Can-Fit-Pro, the Fit Body, and the Field of Physical Fitness

by

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Abstract

This thesis presents an examination of how the body is situated within the field of physical fitness: it examines how individuals learn what a ‘fit’ body looks and ‘performs’ like, and explores the benefits of having the appearance of a fit body in our society. The research findings, observations, and conclusions contained within this text are drawn from two inter-related sources: a commonly used fitness industry textbook called *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* (Anderson, Bates, Cova, & Macdonald, 2008) and my own experiences as a professional within that industry, captured in an auto-ethnographic journal. There are three main, highly interconnected, hegemonic discourses that frame the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text: biomedical expert knowledge, neoliberal biopedagogy, and, most importantly, the discourse of risk management mediated by healthiest risk discourse.
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Chapter One: Introduction

While researching and writing this thesis, my objective has been to better understand how the body is situated within the field of physical fitness. I wanted to explore how individuals learn what a ‘fit’ body looks and ‘performs’ like, as well as the benefits that come from having the appearance of a fit body within modern North American society. The research findings, observations, and conclusions contained within this text are drawn from two inter-related sources: a commonly used fitness industry textbook called *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* (Anderson et al., 2008) and my own experiences as a professional within that industry captured in an auto-ethnographic journal.

As a researcher, I straddle both academia and the fitness industry. My academic work focuses on understanding the extent to which the body becomes docile by participating in the fitness field. The docile body is a body that has been effectively transformed into a self-regulating individual through disciplinary power. A docile body is an “appropriate body,” a body that has been taught adequate “comportment” (Foucault, 1977, p. 135). Foucault argues that a body becomes docile by existing in a field where time and space are regulated, and a disciplinary gaze exists resulting in bodies being ranked (Foucault, 1977, p. 141-184). Gaze helps to position individuals as subjects of discourse. As the later sections of this thesis demonstrate, all four ‘docile body’ forming criteria exist within the gym setting.
My academic work seeks to problematize how the docile and fit body has become a status symbol that embodies the values of self-discipline, self-control, and individual responsibility. At the same time, and somewhat ironically, at least part of my success as a personal trainer and fitness writer depends on my (re)production of the values of self-discipline and individual responsibility, which create the body, including my own, as a form of physical capital. I gain physical capital and legitimacy by being actively invested in the field. One of the ways I invest, and produce a particular type of body, is by competing in endurance events like marathons and Ironman triathlons. Negotiating the demands of work and academia is a challenge, since my academic work directly critiques many of the assumed notions of the body that exist within my professional field. Instead of rejecting this slightly precarious position, when researching and writing this thesis, I embraced my lived experience as a fitness industry insider and utilized my knowledge of the mutually constituting and constraining nature of the fitness field.

The textbook I scrutinized is the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* (Anderson et al., 2008), a professional text published by an organization called Can-Fit-Pro. Can-Fit-Pro is a nationally recognized organization that certifies personal trainers, group exercise instructors, and nutrition and wellness consultants (Anderson et al., 2008, p. v). Can-Fit-Pro was founded in 1993 (Anderson et al., 2008, p. v). It originally offered only two certifications: Group Exercise Specialist and Personal Training Specialist (Anderson et al., 2008, p. v); but “Since then, Can-Fit-Pro has grown to become one of the largest providers of education in the fitness industry with over fourteen thousand members regularly influencing over one million people” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 307). Currently, in addition to the two original certifications, Can-Fit-
Pro certifies fitness professionals to become ‘pre and post natal,’ ‘nutrition and wellness,’ ‘yogafit,’ and ‘resist-a-ball’ specialists (http://canfitpro.com/en/).

The purpose of a textual analysis of this book was to better understand how the text has been discursively framed—what underlying norms and assumptions about the body and physical fitness are found within the text. I found that *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* is an instructional text that relies on the discourses of risk management mediated by healthiest risk discourse, neoliberal biopedagogy, and biomedical expert knowledge to discipline the trainers and clients who ‘buy into’ the legitimacy of the knowledge it dispenses. In short, this textbook is used as ‘body school’ for grown-ups.

Since I have been taught to be a personal trainer in large part by Can-Fit-Pro, I have written an auto-ethnographic journal during the period spanning June 1, 2012, to December 29, 2012, with the intent of analyzing how I have been ‘schooled’ by the Can-Fit-Pro text and how it mediates my interactions with my clients, the way I form my professional image as a columnist for *The Globe and Mail* and fitness personality, and my running lifestyle. Ellis and Bochner define auto-ethnography as the fusion of the “author/researcher/researched, with the purpose of using the researcher’s personal lived experience to illuminate the phenomenon under study” (as cited in Allen-Collinson, 2009, p. 292). Auto-ethnography is a fairly nascent form of qualitative inquiry (Anderson & Austin, 2012). It is an off-shoot of ethnography (Sands, 2002, p. 123). Ethnography and auto-ethnography share a scholarly agenda, as each aims to understand a cultural phenomenon, experience, or social group through immersion in the subject. The difference is that the former situates the researcher as an observer, while the latter situates the researcher as part of the phenomenon being studied (Anderson & Austin, 2012).
In keeping a journal as part of the research process, I sought to gain deeper insights into how Can-Fit-Pro’s schooling has affected my relationships with myself, my body, my professional peers, my clients, and my identity as a runner and a triathlete. Within the journal, I reflected on my life as a personal trainer, athlete, and fitness expert. My identity as an athlete is intimately linked to my identity as a personal trainer and fitness expert. My athletic identity garners me physical and professional credibility, allowing me to pontificate on fitness (both directly to my clients and as a fitness writer) with a feeling of pride and embodied biomedical expert knowledge. I draw on this embodied athletic knowledge when I communicate with my clients and within my fitness-related publications. In addition, I explicitly refer to my athletic accomplishments on my website, using my athletic experiences as form of self-promotion.

Topics explored in the auto-ethnographic journal reflect my relationships with clients, my ambiguous relationship with my own body, how I have garnered physical capital and legitimacy through producing a particular type of body that in large part is maintained through competing in endurance events like marathons and Ironman triathlons, my identity as a trainer and as an athlete, how I have been ‘schooled’ as a trainer by Can-Fit-Pro, how my clients ‘school’ me, and how I have then ‘schooled’ my clients. Discourse analysis has been deployed to unpack both the Can-Fit-Pro textbook and my auto-ethnographic journal. Both texts were indexed. The indexing results can be found in Appendix A. When reflecting upon and analyzing both texts, and when writing this thesis, I have drawn on my memories and experiences from working as a personal trainer for 11 years in the fitness field. Therefore, the traditional aspects of a Master’s thesis are enhanced with auto-ethnographic narrative writing.
For some individuals, like myself, exercising and consciously being a consumer of the fitness industry allows both for feelings of joy and accomplishment and for critical self-reflection and professional reflection. My clients often profess to me that they feel productive and fulfilled when they exercise. I myself, feel proud when I tell people I have completed ten marathons, five half Ironmans, and one full Ironman. This thesis is not an attempt to disregard those feelings of accomplishment and productivity. My intent is to try and understand the relationships of power that exist within the field that allow the individuals who take part in the fitness field to feel happy, fulfilled, and morally virtuous.

**Thesis**

Drawing on Foucault’s concept of biopower, as well as the related concept of biopedagogy from Evans and Davies (2003a, 2003b), Harwood (2009), McDermott (2007), MacNeill and Rail (2010), and Wright (2009), I argue that trainers are ‘schooled’ by Can-Fit-Pro and then pass on the information to ‘school’ their clients. There are three main, highly interconnected, hegemonic discourses that frame the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text: biomedical expert knowledge, neoliberal biopedagogy, and, most importantly, risk management mediated by ‘healthiest risk’ discourse. Can-Fit-Pro uses the discourse of risk management mediated by healthiest risk as a key way to ‘sell’ the legitimacy of the field to both trainers and their clients. The field is reproduced only when trainers and clients ‘buy into’ not only the legitimacy of knowledge but the dire importance of the knowledge within the textbook. Part of ‘buying in’ is believing that the biomedical expert knowledge within the text offers the possibility of reducing negative life experiences, like injury, disease, unhappiness, and litigation,
and improving positive life experiences, like health and quality of life. A trainer is only a successful neoliberal biopedagogical tool if the client ‘buys into’ the legitimacy of the field. Therefore, the discourse of “risk management” (mediated by healthiest risk discourse) informs the other two dominant discourses of biomedical expert knowledge and neoliberal biopedagogy. Chapter Six fully outlines the results of my textual analysis of the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* textbook.

**Research Context**

It has been argued that within modern North American society, a body that looks ‘fit’ and therefore ‘healthy,’ as opposed to a body that meets objective physiological standards of ‘fitness,’ has become emblematic of an individual who has self-control and is morally virtuous (Bargielowska, 2010; Haravon Collins, 2002; Lloyd, 1995; Pronger, 2002; Smith Maguire, 2008; Sassatelli, 2010; Shilling, 1993; and Woodward, 2009). Can-Fit-Pro states that in order for an individual to be fit they need adequate cardiovascular capacity, muscular flexibility, and a healthy body composition (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 4). Smith Maguire states that a typical definition of being ‘fit’ is having a “combination of strength, flexibility and cardiovascular endurance” (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 3).

However, in modern society, the representation of fitness often becomes more important than the actual attainment of fitness. Having a fit body has become a signal to others that the individual is performing as someone who is in control and constantly aspiring to improve their body in relation to social norms (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 2-3). Personally, I know I struggle on a daily basis trying to walk the delicate line between ‘being fit’ and ‘looking fit.’ Often it is when I am in a physiologically fit state when preparing for a triathlon that I feel the
most unfit. I have more muscle in my legs and shoulders and I feel bulky. It is in those moments that I feel the most conflicted. I wrestle with what is more important: being able to complete the swimming, biking, and running the distances my next race requires, or looking fit for my clients. Feeling bulky makes me self-conscious, especially when I film videos for The Globe and Mail. I am uncomfortable with the idea of thousands of viewers across the country judging me. At the same time, the idea of starvation or counting calories is anathema to me.

