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KEEP UP WITH THE  
FITNESS **EVOLUTION**

Where does your focus lie?

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**competitive  
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# Keeping up with the fitness evolution

Report: Jeff Archer



The opportunities to learn and develop yourself, your career and your business in the fitness industry are almost unlimited, meaning you can literally be the master or mistress of your own destiny.

All these opportunities can also raise some questions over what you will draw upon to establish and maintain your competitive edge. Over recent years fitness professionals have had to broaden their knowledge beyond cardiovascular, strength and flexibility workouts to keep up with new developments and the desires of the market. Nowadays, anyone working in fitness must have at least a basic understanding of nutrition, yoga techniques, Pilates, physiotherapy, core stability, postural alignment, podiatry, chiropractic and osteopathy. They must also be comfortable drawing on elements from these areas in their own work, and knowing when to refer clients on.

The way we teach has also evolved, moving from the directive to the persuasive and on to a coaching style of delivery that focuses as much on how we communicate as what's being communicated. The technology now at our disposal is incredible compared to a few years ago. Client programme information can be held electronically and updated by you, or them, online or by phone, text or email.

And the equipment we use develops and evolves almost every week. Runners now know how far and how fast they go and where they are at any given time with GPS watches. Heart rate monitors can now provide a guide to a complete workout and the stability "ball" is changing size, shape, colour and effectiveness with alarming regularity.

The best way to guarantee your success and security amid all these opportunities is to decide which area you would like to excel in. Choose to become the expert in your chosen sector of the market, maybe even carve out your own particular niche, but select a speciality for which you can become known and focus on this entirely.

You will be able to create the sharpest competitive edge by concentrating on what you are most passionate about, so avoid branding yourself as something that you think would be well received by the public. Rather you should go for what inspires you, what you choose to do in your spare time, what doesn't seem like work to you.

You might choose to be the teacher who specialises in fitness for new mothers or for stressed-out executives. You could be the trainer who's an expert in posture and movement. You may wish to become an expert with a particular piece of kit or work only with people who are training for particular sports or events that you love.

Whichever area you decide to specialise in, you need to focus on this area above all else and be better at it than anyone else you know. That's not to say you should ignore everything else in the fitness world – you must always be aware of the latest research and developments – but knowing where your passion lies gives context to all these developments and you can use the latest research to fine-tune your approach and strengthen your position in the market.

A wide knowledge is important but attempting to be everything to everyone can lead to a reputation for being a jack-of-all-trades and a master of none. When looking for professional advice, most people would prefer to work with someone who is an absolute master in their field, so decide what you'd like your reputation to be, what expertise you'd like people to seek you out for and then make yourself the best of the best in this area. **fm**



Jeff Archer is a director at The Tonic and author of *Teach Yourself Fitness*, which contains everything you need to know to guarantee clients reach their fitness goals fast. For more information visit [www.the-tonic.com](http://www.the-tonic.com) or [www.hodderheadline.co.uk](http://www.hodderheadline.co.uk)