

Can You Focus on Personal Training in Zurich?

An insight into Personal Training as Focus 14 celebrates the opening of their training suite in the centre of Zürich.

It was a pleasure, as always, to be in Zürich and on Friday 20 July the weight of the humid afternoon heat was lifted when I entered the calming atmosphere of Focus 14. I was glad that I had accepted the kind invitation to visit this unique personal training suite.

The reality property shows drive home the mantra of the importance of *Location, Location, Location*: Focus 14 is situated in the prime location of Uraniastrasse 14 just across the road from the rear entrance of Jelmoli.

Adam Cutler and Stuart May showed me around and their sense of pride is justified bearing in mind the hurdles they have overcome to achieve this. Finding any space in Zürich is difficult but imagine trying to persuade the authorities that an entire floor of a grand old building will be transformed into a personal training suite. It required vision, drive, good teamwork, professionalism, and energy all of which they have in abundance.

“At any time throughout the start up process did you ever feel like throwing in the towel?” I enquired.

“It is all I ever wanted to do.” replied Adam.

“This has been a 10 year project.” Stuart added and they are both dedicated to it’s success.

Their *secret weapon* is Olga Miller: A well-organised, persistent, enterprising business consultant who has played a key part in the success of Focus 14 to date. In any type of business environment a variety of skills are required and it is important to play to strengths. Olga’s skills in marketing, managerial tasks, planning strategies, and change management really have been the strong muscle supporting the framework of Focus 14.

Whilst carrying out research for this article, there have been a few comments thrown my way e.g.

“ I am always a bit weary of the personal trainers in the gym – all they seem to do is stand and watch you!”

“Why pay the extra money when I can just pay the gym membership and do my own thing?”

It is interesting to hear different views and have found such comments are based on ignorance when you delve a bit deeper into why similar remarks are made.

I embraced this new experience, as I have never had a personal trainer and went into Focus 14 with an open mind, armed with questions and filled with the naïve hope that they could provide a solution to my quest to have Madonna's arms.

The first element that struck me was the private, exclusive space. There are no television sets, no coffee machines and no ab curl floor devices (for good reason). For all of you who have shared my uncomfortable experiences of crowded gym changing rooms, forgotten the number of your locker that is squashed right in the corner and been subjected to the locker room bully who protests loudly if you dare to choose one of the lockers near their personal belongings; this environment will be a most welcome relief. The changing areas are clean, spacious and there are no keys to concern your self with.

Environmental issues were taken into account when completing the interior design e.g. the water boiler is environmentally friendly, recycling collection containers are available to use and the treadmill is the only training machine that needs electricity. The electricity is ökopower, which uses renewable sources

The whole personal training suite is a well thought out serene space offering the opportunity to escape both mentally and physically. It is a personal service in a personal space.

Is it worth the extra cost? In my opinion: Yes.

Some of the reasons that justify the expense are as follows: -

- The personal service Fits Your World: Focus 14 does not take the approach that one size fits all i.e. a training programme needs to be designed for your individual needs and ability.
- Efficiency: As any spare time is a rare commodity for some, it is advantageous to make the most of that one-hour dedicated to exercise. It should not be spent waiting for machines to be ready in a gym filled to capacity.
- Planning of programme: Focus 14 takes an holistic approach to their clients and prevention is built into the programme. The initial detailed assessment is invaluable as this determines the course of action that can and most importantly cannot be taken e.g. if there are any potential health or movement issues highlighted.
- Motivation and support: Some people are motivated into action when they have appointments in their calendars and might be less likely to make excuses e.g. they just *have* to finish that one last email or household chore, if a reservation is pre-booked. The personal trainer will not just be standing there watching you but providing support and professional guidance to ensure you are not doing yourself more damage than good. We can also dispel the myth that there will be a couple of bodybuilders shouting instructions at you to lift ridiculous weights in an attempt to look like the next Arnold Schwarzenegger! The focus is not on how much weight but the correct movement given suitable resistance.

Advice is provided on what not to wear e.g. baggy trousers and tee shirts. Close fitting garments will assist the monitoring of movement. Good sports shoes are required and again guidance will be provided to any novice who is confused by the vast range of so called training shoes now available.

- Client Focus: The personal trainers at Focus 14 are able to work professionally and concentrate on each client, as they are not under the pressure of unrealistic sales targets of a commercialised gym.

During my visit I was shown the Kineses training system, which is state of the art. On the surface it appears simple but with the proper knowledge it opens up a world of dynamic opportunities benefiting the performance and appearance of your body. In the hectic gym environment each machine can resemble another email in our minds, hence provoking the same stress reaction. There is also the risk of adopting the philosophy of the people around us in a gym leading to reinforcing the bad posture of our work environment rather than reprogramming our physical and mental attitude.

The incredible in depth knowledge Stuart and Adam have in the subject of anatomy comes across strongly but they are not complacent as new ground breaking theories are continually being explored. All this is enhanced by the attendance on advanced courses many supplied from the UK, which is driving professional standards to new heights.

If you are interested in visiting Focus 14 please make an appointment, as the personal trainers may not be available to show you around if they are involved in training programmes.

What does the future hold for Focus 14 other than growth and a successful partnership with their clients? Here are some of the ideas that are due to be turned into action: -

- Innovative enhancements to the website: An on line booking service is planned along with a photographic training programme meeting the demands of clients who are regularly on the move i.e. business trips etc.
- Special seasonal promotional offers on the website.
- The possible proposal of working in partnership with a Community Project: As the growing concerns of obese children dominate the global headlines this would be a challenging but worthwhile cause to tackle, benefiting us all in the future.
- Continued work with complimentary health partners: The mixture of alternative and clinical partners working with Focus 14 add to the value of the overall experience of selecting a personal trainer and reinforces the holistic approach.

Media pressure demands that women are a size zero and men have a six pack that resemble Hollywood stars but it does not necessarily follow that a certain outward

appearance will result in you being healthy and fit. There is a saying that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing and it certainly applies in this area. We cannot be professionals in all subjects and that is why it is necessary to consult experts with regards to our health.

In a world where apathy unfortunately is common especially relating to the work place it was refreshing to meet two people who are energetic, enthusiastic and who thoroughly enjoy their career. It fills me with joy meeting people who are passionate about what they are doing as the majority of people I have met obtain an income to meet practical needs and their dream careers are lost amongst the quagmire of tough targets and financial demands.

More details can be found on: www.focus14.ch.

P.S. Do I now have arms like Madonna? No. I listened carefully to the smart answer provided by Stuart: "To achieve this result I need to have Madonna's back, genetic make up and budget. Not forgetting that sitting in front of a PC for approx 10 hours a day, which I currently do in my contract for a global corporate company, does not help!"

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Article written by Theresa Avery in August 2007. If you wish to have a similar article written to promote your business venture please contact Stuart using the email address stuart.may@focus14.ch - Thank You.