My body, like all bodies exist within particular social, economic, and political realities. Gendered, raced, and classed discourses also create particular understandings of the body. Within current neoliberal discourses, “critical, rational thought, self-reflection and…self-determination” are valued (Woodward, 2009, p. 74). Therefore, within these discourses, an individual’s ability to be self-disciplined and self-reliant is valued. Neoliberalism is implicated in the reproduction of gender, race and class discourses, representations and realities. Within the neoliberal discourse, the fit body has become an advertisement that ‘sells’ if you are determined and disciplined enough to control your dietary intake and activity level. In addition, the body displays markers of your social status, gender, sexuality, and class. The body has become one way to display and signify your “personal worth” (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 8). The ‘fit’ body has become, to many, a marker of an individual who will be successful in all aspects of his or her life owing to the fact that he or she is self-disciplined, hard-working, and in control.

**Research Rationale**

Can-Fit-Pro certifies personal trainers and group exercise instructors within Canada. Can-Fit-Pro attempts to imbue the trainers they certify with what Foucault describes as “expert
knowledge” (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 13). Being ‘Can-Fit-Pro certified’ gives personal trainers what Sassatelli describes as “legitimacy” (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 13). This “legitimacy” and “expert knowledge” place personal trainers and group exercise instructors in positions of power, and give these individuals the ‘right’ to judge their clients’ bodies and advise those clients about how to manage their bodies. Successful and educated individuals, who in other situations demand respect from their peers, actively seek out trainers to critique, judge, advise, and ‘school’ them on issues surrounding their bodies.

The information and discourses presented in Can-Fit-Pro’s *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text are shaped and framed in a strategic manner to further the interests of the organization and the fitness field as a whole. To apply Smith Maguire’s work, textbooks like *Foundations of Professional Personal Training*, unsurprisingly, teach individuals that to know themselves, they have to confess to and learn from experts (Smith Maguire, 2008). Analysis of the Can-Fit-Pro personal training textbook is important because not only is it a commercial perspective designed to foster profits for the fitness industry, the information taught within the textbook is framed as ‘objective’ information. It has been strategically framed to reproduce a selective understanding of the body and physical fitness in which the body is ‘in need’ of the expert knowledge that organizations like Can-Fit-Pro possess, without any regard for understanding wider socioeconomic relations of power that the body exists within.

In addition to Smith Maguire, there have been other scholars who have performed textual analyses of fitness textbooks. For example, many of the authors I cite in the literature review draw heavily from Brian Pronger’s seminal book, *Body Fascism* (2002). *Body Fascism*
questioned the supposedly objective scientific discourse used in fitness textbooks. As I discuss in the literature review below, Foucault’s concepts of disciplinary power, the panoptic norm and ‘the self’ are often used by scholars to analyze how a body is disciplined and controlled through exercise. Pirkko Markula is an example of a scholar who has used Foucault’s concepts in conjunction with ethnography, auto-ethnography, and participant observation to understand the body as situated within the fitness field (Markula, 2004). Since I make my living within the fitness field, I feel my research can offer a fresh analysis of, and an insider’s perspective on, the extent to which fitness textbooks school the body.

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter One introduces the reader to Can-Fit-Pro, offers a research context and rationale, and situates myself, the researcher, within the field of physical fitness. In Chapter Two, I have outlined the main theoretical framework used, a framework largely influenced by Foucault and Bourdieu. Chapter Three traces the methodology used within the research process: primarily auto-ethnography and discourse analysis. In Chapter Four, I offer examples of how scholars have utilized Foucault’s concepts in their analyses of the fitness field. Chapter Five orients my analysis of the fitness field within the context of sociology of the body. In Chapter Six, I provide my original research conclusions formed through the textual analysis of the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text. In Chapter Seven, I highlight important insights gathered from my auto-ethnographic journal. Finally, in Chapter Eight, I provide concluding remarks, outline my possible contributions to the field, and discuss recommendations for augmenting the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text.
Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

My theoretical lens is predominantly inspired by the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault. Drawing on Bourdieu’s concept of a cultural field, and Jen Smith Maguire’s use of the same concept, I conceptualize Can-Fit-Pro as situated within a larger field, the ‘fitness field.’ Foucault’s concepts, especially discourse, knowledge, disciplinary power, and the norm, helped me understand how and why individuals who participate in the fitness field discipline themselves to be fit. Foucault’s concepts will be explained in detail within the “Foucault” section of this chapter. My conclusions and insights are drawn from the theoretical work of these two scholars, a textual analysis of the Can-Fit-Pro textbook, my auto-ethnographic journal, and the 11 years that I have spent as a professional within the fitness field.

My intention in writing this thesis is to analyze how the information within the Can-Fit-Pro text *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* influences how individuals who participate in the field understand and relate to their bodies. Drawing on Foucault’s concept of biopower, as well as the related concept of biopedagogy from Evans and Davies (2003a, 2003b), Harwood (2009), MacNeill and Rail (2010), and Wright (2003), I conclude that trainers are ‘schooled’ by Can-Fit-Pro to accept a system of ideas and ideals about the body—a hegemonic discourse surrounding the body that understands the body as being in need of discipline and surveillance. Trainers embody and understand the discourse as natural and therefore do not often question the information even though it has direct influence on how they relate to both their own and their clients’ bodies. Although my research is not focused on how other trainers interact with their clients, my auto-ethnographic journal includes personal reflections and observations on that topic. Moreover, Can-Fit-Pro affects how trainers interact with their clients since the fitness field
would not be able to exist in its present form if trainers and other ‘experts’ did not pass on both the discourse of discipline and the information within the text to ‘school’ their clients. My intent has been to discover which discourses are most dominantly used within the Can-Fit-Pro textbook to school trainers, and then to theorize what Can-Fit-Pro potentially gains from using particular discourses more aggressively than other possible discourses.

There are three main, highly interconnected, hegemonic discourses that frame the Foundations of Professional Personal Training text: biomedical expert knowledge, neoliberal biopedagogy, and, most important, risk management mediated by healthiest risk discourse. Can-Fit-Pro uses the discourse of risk management as a key way to ‘sell’ the legitimacy of the field to both trainers and their clients. The field is reproduced only when trainers and clients ‘buy into’ not only the legitimacy but to the dire importance of the knowledge within the textbook.

My analysis of the Foundations of Professional Personal Training text, as well as my auto-ethnographic journal, provides numerous stories of how trainers are schooled by Can-Fit-Pro. For example, within the Foundations of Professional Personal Training textbook, trainers are taught to use particular phrases when walking a client through how to squat—phrases like, “weight should be on the heels of the feet” and “be careful that the knees do not come too far beyond the front of the toes” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 233). When I assess new clients, I ask them to walk me through how they have been taught to do exercises, like squats. Often clients will repeat, nearly verbatim, tips like the ones mentioned above. These clients have not only been ‘schooled,’ but have internalized and remembered the schooling (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 151). Can-Fit-Pro, as an active and financially engaged member of the fitness field is only able to
stay in business if both trainers and clients feel that the information it provides is worth paying for. Can-Fit-Pro is invested in teaching trainers and clients how to participate within the field in a particular way. Can-Fit-Pro teaches trainers information that they need to deploy as a disciplining power in order to create docile bodies. Docile bodies are willing participants in the field. In the following pages, I will outline the main concepts from Bourdieu and Foucault, such as disciplinary power and the docile body, that have influenced my theoretical lens.

**Bourdieu: Fitness Field**

Can-Fit-Pro exists within the greater discourse, or world, of fitness. Bourdieu (1983) and Smith Maguire (2008) have led me to understand the ‘world’ of fitness as the ‘fitness field.’ Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of a cultural field, and Jen Smith Maguire’s use of this concept in her book *Fit For Consumption* (2008), I conceptualize Can-Fit-Pro as being situated within a larger field, the ‘fitness field.’ A field is “the structured space of positions in which an individual is located” (Elliot, 2009, p. 146). Bourdieu states that, in a field people acquire “dispositions” from the “processes associated with protracted dealings with the regulations of the field” (Bourdieu, 1995, p. 8). Dispositions are “capable of generating behaviors” and these behaviors form “the fundamental belief in the value” of the field itself (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 9). A field, such as the fitness field, pre-exists the individual and serves as a “relational force” that helps to proscribe the power dynamics that exist with said field (Elliot, 2009, p. 146). Pre-existing power relations within a field result in tacit and overt rules of comportment that affect how individuals and groups can interact within the field. “Social fields are not autonomous ‘social facts’, but depend for their continuation on the social practices of groups and individuals”
(Shilling, 2005, p. 62). In other words, the fitness field is not an immutable organism. How individuals experience the fitness field depends on pre-existing power relations, but through counter-hegemonic practices the possibility of an alternative fitness field exists.

Smith Maguire applies Bourdieu’s concept of a cultural field in her study of the mutually reinforcing productive and consumptive elements of the world of American fitness. Smith Maguire’s idea that the fitness field is “mutually productive and consumptive” (2008) will be addressed in more detail in later sections. In brief, her idea is that when participants consume the field’s ideological and material goods, they also produce the field, although this is often without conscious knowledge or intent. For example, when participants read articles about the newest weight loss or fitness fad they not only ‘consume’ the field, they produce the market for further articles to be written about health and fitness. Likewise, when I write a blog for The Huffington Post, I am consuming and producing the field because I am reproducing the discourse that I have previously consumed. In this way, the field is mutually productive and consumptive.

A cultural field is somewhat analogous to a game. In a game of basketball or hockey, even though the participants and spectators do not have an official contract, players and spectators agree that the game is worth playing and therefore the rules get reproduced. This occurs within a cultural field as well. As either a player or a spectator, the social legitimacy of the fitness field gets re-inscribed (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 10). The fitness field is “a network of sites, texts, producers and consumers” that are interconnected and that complement one another (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 10). A field is maintained through the interaction and navigation of both consumers and producers of the field’s ideology and norms (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 3).
The field cannot exist unless the field-specific knowledge, the ideology of the importance of self-discipline and the ‘fit body,’ and the resulting products are each produced and consumed. Each individual who participates in the field, whether an ‘expert’ or a ‘layperson,’ is not confined to the role of producer or consumer. Rather, all participants, to varying degrees, are both producers and consumers.

I am an example of how individuals within the fitness field mutually produce and consume the field. Although often in a conflicted manner, I consume the material goods and ideology of the field. I consume material products such as fitness clothes, equipment, and gym memberships. Ideologically, I consume the field by buying into a need to ‘discipline’ myself. I am an example of what Foucault called a “docile body.” I am disciplined in the way I eat and exercise. Since I am almost always training for an event, most of my free time is structured around and consumed by swimming, biking, and running. My vacations predominantly revolve around training for or competing in an event. I track my workouts and actively seek out expert knowledge from other fitness professionals. For example, I hired a running coach, Elaine, to train me for a half marathon, taking place in December 2012. I discussed my ambiguous feelings about hiring Elaine on pages 114 and 115 of my auto-ethnographic journal:

I have hired a coach to train me for my 1/2 marathon. I know a lot about training so I feel this “tug” to argue with Elaine, but in the end I am paying her so I should just do what she says or not pay her. After much internal debate and after an email debate with Elaine, I decided to “give in” to her care since I am paying her anyway. I did the interval workout
that I had told her that I could not do. Maybe in the end she knows what she is talking about and I should just trust her.

