

# EMAIL MARKETING FOR FITNESS CENTERS



In ancient times, people “did cardio” by running messages from village to village. Yoga was practiced by ascetics as a path to higher consciousness. “Strength training” was carrying buffalo home from a hunting trip.

They called it survival. We call it “working out.” And with hectic schedules and long commutes, we find it hard to fit in.

People who sign up for memberships, classes or training have the best of intentions. But then life happens. They get busy, and before you know it, they've stopped showing up.

But no matter how busy they get, sometime in their day, most of your clients (and prospective clients) check their email. A message from you can remind them of their fitness goals – and get them jogging your way.

## Why Email Works

If you're debating how effective email will be at growing your business, consider this:

- ✓ Email is a conversational medium. Your ad isn't on a billboard or in a magazine, where people have to remember to look you up later. It's in the inbox, directly alongside a “reply” button. By responding or clicking a link, prospects can become clients in a matter of seconds.
- ✓ With email, you market to a targeted audience. Why try convincing people to put their physical fitness in your hands if they don't care about getting in shape? Email targets your advertising dollars to the people who are already interested (and most likely to respond).
- ✓ An email relationship is continuous. Once you have someone's permission, you have endless chances to interest them. And an interested subscriber means a chance for more business.

Most importantly, by sending a continuous series of emails, you can build a relationship with your subscribers so when they're looking for fitness solutions, you're one they turn to.

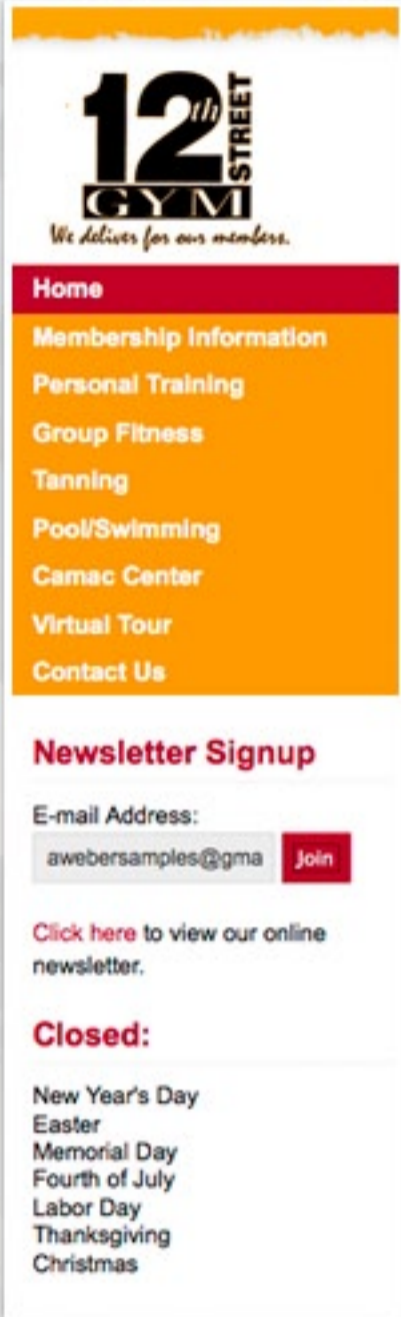
# How to Sign Up Subscribers

Before you can start sending emails, though, you need people to send them to. These are your subscribers – people who are interested in your business and have signed up to hear from you. Whether you have a web site or not, there are many ways you can find these people and invite their subscriptions.

## Web Forms

A web form is a place online where people can request your messages by entering their contact information. Usually, the form is placed on your web site so you can direct people there easily.

