmed and you can testify to the in-depthness of the exercise demonstration videos.

Lawrence: Oh yes.

Simon: And the level of details that's in those from joint angles, animations overlaid on top of the videos explaining everything, both in slow motion and at normal speed. So many exercise demonstrations.

And again, full body weight, full free weight, and full machine, so it doesn't matter modality you're using or intend to use with your clients. Indeed I think a great personal trainer would use, would learn to use all. And the routine directory as well where I think we've got around 100 different routines to help you get started with figuring out how you can structure routines and where they go.

Simon: We move onto some alternative training techniques as well, things like rep assist, drop set, rest cores, static holds, John Little's Max Pyramid technique we talk about. There's a lot. That's only one, or that's only a handful out of the many different techniques that you can use for novelty to keep clients engaged and enjoying the process with you over time.

Simon: We have a module called Working With Clients, which really is focused on your interactions. That's stuff we were kind of talking a little bit about during this interview. It's going into well how do you do that? How should your exercise environment and equipment look like and be? What is that experience you're providing them? How do you take a client through a first appointment with the right expression of what they're going to get from your workouts, what they're going to get from your facility, what that experience is going to be like, explaining the kind of language we suggest that you use with clients.

Simon: We have actually filmed live me taking somebody through that very initial session. We're very lucky to get somebody agreed to be filmed first time they walked in.

Lawrence: Oh wow.

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Simon: Me introducing them to high-intensity training. So sitting them down and saying, "Okay," this is as if I had any other client walking through the door, how I would do that.

Lawrence: I wasn't aware of that.

Simon: Yeah.

Lawrence: I wasn't sure because maybe your, maybe I missed it. I wasn't sure if that was a repeat, well it was clearly not a repeat person because it was a, you could tell it was a real initial kind of conversation. I wasn't sure whether it was like kind of pretend versus real. I wasn't sure. You might want to make that clear because that's even more impressive that you were able to get that I think.

Simon: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Somebody was absolutely happy help out that walking through the door and that initial sit down introducing to the protocol from the outside, and you can see the kind of questions I was getting asked during that as well,

Simon: There's also carrying on into the next module, which looks at special populations, so we look at considerations around working with special populations. When that comes up for you, we look at populations like pregnant women, athletes, children and people going through adolescence, clients who are injured, senior citizens, and facing some of the more common disease types as well.

Simon: There's a module on nutrition. So that's really our fundamental course. As I mentioned the Master's adds on some more special populations and it adds on some more alternative training techniques and protocols, and it adds on well-being factors around

being a personal trainer and looking after your clients as well, and how to build your business.

Simon: I'm going to keep it really brief for the other one, which is the CPT. That's really for someone who is already a personal trainer or comes from an exercise or physiologic background who studied A and P before and so on, but is relatively new to high-intensity training and wants to adapt their previous certifications to a certification which shows them just high-intensity training and the knowledge behind high-intensity training, and all that stuff that we talked about, but with the A and P stuff, the anatomy and physiology stuff out because they've already studied that. So it's for somebody who's already in the field, maybe is a personal trainer, or a physiotherapist, or a chiropractor, or a related field where they've studied physiology before and have that part of the certification covered. This just teaches them HIT, so if they do the CPT course, CBT course.

Simon: So yeah, those are the three main courses. We also have upper courses on the platform as well. We have DIY, which is about just training yourself. If you're not interested in being a trainer, it's how to train yourself with any type of equipment. We have a course with Bill DeSimone, one with Jay Vincent, the latest one with Skyler Tanner, more to come. So we have different perspectives around synergistic topics relating to high-intensity training as well. So that's really as briefly as I can put it, and if you're interested in learning more, just come over to hituni.com and have a look at the course, and if you want to ask some questions around that or want some more detail after you've had a look through that, feel free to shoot

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me off an email at simon@hituni.com, and I will gladly walk you through that process.

Lawrence: Cool. Thanks Simon. I appreciate the overview, the detailed overview because I'm sure people have lots of questions about it. A couple of things very quickly. If people want to learn more about HITuni and listen to more podcasts of Simon and I talk about HITuni, how it's recognized and things like that, we did a... go to episode number 100. If you search 100, you'll find [inaudible 01:12:58] story of HITuni, and you can learn more there. Certainly in the second half, Simon and I get really into kind of a more of the questions about the courses there too.

Lawrence: And yeah, and I would also say if you want to get a 10% discount, please go to hituni.com/HIB, which stands for High-Intensity Business. So it's hituni.com/HIB. And Simon, best way for... oh, you've said that, you've already gave the URL and your email, so...

Simon: hituni.com.

Lawrence: That's it. That's it. And to find the blog post for this episode guys, please go to highintensitybusiness.com and search for episode number 240, and until next time, thank you very much for listening.

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