I mention my relationship with Elaine because seeking out field-specific knowledge is an example of someone consuming the field in financial and ideological capacities. I paid my running coach for her knowledge and guidance, and this demonstrates that I have bought into the legitimacy of the “expert knowledge” found within the field.

I also produce the field by ‘schooling’ my clients and readers of my work in publications such as The Globe and Mail, Chatelaine, and The Huffington Post. Using a Foucauldian lens, I posit that within the logic of the field the only way I can be successful in my job is if I produce other individuals who also will ‘consume’ the fitness field. If people are not willing to consume the ideology and goods produced within the field, they will not pay for my services or read any of my publications. Through being an active consumer and buying and openly demonstrating that I use fitness products, such as Lululemon clothing, I advertise aspects of the field to my clients and tacitly ‘school’ my clients. I obviously would never tell them they must wear Lululemon, but if they ask, I will talk about how much I love the clothing. Clients see me dressed in a certain way and at least some of them, whether consciously or unconsciously, believe that dressing a certain way is one element of properly participating in the field of fitness. For example, my client Sandy is an avid Lululemon fan. Before she started training with me she never wore Lululemon.

Over the past few years, my existence within the web of production and consumption has become even more complicated. Now, businesses know that my readers trust me, so I am often given products for free. Through the acceptance of these free products, and the rare paid
partnership, I have become an endorsement for several companies. Of course, I only use products from companies I actually like. For example, a skin care company wanted me to work on their website. I said no because I did not like the idea of promoting a company that endorses wearing make-up when one works out (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 46). Regardless, my use of any product can, and will, be problematized. When I do not pay for material goods, my consumption comes through ‘buying’ into the discourse of the field by wearing or using the free products I am given. For example, for the “Fitness Basics” video series I do for *The Globe and Mail*, Lululemon often provides me with outfits so that I will wear their clothes in the videos. Similarly, when I spoke at a Roots store, I was given free Roots clothing to wear during my speech. I was allowed to pick out the outfit of my choice and keep the clothing after (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 24, 26-29). The implication of this is that, in addition to becoming a billboard for these products, being given free products provides me with a certain amount of prestige and capital and causes me to become further invested in the fitness field. I consciously and unconsciously aim to maintain my place in the field so that I can maintain my cultural, social and physical capital and continue to be given free products.

A third example would be that I was sent a set of free “Fat Gripz,” which are blue plastic grips that you place around dumbbells to increase the width of the grip that is needed to hold the weight. On October 30, 2012, I wrote an “Ask The Trainer” column for *The Globe and Mail* about eliminating wrist pain. Within the column, I mentioned the Fat Gripz product. I mentioned the product because I like and use it, not because I wanted a free sample, but the company read the column and emailed me. They asked if they could send me a free, monogramed set of Fat Gripz (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 143). I said yes because I like the product and, possibly
problematically, I like receiving free products. If I am completely honest, I also liked the feeling of being important enough to be given free products.

A final example of how I ‘school’ clients to become active participants in the field is the advice I dispense. Clients often ask my opinion on purchasing fitness products like running shoes. I am asked to give advice on where they should buy them, what brand is best, and what level of support they need from their shoes (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 142, 163). Sometimes clients email me from the running shoe store to make sure they have purchased the ‘correct’ shoes (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 143).

Can-Fit-Pro is very frank about their desire to produce trainers who have adequate influence over their clients. In the introduction of Foundations of Professional Personal Training it states that part of a certified fitness professional’s “code of ethics” should be to “educate others to perform safe and effective exercise” as well as to “motivate others to pursue a healthy, happy and balanced lifestyle” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. vii). In these excerpts, an individual fitness participant’s position within the field is neither simplistic nor static. All participants, to some degree, are consumers and producers. Through producing and consuming field-specific expert knowledge like hiring a running coach or a personal trainer, individuals buy into and therefore legitimate the “expert knowledge” found within the field. In order for a field to be maintained, individuals must consume its material and ideological products. Foucault’s concepts of biopower, disciplinary power, gaze, the knowledge/power nexus, and the norm offer a platform for understanding how and why individuals make particular choices that result in participation in the fitness field, in part because gaze helps to position individuals as subjects of discourse. The
following section on Foucault outlines his main concepts that help explain why individuals make choices about their personal conduct (such as purchasing the services of a trainer or journaling about their diet) that may (re)produce the fitness field.

**Foucault**

**Introduction.** Foucauldian concepts that have influenced my theoretical lens include discourse, power, knowledge, the norm, and the self. To quote Foucault, “the body is also directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it, they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs” (Foucault, 1977, p. 25). I decided to use Foucault’s concepts within my analysis because they allow for a ‘jumping off’ point for questioning the common-sense understanding of the body as a ‘natural’ entity. Foucault's theories allow for an analysis of how the body emits signs and demonstrates social, physical, and economic capital; that is, how the fit body is enmeshed in neoliberal social, political, and economic relations of power.

Foucault's theory of biopower offers an explanation of why individuals go through the process of controlling and disciplining themselves. Individuals embark on ‘body projects’ in an attempt to gain physical fitness as defined by public health and the fitness industry. Foucault theorizes that in the modern world this self-control occurs without any direct violence by the government or other institutions (Foucault, 1977, p. 7). The analytical framework of biopower offers a possible explanation of how individuals learn to control their body through a manipulation of desires. Biopower is an understanding of power in which individual citizens (re)produce relationships of power because they become invested in the existing relationships of
power (Foucault, 1977, p. 27). Foucault’s concept of power has led me to conclude that, in large part, individuals learn self-control through subtle, unquestioned, often tacit instructions. The power of the ‘norm,’ disciplining power, surveillance, expert knowledge, and the panopticon teach human beings how to control and survey themselves. Can-Fit-Pro is an example of an institution that teaches body norms both through overt dissemination of expert knowledge, as well as through tacit and subtle instruction.

Foucault's theories have had a profound influence on most of the poststructuralist scholars, whose works form the theoretical basis of this project. Foucault’s work has provided the tools for the scholars cited within this research thesis, and for me, to question many of the ‘taken-for-granted’ norms and assumptions surrounding the body and physical fitness. Concepts like biopower, disciplinary power, the norm, and gaze have opened the doors for poststructuralist scholars such as myself to question the largely unquestioned ‘truths’ surrounding the body and to understand the ‘truths’ of the fit body as existing within a particular historical time period, as a result of history, and as existing within a wider sociopolitical field.

His concepts, especially the norm, the gaze, the panopticon, the self, and disciplinary power have been powerful sensitizing concepts within my research. Through applying these concepts I understand that, although the body always has a biological form, biology is always understood within particular discourses, historical time periods, and relationships of power. His concepts of the self, the gaze, and the panopticon were especially useful within my autoethnography because they have given me the tools to deconstruct my position within the fitness field, and to explore how my understanding of my body and of what it means to be a trainer is not a ‘natural,’ unquestionable reality. This is in part because gaze is one way that individuals
such as myself become subjects of discourse. This realization was the impetus behind deciding to deconstruct the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* textbook. Without Foucault, I would have continued to assume the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text to be a banal ‘objective’ text. Still, I was careful to allow his concepts to guide me, but not to fully direct me within my analysis of both the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text and my auto-ethnographic journal.

**Basic concepts from Foucault that have influenced my theoretical lens.**

**Discourse.** At a rudimentary level, “discourse” can be understood as a group of interlocking statements used to describe the same phenomenon (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 29-31). Discourse, in the Foucauldian sense of the word, is not just “passages of connected writings or speech” (Hall, 1997, p. 44). Discourse is more significant than the words that are said. People who speak using the same discourse often unconsciously share a particular, political, sociological, or socioeconomic point of view. The “relatively bonded, socially produced forms of knowledge” that are produced through discourse set limits upon what is possible to think, write, or speak about a given social object or practice (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010, p. 5). Discourse is more complex than a sum of the statements used. The statements used within a discourse are the verbal manifestation of unwritten rules that encourage certain beliefs to be held. These beliefs produce the subsequent statements used within the discourse (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 29-31).

Discourse is a system of ideas. Multiple discourses always exist, but the discourses that are the most hegemonic are able to maintain their salience while going largely unquestioned. As a result, discourse has the power to discipline bodies. The most salient discourses are often
unquestioned owing to the fact that they are usually supported by knowledge that is considered legitimate or even ‘natural.’ Legitimate knowledge, especially when understood as common sense or natural, is connected to existing relationships of power and dominant discourses. When something appears natural it is able to exist unquestioned, and therefore maintain an unchallenged position of power. One of the reasons that discourses about exercise go unquestioned by many in society is that the knowledge used in the relevant discourse is backed up by science. Pronger, influenced by Foucault, states that “science does not simply observe nature and comment on it. Science actually provokes nature to appear in certain ways” (Pronger, 2002, p. 36). Expert knowledge, such as knowledge acquired through science, becomes intrinsically linked with the maintenance of power relations (Pronger, 2002).

All knowledge is the “effect of a specific regime of power” (McNay, 1992, p. 27). Power affects what is thought of as useful knowledge (Pronger, 2002, p. 30). Within my Foundations of Professional Personal Training textual analysis, and throughout my auto-ethnographic journal, I attempt to theorize how the discourses that Can-Fit-Pro relies upon influence their position of power within the fitness field. The knowledge that the organization seeks to legitimize is not only directed to the maintenance of their position of influence and stature within the fitness field, but their position of power within the field is related to their knowledge production. This is because knowledge and power are inextricably linked. Although relationships of power affect what is thought of as useful knowledge, useful knowledge is also used to legitimize relationships of power (Pronger, 2002, p. 30).
Although I used discourse analysis to examine which discourses the authors of the Can-Fit-Pro textbook used to frame the text, it is worth stating that no text, including *Foundations of Professional Personal Training*, exists within one single immutable discourse. Therefore, my intent was not to uncover one single discourse within the Can-Fit-Pro textbook. Instead, my goal was to discover which discourses are most dominant, and then to theorize what Can-Fit-Pro potentially gains from using particular discourses more aggressively than other discourses. I was interested in which discourses framed the writing of the textbook because, as Stuart Hall states, “discourse governs the parameters of thought and practice. Discourse is about both what you say and what you do” (1997, p. 46). I used discourse analysis to understand how Can-Fit-Pro’s textbook helps produce certain thought patterns and rules about the body.