- ✓ Ideally, you should have a sign up form on every page of your site.
- ✓ If you have a blog, you may be able to post your web form on your blog page. If not, you could still post an invitation to sign up with a link to the form on your site.
- ✓ If you have an account with an email service provider, they may host your web form on its own page for you. This gives you the option of offering online sign-up **even if you don't have your own site.**



The image shows a vertical screenshot of a website for "12th STREET GYM". The logo at the top features the number "12" in a large, bold font with "STREET" written vertically to its right and "GYM" below it. Below the logo is the tagline "We deliver for our members." The navigation menu consists of several orange buttons with white text: "Home", "Membership Information", "Personal Training", "Group Fitness", "Tanning", "Pool/Swimming", "Camac Center", "Virtual Tour", and "Contact Us". Below the navigation menu is a "Newsletter Signup" section. It includes a label "E-mail Address:" followed by a text input field containing "awebersamples@gma" and a red "Join" button. Below the input field is a link that says "Click here to view our online newsletter." Underneath that is a "Closed:" section with a list of holidays: "New Year's Day", "Easter", "Memorial Day", "Fourth of July", "Labor Day", "Thanksgiving", and "Christmas".

# Social Media

Years ago, if you wanted to find a large group of people, you had to go to a rally or fair. Today, just hop on your favorite social network, and you're a few clicks away from millions of people.

So finding subscribers to your marketing emails is as easy as directing those millions to your web form.

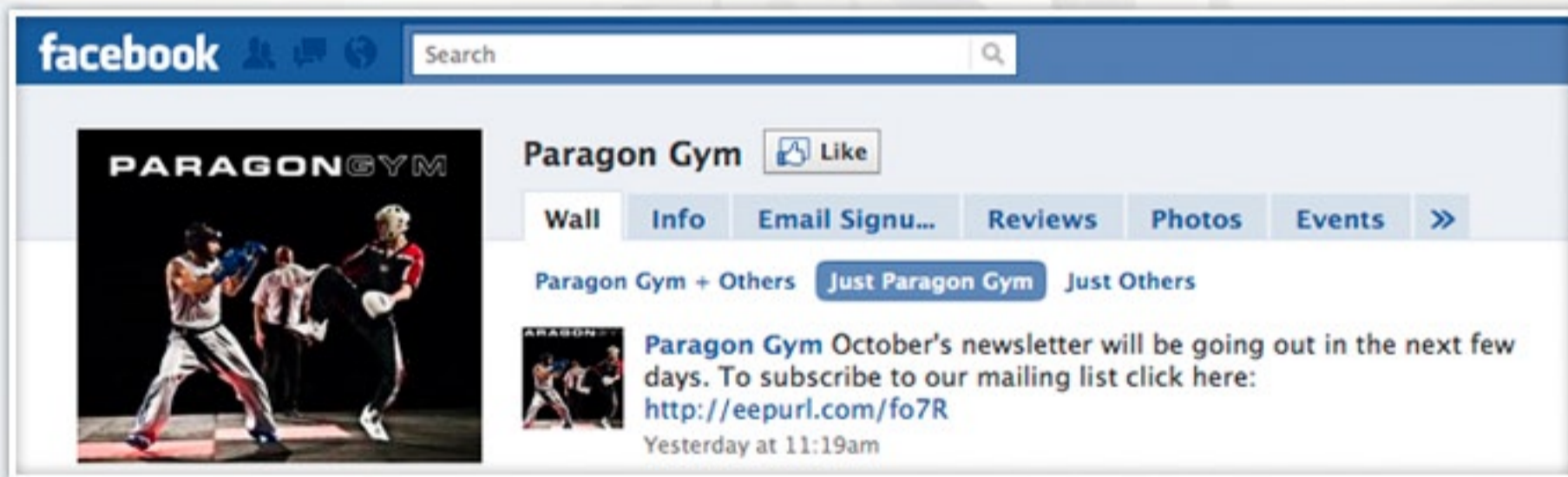
## Twitter

If you're a tweeter, invite your followers to subscribe to your emails with a link to your web form. Make sure to explain all the tips and ideas you'll share with them. You may even want to [tweet a sample newsletter](#) to show the Twitterverse what's in store.

## Facebook

There are three ways to convert your Facebook friends and fans to email subscribers.

01 Post a direct invitation on your wall to invite your contacts to sign up, the way Paragon Gym does here.



02 If you have a fan page set up on Facebook, you can [add your web form](#) so your contacts can sign up.

03 Facebook also offers the ability to host a [custom application](#) for your fan page. If you create one, set it to request users to [subscribe to your emails](#). Once you have permission, [import those addresses](#) to your email list.



