

Intensity vs. Impact!!! No Shame in the Game!!!

Course Description: In the fitness industry these two terms are often used together or interchangeably, but truly they are quite different. In this course we will clarify the definitions of both terms and explore multiple ways to increase and decrease intensity levels during group fitness classes or while working with clients. We will experience these intensity levels and gain a full understanding of how it feels in our bodies. Most importantly we will focus on ways to engage and encourage our participants/clients to work with intensity levels that are the most beneficial to them with no guilt or shame.

Learning Objectives: 1. Define the difference between intensity and impact, specifically high intensity, and high impact.

2. Learn different ways to increase and decrease intensity for class/clients without completely changing the exercise to modify.

3. Explore creative ways to vary our verbiage to be inclusive and encouraging during our classes.

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Module 1: Definition Intensity vs. Impact

In the fitness industry these two terms are often used together or interchangeably, but truly they are quite different.

Intensity is an extreme degree of strength, force, energy or feeling. Simply put, **Intensity** refers to the difficulty level.

Impact is a forceful contact or striking especially of one thing against another. Simply put, the force the body must endure.

While **Impact** can be beneficial, and some **Impact** can increase bone density...impact is simply ONE way of increasing or decreasing **Intensity**.

So, let's talk **Impact**. There are 3 different levels of **Impact**.

- **No-Impact**, where your feet do not leave the ground or surface. (swimming or elliptical trainer, recumbent bike)
- **Low-Impact**, which always keeps one foot in touch with ground. (walking)
- **High-Impact**, where both feet are off the ground at the same time. (running or plyometrics)

Pros and Cons of High Impact:

Pros:

- Raises HR faster so you burn more calories during exercise.
- Improves Bone density
- Helps to improve stability, balance, and coordination
- Strengthens your heart and lungs

Cons:

- Can be painful for pre-existing injury or arthritis
- Can lead to overuse injury if done repetitively
- High impact creates about 2.5 times your body weight of force on your joints, ligaments, and tendons
- Uncomfortable for some people

Module 2: 4 Ways to Increase or Decrease Intensity Levels!!!

I challenge you as a fitness participant or as a fitness instructor to think of increasing or decreasing the intensity level thru ...

1. **ROM** Range of Motion (bigger or smaller movement)
 - a. Suggest making the movement wider, longer, higher, or deeper. Try traveling farther.
 - b. Or the opposite, more narrow, shorter, shallower, smaller.
2. **Speed** (number of reps in the same amount of time)
3. **Weight** (added weight to exercise)
 - a. Hold a DB, weighted vest, medicine balls
4. **Impact** (leaving the ground during the exercise with both feet or not)

Let's Try it...

Take Squats for example.

- Low impact squat
 - Squat deeper or shallower (ROM)
 - Squat faster or slower (Speed)
 - Add a dumbbell or weighted medicine ball (weight)
- High impact squat
 - Jump higher or squat deeper (ROM)
 - Jump faster or slower (Speed)
 - Add a dumbbell or weighted medicine ball (weight)

Now let us try **Skaters for example.**

- Lateral skater low impact
 - Using markers, travel side to side as far as possible (ROM)
 - Skate faster or slower (Speed)
 - Add a dumbbell or weighted medicine ball (weight)
- Lateral Skater High impact squat
 - Jump using markers, travel side to side as far as possible (ROM)
 - Jump skater faster or slower (Speed)
 - Add a dumbbell or weighted medicine ball (weight)

Module 3: Presenting Options to class or client!

Presenting options to class or client:

- **No shame in the game.**
 - Create an atmosphere that welcomes and honors all fitness and ability levels.
 - Being knowledgeable yourself and imparting on your participants/clients the knowledge that the intensity level for exercise should be beneficial to them PERIOD and is not a measure of their value or accomplishment.
- Change your verbiage to be more positive and inclusive to all fitness levels
 - Avoid the 'modification' being a completely different movement from the original exercise by using these intensity variables.
- Preparation! Come into class/session with options for ways to increase or decrease intensity levels.



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