Through years of working in the fitness field, I had anticipated at the start of this research project that the Can-Fit-Pro textbook would use capitalist and neoliberal discourses of health, fitness, and the body. The neoliberal discourse of health emphasizes that individuals should be responsible for their own health. One of the ways that healthy lifestyles are ‘sold’ as important is through reliance on the neoliberal values of individual responsibility and choice (Ayo, 2012). I anticipated the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text would rely heavily on neoliberalism as a discourse since this discourse reinforces the idea that if any individual works hard enough and is disciplined enough, that individual has the potential to have both a fit and healthy body and the rewards that such a body brings. Individuals who buy into or desire the legitimacy of taking care of their own health are Can-Fit-Pro’s ideal consumers.
After completing my research, I concluded that although both these discourses could be found within the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text, the discourse I felt is emphasized most is “risk.” The discourse of risk, specifically how to manage risk, is omnipresent in the Can-Fit-Pro text. Lupton describes the discourse of risk used within the sciences as the “technico-scientific perspective” (1999, p. 1). Within this particular discourse of risk, risk is “largely treated as a taken for granted objective phenomenon,” which means that people’s response to the perceived risk is to seek out expert knowledge, for knowledge and calculations are seen as “the most appropriate standpoint from which to proceed” (Lupton, 1999, p. 2). I would argue that the discourses of neoliberalism (indexed within Appendix A as both “individual responsibility” and “choice”) and capitalism (indexed within Appendix A as “consumption” since capitalism is intrinsically linked to the consumption of goods) can be understood as existing within the text, but only as part of the larger discourse of “risk.” This will be discussed in Chapter Six.

Can-Fit-Pro uses the discourse of risk management, mediated by healthiest risk discourse, as a key way to ‘sell’ the legitimacy of the field to both trainers and their clients. The field is reproduced only when trainers and clients ‘buy into’ not only the legitimacy but the dire importance of the knowledge within the textbook. Part of ‘buying in’ is believing that the expert knowledge within the text has the possibility of reducing negative life experiences, like injury, disease, unhappiness, and litigation, and improving positive life experiences, like health and quality of life. Ayo states that modern day health promotion strategies target the bodies of individuals “as the site of intervention and regulation as oppose to overarching social systems” (Ayo, 2012, p. 103). The unquestioned assumption that individuals should manage their own
health risk is connected to the importance put on rationality within the discourse of neoliberalism; it goes unquestioned that it is rational to take care of one’s individual health (Ayo, 2012, p. 103). Can-Fit-Pro teaches their trainers how to sell personal training services based on the idea that they can help assess and then manage their clients’ risk, if of course the client is willing to make the personal choice to take personal responsibility for their own health. For example, the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text states that by using several measurements that are related to fat distribution and the proportionality of the body, the trainer “can estimate the client’s health risk” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 113). According to Ayo, it is typical for health promotion organizations like Can-Fit-Pro to capitalize on the potential of life-threatening diseases to legitimize their promotion strategies, and therefore their existence (2012, p. 103). In the “Methodology” section, I further explain how I used discourse analysis within this research. In Chapter Six, as well as within Chapter Three, I will further explain my research findings and the importance of the discourse of risk.

**Biopower**

Bio-power incites desire. [It is] about ranking people, creating hierarchies between individuals and inciting people to want to be part of the system and get lots of rewards (Foucault, 1977, p. 180).

I use a theoretical understanding of power that is based predominately on one of Foucault’s understandings of power: “biopower.” Foucault states that there has been a gradual shift in the nature of power from “sovereign power” to “biopower” (Foucault, 1984, p. 262). The main characteristic of sovereign power was that order was maintained through threats of physical
violence (Foucault, 1984, p. 262). Public displays of violence were used as warnings to scare people into behaving (Foucault, 1984, p. 262). Sovereign power is repressive in nature and is an example of ‘top-down’ power. One central sovereign or oligarch overtly displayed their power by constantly demonstrating that they had the power to impede the freedom of the citizen (Foucault, 1984, p. 260).

Over time, power shifted from being held by one person to being possessed (in varying amounts) by the entire population (as cited in Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 36). Power is formed through the relations and interactions between people. Foucault called this “relational” understanding of power, “biopower.” Biopower can be understood as a capillary-like network that “ends by forming a dense web that passes through apparatuses and institutions, without being exactly localized in them” (as cited in Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 36). Biopower does not rely on physical violence. Instead citizens (re)produce relationships of power because they become invested in the existing relationships of power (Foucault, 1977, p. 27). Citizens develop desires and are controlled by their desires to such an extent that they ‘choose’ to adopt self-disciplinary techniques. For example, I chose to spend thousands of dollars on attaining a Paul Chek certification because I am invested in the power relations of the fitness field. Being certified by Paul Chek offers me a certain amount of cachet and respect and the foundation for particular and legitimated scope of practice. The fact that enough trainers are willing to spend thousands on Paul Chek certification maintains his position of power and prestige within the fitness field.
Through the above example, power is not expressed over citizens through violence (I am not physically coerced to attend the Paul Chek course); instead power ‘invests’ individuals, such as myself, in the existing relationships of the field (Foucault, 1977, p. 27). Through this logic, the producers and consumers of the fitness field are not forced to care about the body. They become invested in a systemic body culture. Individuals develop desires and choose to adopt self-disciplinary tactics (like body projects) because of the normalizing nature of modern day capitalist societies (Foucault, 1984, p. 262). Pronger delves further into deconstructing desire. Building in part on Foucault, Pronger refers to desire beyond sexual desire: he states that there is desire in all physical activities (2002, p. 76). According to Pronger, the desire to choose, to buy and to move in particular ways is a productive process that is often shaped by capitalism (Pronger, 2002, p. 75). Capitalism “codes” desire by giving everything a value (Pronger, 2002, p. 107). Individuals then desire the value that is attached to certain material objects, ways of being, and ways of knowing. Individuals ‘choose’ to get fit because they desire the value that is attached to having a body that looks ‘fit.’ Pronger’s understanding of desire connects to Foucault’s concept of biopower.

Pronger’s understanding of desire as productive, and Foucault’s ideas about the productivity of biopower, helps to explain how individuals are manipulated and controlled without feeling oppressed. Individuals feel ‘in control’ of their actions, therefore they feel no need for critical reflection or resistance. This is the case regarding individuals’ relationships to their bodies. Individuals may feel that gaining a ‘fit’ body is a matter of personal control, not outside manipulation. Therefore, individuals may feel no need to be self-reflexive of their desire and ‘choice’ to monitor their health and fitness decisions.
As stated above, Can-Fit-Pro legitimizes the need for individuals to ‘choose’ to be fit by heavily peppering their textbook with the discourse of “risk management,” mediated by healthiest risk discourse. For example, the text legitimizes the ‘choice’ of fitness with statements such as, “A reasonable amount of strength and endurance may help clients be more efficient in daily tasks and reduce the chances of having low back pain” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 78). I know that I have told clients that one of the reasons we should all incorporate strength training is “injury prevention” and to improve “ease of daily life tasks.” I have also written about it many times. One example is an “Ask The Trainer” column I wrote that was published on September 19, 2012. The reader asked if he or she needed to do strength work even if he or she cycled. My answer clearly indicated that one of the reasons to include strength exercises in your routine is injury prevention. My introduction to the column stated,

I will give you the same lecture that I give myself, which is that training your legs can lead to greater power, strength and endurance on the bike and can also help counteract cycling-related overuse injuries—such as patellofemoral syndrome, iliotibial band syndrome and patellar tendonitis—and muscle imbalances (Trotter, 2012b).

Another example would be a blog that was published on The Huffington Post website called “Don’t Run to Get in Shape, Get in Shape to Run” (Trotter, 2012a). This blog talks about how, although I love to run, running on its own is an “injury waiting to happen.” I explain that in order to be able to run injury free for life one has to incorporate strength training and flexibility training into their routine. My history of selling strength training to my clients through risk management as well as these two examples of publications that I have written are clear examples
of how Can-Fit-Pro, and other educational institutions within the fitness field, has schooled me and I have then schooled my clients. This example of how I school my clients to make ‘appropriate’ health choices, in large part through discourses of risk management, is an example of biopower at work.

In a society in which biopower reigns, manipulation of the population is no longer fostered through scare tactics like public execution (as cited in Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 36). Instead, it is done at a distance and, in Foucault’s words, “a whole army of technicians took over from the executioner” (Foucault, 1977, p. 11). Foucault argued that doctors and educators were among the “technicians” who constituted this army (Foucault, 1977, p. 11). Markula and Pringle argue that “fitness experts” such as personal trainers are a type of modern day “body technician” (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 60). Trainers, health media, and other fitness experts play an important role by both relaying and dispersing quasi-medical knowledge to their consumers (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 60). As both a trainer and a member of the health media, I would be an example of a ‘health technician.’

What is useful about this understanding of power is that it opens the possibility of analyzing not only face-to-face relationships of power, such as those between trainer and client, but also relations of power between people who have never met. For example, I write two columns for The Globe and Mail. One is the “Ask the Trainer” column. Readers email me their fitness and health questions. I pick one question per week to answer and that answer then gets published as a column in each Wednesday’s edition of The Globe and Mail. The second column is called the “Stealth Workout.” This column is published on Mondays. It demonstrates simple
exercises that individuals can stealthily incorporate into their daily lives without going to the gym. I also blog regularly for *The Huffington Post* about any subject of my choosing. A sample subject is “Motivation: Fitness is An Endurance Event, Not a Sprint.” Using Foucault’s concept of biopower, I argue that Can-Fit-Pro, and the plethora of other certifications I hold, offers me legitimacy that allows me to ‘school’ my clients and that also enables me to ‘school’ my readers and thereby influence how strangers relate to their bodies.