## YouTube

YouTube lets you edit your video by adding notes called [annotations](#) that display when the video is played.

If you have videos of events at your location or workout tutorials, invite viewers to click through to your web form for more news and tips!

## Your Own Emails

You aren't the only one who can hype your campaign: your readers can, too.

[Buttons to share your emails on social networks](#) offer opportunities to promote your message – and give you a chance to go viral.

Like this? Share it!



# Setting The Right Expectations At Online Sign Up

Every place you put your web form, make sure to explain what subscribers will get so they'll know what to expect when they sign up.

For example, yoga teacher and nutritional coach Lucas Rockwood lists the topics his emails will cover on his web form.

Not only does this let people know what they are in for, it also acts as a tease.

Potential subscribers wonder, “WHY does coffee make me stiff? If

Indian food isn't yoga food, what is? If yoga doesn't work, then why do you teach it?”

And they sign up to get the answers.

**7 Secrets of Nutrition & Flexibility**  
**Free Mini-Course**

Secret #1: ANYONE CAN BECOME FLEXIBLE  
Secret #2: COFFEE MAKES YOU STIFF  
Secret #3: INDIAN FOOD IS NOT YOGA FOOD  
Secret #4: I'M SORRY, BUT YOGA DOESN'T WORK  
Secret #5: RAW FOOD FOR FLEXIBILITY  
Secret #6: FLEXIBILITY IS NOT GENETIC  
Secret #7: NEVER STOP STRETCHING

**SIGN UP BELOW!**

Your Name

Your Email

**SIGN UP NOW!**

## Finding Subscribers Offline

Just because the emailing happens online doesn't mean you're limited to the Internet for finding subscribers. Anyone who drops into your gym or studio is a potential subscriber. So is everyone in the surrounding neighborhood.

The key to collecting sign ups is in the way you approach them. You don't want to be too reserved (you do need to ask for their subscription), but you don't want to be too obnoxious, either.

- ✓ Hang a sign up sheet on the counter or wall at your location. If you're a trainer or teacher, ask the gym or studio you work at if they'd mind you posting a sheet there.
- ✓ If you have a booth at a fair or community day, there are several ways you could ask people to sign up. Use paper and pen, set up an iPad or laptop kiosk that displays your web form or pass out a [QR code](#) so people with smartphones can subscribe immediately.
- ✓ When new clients sign up for membership, register for classes or make an appointment for training, ask them if they'd like to get your emails.
- ✓ Mail out a coupon to your local neighborhoods for a free gym visit, class or training session. Explain that people redeem the coupon by submitting their email address. Then, even if they don't purchase membership or more sessions right away, your emails can show them all the reasons they should come back later.

# What About SPAM Complaints?

Whichever sign up methods you use, slip-ups can happen. Occasionally, computer scripts (or even people) will stumble across your web form and sign up - with someone else's email address.

Other times, people misspell their addresses. When that happens in your web form, you could end up sending to the wrong people.

In these situations, the recipient thinks the messages are unrequested junk mail, otherwise known as spam. You're not likely to get much response from people who weren't interested in the first place. Even worse, they may click the "report spam" button to make a complaint against you.

When people report your emails as spam, ISPs (Gmail, Hotmail and the like) notice. If enough people complain, they may stop delivering your messages.

And if an email service provider is sending out your messages, their reputation could be damaged as well. Messages they're sending from the same IP address, even if they're from another marketer, could also be blocked.

## The Solution: Confirmed Opt-In

Think of confirmed opt-in as the sign up spotter that can protect you from these problems.

This is exactly what it sounds like: a request that new subscribers confirm their choice to opt into your mailing list. Every new address is sent a message that asks them to click a link to confirm their interest.

When the link is clicked, the address is added to the list of subscribers. As a sender, you're assured the address is legitimate. And since your new subscribers have bothered to confirm their interest, they're likely to be engaged and responsive.