According to Foucault, “The great spectacle of physical punishment disappeared; the tortured body was avoided” (1977, p. 14). Biopower developed to replace this “spectacle.” Foucault stated that biopower developed along what he called two “poles,” these being “species power” and “disciplinary power” (Foucault, 1984, p. 139). These two poles were not antithetical. Rather, they constituted “two poles of development linked together by a whole intermediary cluster of relations” (Foucault, 1984, p. 139; Harwood, 2009, p. 18). Species power emerged within the second half of the eighteenth century (Foucault, 1984, p. 139). Species power is a “biopolitics of the population,” and is concerned with regulating biological processes of the population (as cited in Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 45). Disciplinary power, or “anatomo-politics,” originated in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (Foucault, 1984, p. 258-289). Disciplinary power works at the level of the individual and is exercised fundamentally by means of surveillance. Its primary goal is to produce docile and productive bodies (Foucault, 1977). Can-Fit-Pro is an example of a business that survives, at least in part, through the existence of disciplinary power. Can-Fit-Pro can only exist if trainers are able to get clients. Trainers can only have careers if there is enough demand from people who want to be surveyed and formed into (at least partial) docile bodies. Consumers of the fitness field would probably
not appreciate being defined as “docile bodies,” but they are docile bodies since they want the positive results (gaining the look of the fit body) that being docile will get them.

Although species power and disciplinary power are two separate concepts, they are also interrelated. An example of species power is the social support that governments give to their elderly citizens to improve life expectancy. The manipulations of individuals via disciplinary power can be seen in how governmental institutions disseminate information on how individuals can, and should, monitor their own blood pressure (MacNeill and Rail, 2010). This example demonstrates how species power and disciplinary power are both similar and different. They are both productive forms of power because they encourage a certain understanding of health and wellness. The difference is that species power is directed at the population as a whole. It is concerned with the population’s biological processes (in the above example, life vs. death). Disciplinary power is directed at the individual.

Within my research, I place particular emphasis on the significance of disciplinary power, as an understanding of disciplinary power is needed for a discursive analysis of power, fitness, and the body. Disciplinary power teaches individuals norms. Within health and physical fitness, the ‘norm’ is of primary importance. The norms of physical activity and health “help produce identities or roles such as fit/unfit/healthy/unhealthy” (Evans & Davies, 2003b, p. 44). The effect of the ‘norm’ is that it incites the individual to change and act ‘appropriately’ when he or she gets an unsatisfactory ‘score.’ Disciplinary power is “essentially corrective” (Foucault, 1977, p. 179). It is not about beheading someone if they do something wrong. Instead, it is about training them to correct themselves even without the threat of punishment by the state. Can-Fit-Pro
teaches trainers how to offer their clients ways to ‘better’ themselves. Can-Fit-Pro teaches their trainers how perform pre-assessment intake and assessments, and part of the assessment process is comparing clients to ‘norms’ of fitness based on their age and gender (see, for example, Anderson et al., 2008, p. 99-122, 265-270). From the assessment information a trainer is then given the tools to design an appropriate program (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 123-162).

When a new client comes to me wanting to be put on a program, it is my job to assess what they are currently doing and offer suggestions on ways they can improve their program so that they reduce their chance of injury and increase their results (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 146). A good example would be a client who came for a program on November 28, 2012. She had been swimming at a leisurely pace for years. Part of the program I gave her was teaching her to incorporate intervals into her pool workout. The Can-Fit-Pro text indicates that modifying clients’ existing programs is an important element of the personal training process, stating that, “To ensure optimal success, great personal trainers not only plan variety within their programs, they also anticipate when and where their clients will need variation” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 143). As a result of the assessment procedure and my program recommendations, this client was disciplined. Depending on the extent to which she follows my instructions, she will be, to varying degrees, a docile and disciplined body.

The panopticon

By the term “panopticism”, I have in mind an ensemble of mechanisms brought into play in all the clusters of procedures used by power (Foucault, 1980, p. 71).
Foucault’s concept of the “panopticon,” which is based on Jeremy Bentham’s design for a prison, has greatly influenced my theoretical framework. Within Bentham’s original model, a tower in the centre of the prison compound gave a guard the ability to look in every inmate’s window (Foucault, 1977, p. 200). Although the person in the prison cell knew they were in a position to be seen, they were never actually sure if they were being watched. Foucault theorized that the mere possibility of this omnipresent gaze forced individuals to self-survey and self-discipline (as cited in Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 43). Individuals may internalize the need to survey themselves. ‘Gazing’ and surveying themselves is one way they become subjects of discourse. Disciplinary power is grounded in the concept of “internalized self-surveillance.” This internalized self-surveillance is what inextricably links disciplinary power to Foucault’s theory of the “panopticon” (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 42, 73). The panopticon facilitates constant self-surveillance, and therefore facilitates disciplinary power.

Foucault used Bentham’s architectural concept of a panoptic building to build a theoretical understanding of the panopticon as both a form of technology and a method of theoretical analysis (Foucault, 1980, p. 71). Foucault states in an interview that when using the term panopticism he had “in mind an ensemble of mechanisms brought into play in all the clusters of procedures used by power....And, at a certain moment in time, these methods began to become generalized” (Foucault, 1980, p. 71). Foucault theorizes that we now live in a panoptic “disciplinary society” (Foucault, 1977, p. 208-209). We no longer need the actual prison guards within the panoptic building to feel like we are being watched. There has been a diffusion of the panoptic gaze throughout society (Annandale, 1998, p. 36). For example, trainers gaze at their clients, but their clients also gaze at their trainers and at other gym members. More importantly,
and more insidiously, gym members and trainers internally gaze at themselves. This gaze, in part, affects how individuals act and therefore how individuals form their sense of ‘self’ and produces individuals as subjects of discourse. Panoptic methods of surveillance have become “generalized to affect society as a whole not just prisoners” (Foucault, 1980, p. 71). Within our modern day society there is the constant possibility that we are being watched. Since we do not know the identity of the original surveyor, the panoptic gaze is able to function “in a diffused, multiple, polyvalent way throughout the whole social body” (Foucault, 1977, p. 208-209).

As stated above, to varying degrees the trainers that Can-Fit-Pro certifies are examples of panoptic surveyors. Trainers survey themselves and other trainers. They also teach their clients to be surveyors. Clients survey other clients and survey the trainers as well. The result is a complex web of surveillance legitimized by expert knowledge. I may survey and judge my clients, but if they do not ‘judge’ me to be an ‘acceptable’ trainer, I would have no clients to judge. A good example is a client who I referred to a naturopathic doctor whom I respect. After the first visit, my client refused to go back because she felt that the doctor was not fit enough. My client did not understand why she should take advice and judgment from an ‘unfit’ expert (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 44). The naturopathic doctor whom I referred my client to had the “expert knowledge” that any naturopathic doctor has. She had gone to school and passed all her examinations. She was certified to dispense advice, but that expert knowledge she held was not enough because my client judged her an ‘unacceptable’ knowledge source based on the way her body looked. My client decided to go to another naturopath with the exact same credentials, but whom she deemed more acceptable because of the other doctor’s embodiment of the image of health and fitness. These types of client reactions do affect me. I grew up with a mother who told
me I am beautiful, no matter what, but when I hear people openly criticize someone else’s body, I internalize the knowledge that at least in part my livelihood depends on maintaining a certain type of body. The panoptic gaze within the fitness field is not a linear hierarchy. Relationships of power are complex. Expert knowledge only gains traction if participants within the field judge the expert worthy.

**The docile body**

A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved (Foucault, 1991, p. 103).

Foucault’s concept of the “docile body” has also significantly influenced my theoretical lens. The concept of the docile body is heavily connected to the concepts of disciplinary power and the panopticon. The docile body is the effect of the constant control and manipulation that disciplinary power has on the individual (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 74). The docile body is a body that has been effectively transformed into a self-regulating individual through disciplinary power. A docile body is an “appropriate body,” a body that has been taught adequate “comportment” (Foucault, 1977, p. 135). As Foucault’s quote above indicates, a body is docile when it is consciously monitored, controlled, and changed (Foucault, 1991, p. 103). One way that individuals become docile is through constant monitoring and tracking of their food and exercise. I am an example of a docile body because when I am training for a competition I log all my workouts—what I am supposed to do and what I actually did—on a website called *TrainingPeaks*. This website is an interface between coaches and clients. My coach can post a workout she wants me to do and then I post and confess what I actually ended up doing (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 113).
Can-Fit-Pro, the fitness field, and individual personal trainers need a certain number of docile bodies to stay in business. I pay $100 for every marathon I enter, approximately $160 every three months for running shoes, and, when I am training for an Ironman, $300 a month for coaching. Most races also include an element of travel. Some, like the Lake Placid Ironman, I drove to. Others, like the half Ironmans in Hawaii, St. Croix, and California, I had to fly to. In all cases, I had to rent a hotel room. In short, these races are expensive. If myself and other endurance athletes and fitness enthusiasts were not willing to spend that money to, in short, be at least partially docile bodies, the fitness and running field, at least in its present form, could not continue to exist. I had a conversation with a colleague that offers a great example. I met her because we were both attending an expensive course taught by Charles Poliquin, a strength coach who has a huge following in certain segments of the fitness population. Being ‘Poliquin certified’ can increase how much a trainer can charge per hour. The colleague I was talking with confessed how frustrated she was because, although she was the only trainer in her gym who was ‘Poliquin certified,’ none of the members knew who he was, so she was not able to raise her rates (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 110). From this we see that knowledge on its own does not lead to the creation of docile bodies. Individuals need to believe the knowledge that the expert holds is legitimate and worthwhile. Individuals not only have to believe that the knowledge is legitimate, but particularly in the case of niche training and nutrition advice, such as that from Poliquin, the individuals have to have the economic ability to purchase the knowledge.

Within the fitness field, knowledge only has the power to influence consumption if it is viewed by the consumer as worthwhile. Certain fitness communities know who Charles Poliquin is. In
fact, Poliquin-certified trainers are often sought out. There is a database on the Internet where you can find Poliquin-certified trainers in your area. I have been contacted through this list. In addition, being Poliquin certified adds a certain capital to a trainer’s curriculum vitae. Trainers certified by him can often charge more money. More importantly, gyms will often give trainers a larger ‘cut’ of what the client pays if the trainer holds these types of advanced certifications, even if the clients do not know what exactly a ‘Poliquin Level One’ trainer is. A colleague at a fascial stretch therapy course told me that she was paying $3000 to take the course because the other trainers at her gym were using fascial stretch therapy and her clients were starting to become annoyed that she was not using it. From these examples, we see how interconnected and complex the relationship is between power and (expert) knowledge. Knowledge influences consumption when the knowledge held is revered enough within a discourse to be thought of as legitimate.

*Science, knowledge, power*


Knowledge is put to work through discourse (Hall, 1997, p. 47).

My theoretical framework has been greatly influenced by Foucault’s idea that what is considered legitimate knowledge is connected to existing relationships of power and dominant discourses. As stated above, Foucault theorizes that biopower incites individuals to monitor themselves, not because they fear violence, but because they fear not living up to the
norm. Violence is no longer the main mechanism of discipline, and therefore expert knowledge, such as knowledge acquired through science, and / or knowledge found within fitness texts, becomes intrinsically linked with the maintenance of power relations. The knowledge found within fitness text is ‘productive’, it codes the body in particular ways and directs desire (Pronger, 2002, p. 124). This mutually reinforcing relationship between power and knowledge is often referred to as Foucault’s “power/knowledge nexus” (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 7).

All knowledge is the “effect of a specific regime of power” (McNay, 1992, p. 27). This is because power affects what is thought of as useful knowledge (Pronger, 2002, p. 30). What makes Foucault’s analysis interesting, however, is that the relationship is not simply top down. Those in dominant positions do not simply define what is thought of as useful knowledge. Although relationships of power affect what is thought of as useful knowledge, useful knowledge is also used to legitimize relationships of power (Pronger, 2002, p. 30). To quote Foucault, “there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (Foucault, 1977, p. 27). My understanding, following the application of Pronger, is that Foucault’s analysis of the power/knowledge nexus is based in his belief that there is a plethora of small truths, but some truths, like science, become understood as objective and above analytical reproof (Pronger, 2002). Foucault was not “searching for an ‘eternal’ truth but a historian analysing specific ‘truths,’ bound in time and place” (Heikkinen, Silvonen, & Simola, 1999, p. 141). Foucault did not search for capital T truths in an absolute sense, because truths always take place within particular periods, settings, or contexts (Hall 1997, p. 49). His concept of the historically contextualized truth is often referred to as a “discursive formation sustaining a regime of truth”
(Hall, 1997, p. 49). Since Foucault understands what is considered truth to be a product of history, and the power relationships of particular time periods, his goal is not to replace existing truths with more objective truths. Instead his analysis of both knowledge and truth is in an attempt to understand why certain truths, for example scientific truth, became hegemonic over all others (Pronger, 2002).

Interestingly, utilizing the power/knowledge nexus is not implying that power and knowledge are synonymous, but that the dominant forms of knowledge actually help produce the reality that they describe (McNay, 1992). Assessments by experts are legitimized by their foundation in science and scientific language (Foucault, 1977, p. 19). Assessments allow trainers to tell their clients how well the clients live up to the ‘norm’ and give information on which to base their programs and training. The program and training sessions are thought of as legitimate since the assessment is based on the legitimate field of exercise sciences. Through this we see the complex nexus of knowledge and power in which a reliance on scientific knowledge is entrenched. What is problematic about this nexus is that science is not just an accurate, objective representation of reality. Instead, the process of knowledge becoming known as ‘Truth’ is part of the production of what we understand as reality (Pronger, 2002, p. 121). A good example of the connection between knowledge-power-reality is the understanding of health that my clients hold, which comes directly from my demonstrations and from information that I have told them.

Trainer-client relationships always start with some type of an assessment. As part of the assessment and initial intake, clients often confess to me that they are tired and lack energy. I tell them that exercise will provide them with more energy and better sleeping patterns. I cite myself as an example, saying that I sleep so much better on the days that I have exercised (which is what
I think is the reality). The *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text states that exercise increases one’s energy since exercise “improves ability to perform daily activities with less effort” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 6) and “exercisers experience improved mental health and self-image, and an improved outlook on life makes all activities more enjoyable” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 6). This knowledge helps shape how individuals understand their exercise experiences.

My clients often relate back to me stories of their embodied lived experiences that mirror statements of ‘facts’ that I have told them about the effects of exercise. All of a sudden, when they sleep better or feel more energized, they relate those feelings to the exercise experience, regardless of whether the two are actually connected. Expert knowledge, even the seemingly banal example stated above, has the potential to create meaning. Expert knowledge, because it is based in an unquestioned ‘Truth,’ trains people and encourages them to adopt certain behaviours (Foucault, 1997, p. 129). I don’t have a sense of ownership over my clients, or a sense that I ‘produce them’ per say, but I would be lying if I did not admit to feeling huge pride when they accomplish their fitness and health goals. I teach my clients that exercise will improve sleeping patterns and increase energy and self-confidence, not as a method of drumming up business, but because, personally, I find it to be true. That said, this research process has shown me that the pride I feel over their accomplishments is in part because I have helped to form a ‘docile’ fit body, which I deem a ‘success’ since I (unfortunately) value my docility. My experiences and reactions to exercise are, I am sure, in large part related to the expert knowledge that I have consumed.
A Foucauldian analysis has helped me to conceptualize the Can-Fit-Pro textbook as being a selective representation of reality. The Can-Fit-Pro text (re)produces wider sociopolitical values. Scientific ‘truths’ stated within the text help to maintain certain power relationships. A Foucauldian analysis helps us see the possible link between the ‘science’ of fitness and the products and services it helps to sell. Within the fitness world, science and the sale of products work together. For example, Absolute Endurance is a gym that caters to endurance athletes. I train there and attend their group computrainer\textsuperscript{xi} classes. They are able to charge large amounts for their computrainer rides (I pay $25 per ride) in part because the machines produce scientific information (watts, km per hour, average watts, calories burned) about the ride (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 145). Usually cyclists who compete, either at a professional or amateur level, do not simply go out and ride. They often rely on science to analyze their progress and validate their workouts.

The science within the Can-Fit-Pro textbook helps give the fitness field legitimacy. People then feel comfortable buying their products. Gyms, such as GoodLife Fitness, as well as individual trainers, such as myself, use the ‘assessment’ as a way to ‘sell’ the client training. Trainers use scientific tests to appraise potential clients. These tests then prove to the clients that they are lacking in some way with respect to their fitness. The trainer can then legitimately sell their services (Pronger, 2002, p. 127). Even if an individual is fit, trainers and other fitness experts have the ability to use scientific fitness tests to demonstrate how that individual could be fitter or better (Pronger, 2002, p. 139). Assessments, such as the ones detailed in Foundations of Professional Personal Training, are built on scientific tests as well as confessional techniques (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 99-123). As Pronger states, in fitness assessments “the body is
measured, measurements are recorded, calculations are made, an assessment is given, and a way of life is proscribed” (2002, p. 138). Therefore, we see that assessments serve to judge potential clients and through this judgment they invest the client into the wider fitness field, making clients feel in need of training or, as Pronger articulates, in need of a new “way of life” (2012, p. 138).xii The American Council of Sports Medicine (ACSM) has recently created a certification called “Exercise as Medicine.” The Exercise as Medicine “initiative now includes a credential program that will provide exercise professionals with the opportunity to work closely with the medical community and provide numerous additional benefits to the certified professional” (http://certification.acsm.org/exercise-is-medicine-credential, DATE). This offers yet another example of how the fitness field does not simply say, be active in any way that you can. It uses science, especially the science of the assessment, to sell particular ways—ways in which the client will be persuaded to use its services and products—of helping the individual become more fit.

I perform assessments because, although I often feel ambiguous about the procedure, clients like to have a yardstick by which to measure their success. I have tried to compromise by giving them that through ‘non-normative’ testing. Non-normative testing compares the individual only to him or herself. This type of testing receives less than a page of mention within the Can-Fit-Pro text (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 116). Can-Fit-Pro does not advocate this type of testing as strongly because it does not invest the person being tested within the world of fitness to the same extent; the person being tested does not need the trainer to help decipher their statistics, understand scientific jargon, or work through mathematical equations—i.e., the science that is used helps to sell the product. When the product is sold it helps to legitimize the science
being used. Therefore we see that the disciplinary power of fitness (or as Pronger would call it the “technology of physical fitness”) does not just use scientific knowledge as the foundation on which to base its legitimacy, but actually (re)produces the expert knowledge, science, and scientific texts that it is based within (Pronger, 2002, p. 124).

**Governmentality**

Governmentality is another of Foucault's seminal theories. Scholars who use the concept of governmentality seek to explain how, through biopower, populations are controlled with minimal force. To quote Foucault, governmentality is about teaching an individual “how to govern oneself, how to be governed and how to govern others” (Foucault, 1997, p. 87). The concept of governmentality is used by Foucauldian scholars to explain how disciplinary power and individual actions are connected. The ‘key’ to governmentality is that social order is maintained not through coercive force but through “autonomous individuals willfully regulating themselves” and choosing to perform certain actions (Ayo, 2012, p. 100). Governmentality is useful for an analysis of the fitness field because the field is (re)produced by individuals choosing to perform, or at least or attempting to perform and then criticizing themselves for not following through on, actions such as working out or sticking with a particular diet plan.

Governmentality is the contact point between disciplinary power, which incites individuals with normative desire, and the actions and choices that produce an individual's subjectivity. Governmentality is a concept that seeks to explore how and why individuals choose to engage in self-constituting practices and therefore become particular types of subjects (Ayo,
2012, p. 100). Particular discourses produce specific places for subjects and ways that individuals can become subjects—we become “subjects” by “subjecting ourselves” to the “meanings, power and regulation” within particular discourses (Hall, 1997, p. 56).

In other words, governmentality is the “bridge between regimes of discipline and the production of the self” (Evans & Davies, 2003b, p. 43). Governmentality is closely connected to biopower. Governmentality has been referred to as an “art” of governance because it is a type of social control that does not rely on brute force (McDermott, 2007, p. 305). Instead, the intent of governmentality is to produce citizens who are conscious of how their individual acts influence the welfare of the population as a whole (McDermott, 2007, p. 305). Governmentality fosters the idea in its citizens that self-control and self-discipline will promote a secure and safe population (Foucault, 1997, p. 87). Governmentality is about teaching people how to conduct themselves.

Ayo states,

[T]he concept of governmentality provides a useful tool for demonstrating how health promotion works, not by making social and structural changes which impede upon the health and wellbeing of the population, but rather, by inciting the desire within autonomous individuals to choose to follow the imperatives set out by health promoting agencies, and thus, take on the responsibility of changing their own behaviours accordingly (2012, p. 100).
The Can-Fit-Pro text is an example of a disciplinary technology of governmentality because it teaches trainers to teach their clients that it is the responsibility of the individual to be self-disciplined and self-controlled.