To request confirmation, set up a message to automatically go out to each new subscriber, like this one from Chan's Kung Fu School.

### Chan's Kung Fu School Mailing List

Thank you for subscribing to the Chan's Kung Fu School mailing list. Your subscription entitles you to receive valuable e-mail newsletters, announcements, and other information from us.

This message was sent to verify that you wish to join our mailing list and to ensure we maintain a 100% permission-based mailing list.

Please do not reply to this e-mail. Click **Yes, I want to join!** to confirm your subscription. If you did not intend to subscribe, simply ignore this message and your e-mail address will be removed from our records.

Subscriber E-mail address: [awebersamples@gmail.com](mailto:awebersamples@gmail.com)

- [Yes I want to join!](#)
- If you do not wish to be added to this list, no further action is necessary.

You can cancel your subscription or change subscription preferences by clicking the **Unsubscribe** link at the bottom of any e-mail message we send to you in the future. Thank you again for joining.



# Types of Emails You Can Send

There are four basic types of email marketing messages you can send out. Each type gives you a different way to market what makes you stand out as a fitness provider.

Because you have permission to email your subscribers for as long as they are on your list, you don't have to go for the hard sell right away. Instead, create a vision of what they can accomplish by training with you. Then deliver them strategies to accomplish that vision by mixing and matching these message formats.

## Regular Newsletters

Sent on a consistent basis, newsletters help you become and stay part of your subscribers' regular routines.

With a newsletter, you can send updates on your latest happenings and newest offerings. Include anything exciting that's recently happened, clever techniques you've found, upcoming events or new opportunities.

For example:

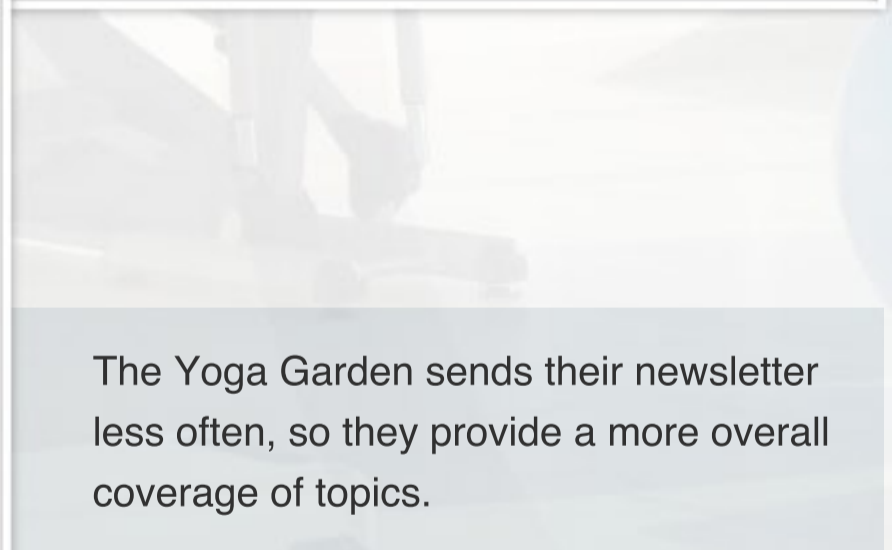
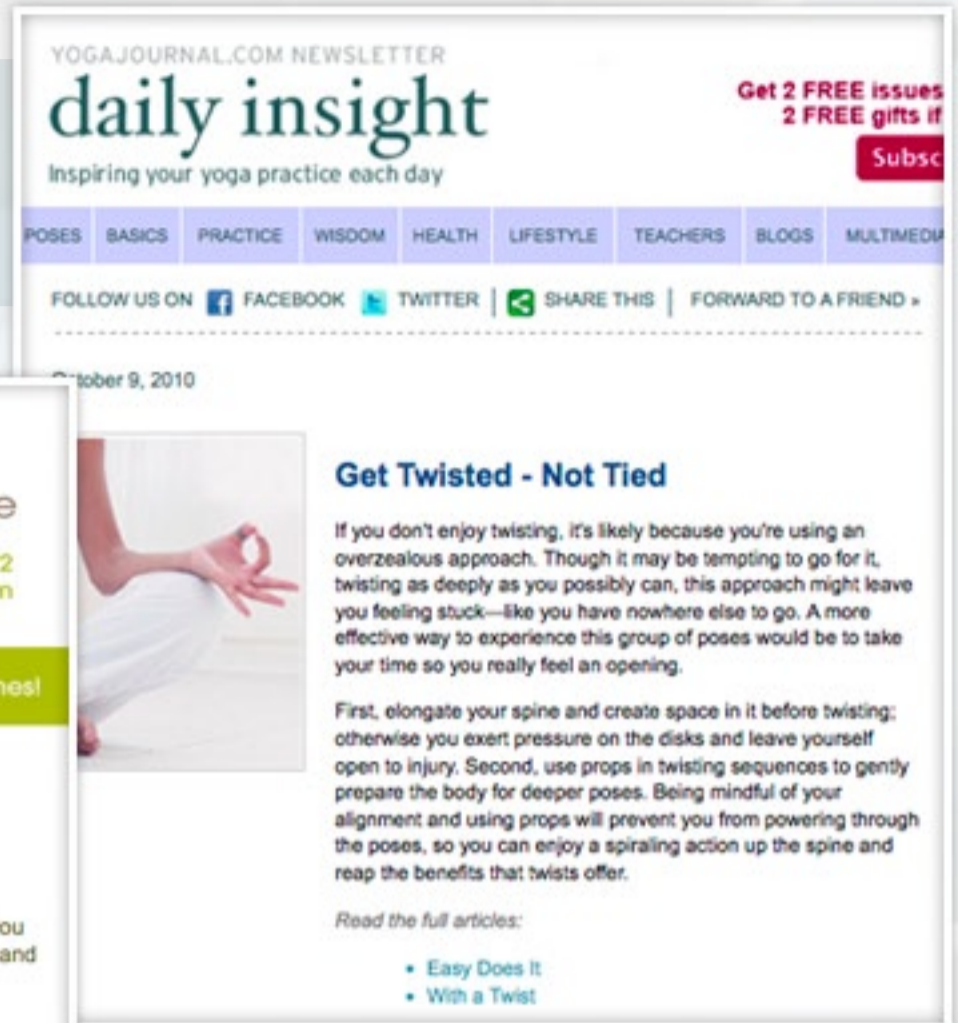
- ✓ Update customers on new classes and instructors
- ✓ Provide insight on which foods make the best fuel
- ✓ Discuss the health benefits of each move or pose
- ✓ Give specific instructions to help people through tricky moves
- ✓ Address how to treat specific injuries

The frequency of your newsletter is going to depend on how often you have time to put one together and how much you have to say. Make sure you establish a frequency that you can keep up with – subscribers will come to expect your mailings.



If you send frequently, include only an item or two in each message. This gives you room to go into specifics without overwhelming your subscribers.

For example, the daily newsletter from the Yoga Journal covers topics such as improving one's technique for each pose.



No matter how often you send, use your newsletter to give your subscribers knowledge they didn't have before, along with motivation to get moving.



# Occasional Broadcasts


Broadcasts are one-time emails, each with a specific subject. Send these between your newsletters for information that can't wait. Announce:

## 01 Special events or cancellations.

Yoga Sphere offered a teacher certification session, so they invited their subscribers to attend.

Join us for an informational session  
Sunday, Sept 12th from 7 -8 pm !!  
[Register here...](#)

YOGA ALLIANCE CERTIFIED  
200 Hour Training  
Oct 15, 2010 - May 22, 2011  
Fri (7-9 pm), Sat (1-7 pm) and Sun (1-6 pm)  
on 14 selected weekends.



Our distinctive Teacher Training 200 Hour Certification program is designed for students interested in a thorough, invigorating exploration of the practices of yoga, which includes asana, meditation, pranayama, philosophy and

of the requirements for  
gible for certification by  
0 Hour Level.

hens the body and mind,  
need teachers from the  
n provides a rich and  
a which balanced, radiant  
'emerge.