The fitness field is (re)produced by a discourse of individual responsibility; it is the individual’s responsibility to take care of their own health. For example, within *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* it is claimed,

>[M]uscle is a very adaptive tissue. With proper training, muscle grows stronger and larger, which enables us to perform everyday activities more easily. Conversely, they can also become smaller and weaker if they are not used on a regular basis. Therefore, resistance training should be part of everyone’s exercise routine (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 78).

Governmentality is about ‘schooling’ the population. Can-Fit-Pro can only survive as an organization if enough individuals want to become certified trainers and enough clients want to consume the field-specific expert knowledge possessed by these trainers. Within this example one can see that Can-Fit-Pro is trying to ‘school’ the trainers they are certifying and give the trainers appropriate expert knowledge to sell their services. Can-Fit-Pro is one of the myriad social institutions\textsuperscript{xiii} that teaches individuals how to act, specifically in relation to fitness, health, and the body.\textsuperscript{xiv}
Subjectivity and technologies of the self

[Subjectivity] is constituted in and through a wide range of discourses and practices within fields of power, knowledge and truth (Evans & Davies, 2003b, p. 43).

Foucault’s concept of “subjectivity” has also influenced my theoretical framework. Deconstructing a purportedly objective text like Can-Fit-Pro’s Foundations of Professional Personal Training is important since, as Foucault states, subjectivities are not natural, but formed through experiences over time. It is worthwhile to deconstruct a text like Foundations of Professional Personal Training because educational fitness texts like Can-Fit-Pro’s certification manual teach individuals the ways they should control their bodies when participating in the fitness field. These lessons in comportment influence people’s experiences. Through experience, subjectivities are formed.

According to Foucault’s understanding of subjectivity, our subjectivities are not ‘natural,’ pre-existing essences (as cited in Wright, 2003b, p. 24). An individual’s subjectivity is formed through a constant process of interacting with their environment. Subjectivities are constituted and reconstituted when individuals interact within existing discourses of speech and behaviour, and negotiate the performance of specific norms of behaviour (Wright, 2004, p. 24). An individual’s subjectivity is their sense of their body and their understanding of their ‘self’ (Evans & Davies, 2003b, p. 43). Particular types of subjectivities may be formed through participation in dominant health and fitness norms. Dominant health and fitness norms, made possible by particular hegemonic discourses and relationships of power, enable particular types of subjectivities to be formed. According to Hall, who is drawing on Foucault, individuals develop
meaningful subjectivities by engaging with the rules of particular discourses and become “subjects” of the particular “power/knowledge nexus” of the discourse (1997, p. 56). I developed my subjectivity as a triathlete and an endurance runner by engaging with the rules of the discourse of endurance athletics.

Can-Fit-Pro’s text, as well as their system \textsuperscript{xv} of training fitness leaders, plays an active role in reproducing certain health discourses. For example, my identity, and therefore my subjectivity, was drastically changed through becoming certified by Charles Poliquin. Charles Poliquin, a strength coach from the United States, is not affiliated with Can-Fit-Pro directly, but my participation in his courses was counted toward continuing education credits that help maintain my Can-Fit-Pro personal trainer designation.\textsuperscript{xvi} In June of 2012, I took Poliquin’s BioSignature course. Poliquin advertises this course on his website by saying:

\textbf{Every day we hear success stories from students who have incorporated Poliquin\textsuperscript{TM} BioSignature Modulation into their business practices. Clients see huge improvements with their body composition in just weeks! Becoming a Poliquin\textsuperscript{TM} BioSignature Practitioner allows you to offer your clients a well-rounded approach to fat loss by utilising nutrition and supplementation. It offers results you can see—fast! The 3-day Poliquin\textsuperscript{TM} BioSignature Level 1 Course introduces students to the 12 sites BioSignature was founded on and how each site relates to hormones in our bodies. In this lecture-based course, students will get the opportunity to learn how to correctly take the sites using callipers
In that course, Poliquin primarily pontificates on nutrition, not training. Before this course, I had been a proud vegetarian for 18 years. In some way, I thought that it was the healthier way to live and that it demonstrated that I was disciplined and moral. Poliquin convinced me that as a vegetarian I must be deficient in micronutrients, such as omega 3, zinc, magnesium, and vitamin D, as a result of not eating enough animal-based protein. He convinced me that as a meat eater I would have more energy, sleep better, and be leaner (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 3-4). I started eating meat again, which caused a huge shift in my day-to-day experiences. I started talking with clients differently about meat, and having discussions with friends at parties about how much I loved meat. I stopped buying my lunch daily from the vegan restaurant near my work. Instead, I brought chicken or pork with vegetables for my lunch. In June I raced a half Ironman and I took 45 minutes off my bike ride. I attributed my new speed to eating meat. It may not have had anything to do with meat—I could have been having a good day or my training may have been excellent leading up to the race. Instead my internalizing Poliquin’s scientific knowledge and advice could just be another example of the process of knowledge becoming known as ‘Truth’ and producing what we understand as reality (Pronger, 2002, p. 121). Either way, through my experiences as a meat eater, my subjectivity began to change, and it continues to do so.

Individuals have the potential to produce their own identity, or subjectivity, through what Foucault described as “technologies of the self.” Technologies of the self are processes that make
it possible “for an individual to choose to transform his/her identity” (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 139). Through technologies of the self an individual comes to “understand him or herself as a subject” (McNay, 1992, p. 49). Foucault employs the concepts of technologies of the self and the process of subjectivity when he theorizes that through the mundane choices individuals make on a daily basis, those individuals can actively be involved in producing their subjectivity. Since individuals do not have a ‘natural essence,’ their subjectivities are always being redefined. This constant process of subjectivity creation allows for the possibility of change. Unfortunately, that subjectivity happens within discourse, and the choices that individuals make are constrained by the systems of power and knowledge that exist because of, and through, discourse. Discourse, knowledge, and power both constrain and enable individuals to produce certain subjectivities. This is because power is both “constitutive and constituting” (Markula, 2001, p. 173).

Individuals have different social, political, and economic realities. These realities limit the ease with which an individual can access the potential agency that Foucault claims is available through technologies of the self. Technologies of the self are “the way a human being turns him or herself into a subject” (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 137). Since every subject is both “subjected to power” and an “active subject within power relations” (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 137), the technologies of the self allow for the possibility for individuals to constitute a subjectivity outside the oppressiveness of governmentality and hegemonic discourses (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 138). All bodies are not situated equally within discourse. Depending on an individual’s class, race, gender, sexuality, and place within the power relations of discourse, their ability to actively produce their subjectivity will be different. The choices that individuals make each day have the potential to lead those individuals to constitute and understand their bodies in
different ways, in so much as our subjectivities are not biological or natural givens. However, since our choices are so heavily circumscribed by existing discourses and power relations, it is often (unconsciously or consciously) easier to ‘choose’ pre-subscribed subjectivities.

**The complex relationships of power that exist within the fitness field**

Based on a Foucauldian understanding of power, my textual analysis, and my auto-ethnographic journal, I argue that the fitness field is maintained, at least in part, because all individuals, regardless of ‘rank,’ have subjectivities that are both constrained and produced though discourse. Individuals are always both the surveyor and the surveyed. Disciplinary power, the disciplinary gaze, surveillance, and the creation of docile bodies are not simply top-down processes. In fact, that is why disciplinary power is so insidious. Normalizing judgments come from everyone—from peers as well as supervisors (Foucault, 1997, p. 177). Individuals survey others; however, surveillance functions as “a network of relationships from top to bottom, but also to a certain extent from bottom to top and laterally; this network ‘holds’ the whole together and traverses it in its entirety with effects of power that derive from one another” (Foucault, 1997, p. 176). I do not simply survey my clients, I am also surveyed by my clients as well as by other trainers.

Dan is a professional cyclist at Absolute Endurance, the gym that caters to endurance athletes where I often train on their computrainers. In early September 2012, Dan came up to me and stated that I was not cycling correctly—that I had huge potential as a cyclist that I was not tapping into. He gave me an interval program that would help me tap into my ‘true’ potential.
(Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 69). Obviously, Dan had been surveying me and, acting as a properly schooled trainer, he, based on no testing methods that I could observe, identified my faults and gave me a program to fix them. The program has drastically improved my cycling, so, as the docile body that I am, I am grateful to Dan. I hate to admit it, but I am proud of the fact that since I have started regularly completing Dan’s interval workouts, my average watts on the bike has improved by approximately 30 watts.

This one simple interaction demonstrates the complex nature of the fitness field. Since, according to Foucault, even the supervisor is perpetually being supervised and surveyed (Foucault, 1997, p. 176), no one within the fitness industry can escape being surveyed. This is especially true for personal trainers because, since they make their livelihood only when others ‘buy into’ the legitimacy of the field, they are the individuals most highly invested in the field. This constant surveillance, and desire for people to like what they see, ‘invests’ individuals within the structures of power (Foucault, 1997, p. 26-27). Within a gym, it is not just the trainers who supervise and survey the members. Trainers also survey other trainers. Clients and members survey the trainers. Trainers are expected to look and act in a certain way, and if they do not, they risk ridicule and potential loss of clients. The surveillance may incite certain desires within the members, but it also produces desires within the trainers.

This network of individuals who both survey and are being surveyed enables relationships of power to be both “constituting and constraining” (Markula, 2001, p. 173). Markula uses the example of women writing magazine articles about fitness versus women reading the same magazine articles. Women in positions of power, such as magazine editors,
help to shape other women’s understanding of their bodies (Markula, 2001, p. 173). In this way they exercise a power relationship with readers that is “constituting” or productive. They themselves are also constrained by the fitness field that they write within. I know from personal experience of writing for The Globe and Mail that, although my column gives me a certain amount of productive power, I am also constrained. I am constrained both by the subjects I am supposed to discuss within my column and by the performance and appearance a professional trainer is expected to exemplify. I only get a certain amount of choice regarding the questions that I answer in The Globe and Mail. My editor gives me a series of questions that he has already vetted as appropriate, and I am able to pick from among them. I got in trouble early on in my career at The Globe and Mail for catering to an incorrect demographic. I was told I should gear most of my answers to a primarily female, under-40 demographic. As a writer and a personal trainer, I teach others how a fit person should act, and at least within the context of my public image I am constrained by what I ‘should’ teach my readers. Through being a fitness writer, and working with my clients, I become a disciplinary technology that promotes biopedagogy.