[Teacher Training  
lication](#)

And the Yoga Garden knew a community event would make parking difficult for their customers, so they sent out a broadcast with the date and times to watch out for.

**important parking information for  
this Saturday, April 24**

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Greetings!


**Due to the Narberth Run, ALL STREETS in  
Narberth will be closed between 8:30 and  
10:00 am on Saturday, April 24.**

## 02 Upcoming classes, retreats and workshops.

YogaSphere introduced a new class to their autumn roster. Rather than leave it up to people to inquire about the details themselves, the studio sent out the details to their subscribers.

They included information about the instructor, the date and time, price, the skill level, the purpose of the poses and what attendees could expect.

**Autumn Detox Vinyasa Flow with Elle**



**Friday, Sept 24th 6:30 to 8pm All Levels Class**

Join Elle for an invigorating class to purify, cleanse and restore the body, mind and spirit. We will focus on stimulating and cleansing the body through breath, movement, postures and direct focus on specific areas of the body to enhance the purification process. Instruction and information will be given throughout the class for a higher understanding of detoxification.

The intention of this practice is to leave you feeling clear and light. The class is intense, however, suitable for all levels and optional postures will be instructed to insure safety and well being.  
Class card, MUL or \$15 drop-in. Please register in advance!



## 03 Pep talks.

Trainer Brandon “Big Dog” Shuey sends plain text messages that identify issues that might be holding his subscribers back, then encourages and reassures them.

Hi AWeber,

I was just talking with a student the other day who has been training with us for a few months now. We were talking about when he first started and how much he has improved since the beginning.

Then he told me something that kind of made me sit up and take notice...

"You know," he says, "The first time I came to workout here I was scared to death. I had no idea what to expect and almost didn't show up because I was so intimidated."

"I'm glad I did now, but man, it was nerve racking until I realized that everyone here is just like me. They all had to start in MMA at some point and I realized that everyone in that room had probably felt the same way I did when they first came to train. That sure made me feel better about coming and that's why I've stuck with it."

Well, like I said, it kind of woke me up to the fact that there are probably lots of people just like him. Maybe you're one of them.

What's cool though, is that even if you are a little unsure about training with us just remember that everyone else that has walked through those doors has had the same feelings.

So, don't let the unknown keep you from coming in to check us out. We train with some of the nicest guys you'll ever meet and everybody here is here to learn and get better.

Our MMA classes are held Monday-Thursday from 7am-8am and

## 04 New clothing and equipment available.

In another message, Trainer Shuey announces the availability of new t-shirts for his MMA team. Note that he explains exactly how purchasers will be supporting the team and making their competitions possible.

And since he send the call to purchase as an email, team members can easily click the “forward” button to extend the invitation to their family and friends.

Hi AWeber,

I wanted to drop you a quick note to show you a picture of our office yet...Click here to view:

[www.mmahardcore.com/shirt.html](http://www.mmahardcore.com/shirt.html)

You can pick one up for just \$20 and the money is used to help fund purchases, and other things the team needs.

To purchase a shirt just give me a call at **208-440-5708** or email me at [brandon@mmahardcore.com](mailto:brandon@mmahardcore.com)

Your support is always appreciated and we thank you for being a fan!

Regards,

Brandon "Big Dog" Shuey

PS - Show the team your support by wearing your shirt to the fight!

# Follow Up Series

The biggest advantage your email campaign has over other marketing methods is its capacity for relationship building. By sending messages over time and allowing for responses, you establish trust with your subscribers. Then when they're ready for a fitness solution, you're the one they naturally turn to.

One important way of establishing trust is by providing helpful information in your emails. But as people drop onto and off of your list, it's impossible to make sure that everyone gets the same broadcasts.

But you can make sure everyone starts off on the same foot with a follow up series. This is a sequence of messages that are automatically sent to new subscribers. Each follows the other at an intervals that you set up beforehand.

You can design your follow up series around whatever information you think would make a helpful introduction to your campaign, but here are a few suggestions:

## ✓ An equipment guide.

Walk through the machines you have available. For each one, explain how to use it, which muscles it will work and the proper way to avoid injury. You could even include a diagram of the body that highlights the areas you discuss.

## ✓ Tips & techniques.

Focus each email on a different move. Introduce little-known stretches, ways to use free weights and things to do with a resistance ball. The more new moves you suggest to your subscribers, the more reasons they'll have to come in.

## ✓ Your instructors and trainers.

With each email, introduce a new staff member. Include a short biography, a picture, their personal life quote, their workout philosophy, their schedule, the classes they teach...whatever describes them best.

Over time, your new subscribers will grow familiar with you and come to appreciate your helpfulness. And when they're looking for guidance for their workout, you'll be the first place they turn.



# Blog Broadcasts

Creating a blog takes your fitness community to the next level. Posting news, tips and the latest happenings keeps your customers and prospects up-to-date and engaged.

By adding email, you take that engagement one step further. Every blog has an RSS feed. Link yours to your email campaign. (If you're using an email service provider, they should be able to show you how.) Your new posts will automatically be converted to emails and sent to your subscribers.



## [How to set up blog broadcasting in AWeber](#)

If you're a trainer, you'd do most of the writing yourself. Occasionally, though, you could recruit other trainers or fitness experts to guest blog - then return the favor. You could also ask your more exuberant clients for testimonies of what they've accomplished training with you and publish those as posts.

If you own a gym or studio, you probably know a thing or two about fitness yourself. You probably also have trainers, instructors and other employees who would write posts for the chance to be featured on your blog.

Not only do they get to teach on a larger scale than their usual sessions and classes, they get an opportunity to make a name for themselves by writing as authorities in their field.

And there is plenty to write about. Your blog can cover:

- ✓ Events and happenings - classes, workshops, new trainers or instructors, new equipment - anything going on at your gym or studio
- ✓ Nutrition - classic guidelines, new food trends, the pros and cons of each fad diet
- ✓ Daily exercise tips - give subscribers something to look forward to
- ✓ Safety tips - for strength training, kettlebells - any move that puts the body at risk
- ✓ Stress management - how exercise can help
- ✓ Sports - which games help you achieve certain fitness goals

The care you take to keep subscribers in the loop earns their loyalty. When readers are ready to get serious about exercise, that loyalty leads them to seek you out. Which leads, of course, to more business.

\*\*\*Fitness Tips Newsletter by DailyMuscle\*\*\*

Why is it that some people are able to sustain an active lifestyle for countless years, while some just cannot?

In this newsletter we talk about one of the many secrets to sticking to your routine.

Hello AWeber - here's a quick story I'd like to share with you.

Just this morning, as I was walking into my gym locker room passing the exercise studio - I couldn't help but notice a bunch of older ladies in a 'Ballroom Dancing' class. If you're like me, most of you would be asking yourself - now how does a Ballroom Dancing class ever help with getting the unwanted pounds off the body?

Well it DOES - and it does it without most people realizing how... by helping you to have FUN at the gym, and to associate fun WITH the gym.

Unfortunately, many find the gym to be a place of hard work, pain and boredom - and though those feelings can be ignored for a few months... it will come to a point when one eventually quits - why? Because the gym is no longer fun.

When you are able to associate positive moods, fun classes (even though they don't burn any significant calories), or a fun experience at the gym WITH your entire gym/workout routine - you will find that it gets easier for you to form a habit of working out regularly. You will find yourself skipping your workouts less, and having a new found motivation to stick to your routine.

For those of you who don't have a gym membership - this principle still applies... just ask yourself - are you having fun? If yes, then chances are high you'll keep doing this for many years to come. But if you're dreading your current exercise routine already... it's time you do something about it.

Loosen up, and learn to have some fun.

Your friend and coach,

DM (Malaysia's First Professional Fitness Blogger)  
ACE-certified Lifestyle & Weight Management Consultant  
ACE-certified Personal Trainer  
I blog at <http://www.DailyMuscle.com>

P.S - Do you know someone else who would benefit from my newsletter? Forward it to them! :-)



Trainer and fitness blogger DM shares his reflections on moves, mistakes and staying motivated on his blog, then forwards posts to his email subscribers.



# Creating Your Messages: a Recommended Routine

- 01** Make sure your subject matter matters, and your subject line tells why. Every other message that lands in your subscribers' inboxes is fighting for their attention. Give them motivation to open yours.
- 02** Keep things short and sweet. Figure out the important ideas you want to include. Present each one briefly – your whole message should be readable in under two minutes.
- 03** Find pictures that fit. Yoga studios, use peaceful images for simple ambiance. Gyms, pump up the energy with bright colors. Trainers, add pictures of people in enviable shape – remind your subscribers why they're with you. Use pictures of your own clients (get permission first!) or find images at [iStockphoto](#) or [Shutterstock](#).
- 04** Close with your signature. Gyms and studios, who is the face of your establishment? The owner? The class instructors? Add personal connection with their signatures.
- 05** List your basic information in a sidebar or footer. Include contact details, a link to directions, a mission statement – whatever your readers might be wondering.

# Scheduling Your Emails – When to Send?

Certain times of the year, the demand for fitness solutions rises to a fever pitch. These are the most important times for you to get your marketing messages out there. Unfortunately, they're also the times you'll be busiest doing everything else it takes to keep your business running.

Many email service providers offer a solution in the form of broadcast scheduling. Create your messages beforehand, whenever you have the time and the inspiration. Choose the date and time you'd like them to go out, and they'll automatically be sent when they're needed the most.

## [How to schedule broadcasts in AWeber](#)



Periods of popularity may vary depending on your region, but don't forget about these classics:

### ✓ **The New Year's Special.**

New Year's Eve should be repackaged as the official holiday of the fitness industry. Every year, one of the most popular resolutions people make is to lose weight and get in shape. This time of year, your services are more in-demand than ever.

People are seriously seeking ways to get in shape, and ready to jump at the first solution they see. Even current clients may want more rigorous routines or better scheduling solutions. Don't let this opportunity slip by you!

While New Year's Eve is perhaps not the most popular day to check email, you'll want to have something already in the inbox when they check in the next day. Otherwise, your would-be clients may just google “lost weight fast” and sign up to the first offer they see.

### ✓ **Swimsuit Season.**

Inevitably, the passion behind those New Years resolutions will fade. Pounds will pack on and muscle mass melt away. And then swimsuit season arrives.

The first time the thermometer hits 70 degrees, people feel panic to get their buffed bodies back. Have your campaigns written up and ready to go.



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# Internal Email: for Gyms & Studios

As a gym or studio, your trainers and instructors are hugely important. They lead classes, build relationships with clients and recruit new members.

They represent your business. Their enthusiasm and attitudes directly impact the energy in your building. When their morale rises, so does your business.

So keep that morale up by making sure everyone's an informed member of the team. Since meetings can be hard to organize with everyone on different schedules, create a separate mailing list for your employees and use email instead.

First, create a series of messages to welcome new members to the team. Set these up as follow up emails, so they're sent out automatically as you add employees to your list.

Then send broadcasts to the whole team to:

- ✓ Keep everyone updated on standard procedures
- ✓ Announce and keep track of center goals
- ✓ Introduce new instructors with a biography and pictures
- ✓ Provide details on upcoming events
- ✓ Send out occasional gifts or special discounts as a thank-you for their hard work

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The small act of sending an email can make a dramatic difference in the dynamics of your team – take advantage of it!

# Get Your Email Campaign In Shape

We hope you've found a lot of information in this guide to get your marketing in tip-top shape. Whenever you feel it getting flabby, feel free to come in and visit us for more training!



Stop by *Inbox Ideas*, our blog



Follow our *Twitter feed* for the latest marketing links



Watch our *YouTube videos* for helpful how-to's



Fan us on *Facebook* to interact with other marketers

We have lots of tips and advice ready for your arrival.  
Can't wait to see you there!