**Biopedagogy**

Wright states that scholars including herself, Harwood (2009), Gard (2009), Rail (2009), and Evans and Colls (2009) initially theorized biopedagogy owing to a “joint concern as educators with the ways in which the ‘truths’ of the obesity epidemic, as they are recontextualized in government policy, health promotion initiatives, web resources and school practices” influence individuals (Wright, 2009, p. 1). This joint concern led first to a roundtable, which was held in January 2007. The purpose of the roundtable was to discuss how “escalating concerns over a
global ‘obesity epidemic’ are generating new forms of normalizing practices in schools,”
practices they termed “bio-pedagogies”
the roundtable the seminal book, Biopolitics and the “Obesity Epidemic” was published (2009).
Wright states that originally theorists such as Harwood (2009), Rail (2009), and herself, who
used the concept of biopedagogy, were interested in expanding the original definition of
biopedagogy so that it could be used to analyze how children came to understand their bodies
within the school system; the concept of biopedagogies was used “to describe the normalizing
and regulating practices in schools and disseminated more widely through the web and other
forms of media” (Wright, 2009, p. 1). According to Wright, scholars who use the concept of
biopedagogy do so in an attempt to “bring together the idea of biopower and pedagogy in ways
that help us understand the body as a political space” (Wright, 2009, p. 7).

Biopedagogy draws from Foucault’s notion of biopower (Wright, 2009, p. 1), as well as
Bernstein’s notion of a pedagogized society. Bernstein argued that methods of pedagogy used
throughout society to instruct individuals on how to act are always value laden (Bernstein, 1996,
2001; Wright, 2009, p. 8). Consistent with Foucault’s awareness of the knowledge/power nexus,
the concept of biopedagogy is used to analyze how expert knowledge interacts with relationships
of power to enact individuals to act in certain ways (Wright, 2009, p. 1; MacNeill & Rail, 2010,
p. 179). Biopedagogy can be defined as any type of education that teaches individuals how to
“conduct the conduct” or that teaches appropriate modes of personal conduct (Miller & Rose,
Scholars such as Evans and Davies (2003a, 2003b), Harwood (2009), McDermott (2007), MacNeill and Rail (2010), and Wright (2003) have evolved past using pedagogy only in relation to schooling and teaching philosophy and now use the concept of biopedagogy to deconstruct physical cultures combining the current neoliberal discourse of health, wellness, and physical activity. Biopedagogical sites are not only in schools, “but are everywhere around us, on the web, on television, radio and film, billboards and posters, and pamphlets in doctors’ waiting rooms” (Wright, 2009, p. 7). These sites of biopedagogy are inextricably linked with the neoliberal discourses of health. Neoliberal discourses of health represent health as simply about ‘being healthy,’ but are actually about much more than wellness (MacNeill and Rail, 2010, p. 179; Harwood, 2009, p. 15). Neoliberal discourses of health are about teaching individuals how to conduct themselves. Knowledge of how to conduct oneself is not innate within human beings; it is learned through biopedagogy. Biopedagogy can be defined as a “pedagogy of bios when ‘bios’ is defined as ‘how to’—how to live, how to eat, how much to eat, how much to move, how to move” (Harwood, 2009, p. 15). Simply put, biopedagogy is a pedagogy of “how to act,” teaching society how to regulate itself and to self-discipline.

Since Can-Fit-Pro’s primary role is to certify trainers so that they can tell their clients how to act, I argue that the textbook is a resource of neoliberal biopedagogy. Can-Fit-Pro’s classrooms, and the trainers that it produces, become biopedagogical sites for adults. Individuals learn not only how they should act to be healthy but what it looks like to be healthy, and how they can judge other people’s level of health. For example, individuals who participate in the fitness field learn the rules of the field through biopedagogy. Individuals learn appropriate modes of conduct in the weight room, in the aerobic studio, and in the locker room. As mentioned
earlier, biopower, disciplinary power, and governmentality are concepts that Foucault uses to theorize how modern day social control occurs by individuals learning that it is their responsibility to govern themselves and their personal conduct. Proper citizenship and the safety of society are maintained by the individual learning proper modes of personal conduct (Foucault, 1997, p. 87). Can-Fit-Pro’s *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* is an example of biopedagogy, since it informs readers how to eat, sleep, and move.

The problem with biopedagogical sites like Can-Fit-Pro is that they are understood as an important part of positively influencing population health outcomes, while the social determinants of health are largely ignored. As Ayo states,

The health promotion policies which tend to receive the greatest amount of endorsement are those which suggest that all will be well if individuals simply exercised 30 minutes a day and ate more fruits and vegetables. This discourse prevails at the same time when increasing homelessness and affordable housing have become nationwide problems…and social and economic conditions have deteriorated for many citizens (Ayo, 2012, p. 102).

My textual analysis is not an attempt to dispute the health benefits of exercise. Instead, my intent is to highlight why Can-Fit-Pro is resourced and used as a biopedagogical tool within the current neoliberal discourse of health; why “self-regulating, individualized practices become championed over other forms of well-established knowledge such as the social determinants of health” (Ayo, 2012, p. 102).
Risk vocabulary: the effect of biopower, disciplinary power, and governmentality

Theorists such as Evans and Davies (2003a, 2003b), Leahy and Harrison (2003), McDermott (2007), Nettleson (2010), and Smith Maguire (2008) have utilized Foucault’s concepts of biopower (specifically disciplinary power), governmentality, and discourse to theorize the effect that biopower and governmentality have on modern day discourses of risk. They posit that one important result of biopower and governmentality is our increased reference to risk and risk management within modern day discourse. Currently, risk is viewed as “the product of human action and decision-making rather than of fate, and is therefore treated as a political rather than a metaphysical phenomenon” (Lupton & Tulloch, 2002, p. 318). Since risk is now linked to the individual’s ability to take action, it becomes closely linked to other human traits valued within neoliberalism such as “reflexivity, accountability and responsibility” (Lupton & Tulloch, 2002, p. 318).

Discourses of risk that exist as a tool of disciplinary power have been called “risk vocabulary” (McDermott, 2007, p. 302-303). Risk vocabulary can loosely be understood as information that is disseminated as a scare tactic to incite individuals to work out and manage their health (Evans & Davies, 2003b, p. 37). Within the current neoliberal form of biopower, the fear of illness that is proliferated through ‘risk vocabulary’ is used as a disciplinary technique. Individuals feel responsible for disciplining their own bodies because they fear getting sick or being overweight (Evans & Davies, 2003b, p. 37). It is not the actual possibility of risk that incites people to manage themselves, but rather the way language is wielded (Evans & Davies, 2003b, p. 37).
Risk vocabulary works in a similar manner to biopedagogy. Through participating in discourses of ‘risk,’ for example by categorizing an individual as ‘unhealthy’ or ‘at risk,’ individuals learn that they should take responsibility for their own health (McDermott, 2007, p. 302-303). When scholars label a discourse an example of a ‘risk vocabulary’ they are attempting to highlight discourses that are socially constructed and used for particular social, cultural, and political ends (McDermott, 2007, p. 311). This is because, within ‘risk vocabularies,’ ‘risk’ is not an objective, mathematical, ‘if, then’ question (McDermott, 2007, p. 311). It is not that all ‘risk’ within discourses of risk is made up; the risk itself may be real. When scholars use an analysis that includes a critical understanding of risk vocabularies, they do so in an attempt to understand what particular social, cultural, and political function the vocabulary and language that frame the risk serves (McDermott, 2007, p. 311). The intention behind analyzing risk vocabularies is to understand how the use of a particular risk vocabulary is enmeshed in wider discourses of power: why that risk, above other possible risks, has been brought to the forefront of the discourse.

According to Leahy and Harrison, “The discourse in Neoliberal society is that everyone is ‘at risk’ and individuals need tools to manage the risk” (2003, p. 133). Everyone is pre-diabetic and pre-dead. The fitness field’s existence is predicated on, and legitimized by, the fact that it is seen as one such risk-management tool. Discourses of the risk associated with being inactive help to legitimize both the existence of the fitness field itself, and broader, prolific, neoliberal, individualistic discourses of health. Health promotion policies, like those of Can-Fit-Pro, which emphasise the importance of exercise and proper diet, are given the most salience
within the fitness field, while social determinants of health are widely ignored or downplayed (Ayo, 2012, p. 102).

The risk discourses associated with health simultaneously legitimize the need for the fitness field while downplaying social discourses of health. Risk vocabularies give individuals the impetus to take control of their health, and neoliberal discourses of health ingrain in individuals the importance of self-reliance and responsibility for their own health. The importance of exercise is ‘sold’ to individuals through risk vocabulary. Evans and Davies talk about how individuals within physical education institutions are taught the importance of exercise, and those individuals then actively seek out health knowledge that serves to legitimize the field (2003b, p. 35-36). This can be extrapolated to explain Can-Fit-Pro’s relationship to the fitness field. Can-Fit-Pro teaches their trainers information that reinforces the necessity of the information they provide. Individuals then desire health experts to teach them what activities they should avoid so that they can become healthy, active citizens and so that they can avoid getting sick (Evans & Davies, 2003b, p. 38). This can also be referred to as “healthism,” a term originally coined by Crawford, who did pioneering work in the fields of healthism and physical activity (1980, 1984). Healthism refers to the belief that maintaining good health is an obligation and that “good health can be fulfilled through personal, individual adherence to the many and varied protocols for healthy living” (Roy, 2008, p. 465).

From my understanding of risk vocabularies, there are two types of risk discourses. First, ‘manufactured risk,’ which is defined as risk that gives individuals something to feel anxious about so that they can buy things and feel like they are actively trying to manage the risk (Evans
& Davies, 2003b, p. 37). Second, what I would call ‘appropriated risk,’ which is risk that may be connected to legitimized health concerns, like diabetes or heart disease, but that has been appropriated and framed in such a way as to highlight the importance of self-management and consumption, and to downplay social determents of health and the importance of a public support system that promotes health. The fitness field is legitimated and reproduced through both types of risk.

A good example of a manufactured risk would be the discourse surrounding ‘Oprah arms’ (i.e., the loose skin under one’s arms). New clients will often state that one of their goals is to “get rid of my Oprah arms.” Flabby arms are not a sign of disease, just a natural part of aging and gravity, but individuals are conscious of managing that risk of becoming ‘flabby.’ Specialists such as personal trainers or fitness writers are well placed to be available for consumption during these anxious times. Time with trainers and fitness magazines are commodities that individuals can buy to help manage their manufactured risk (Evans & Davies, 2003b, p. 37). I myself have been hired to write articles regarding the management of arm flab. One article I wrote for Chatelaine was on how to get ‘Michelle Obama arms’; it was called “The Michelle Obama Arms Workout” (Trotter, 2010).

These type of articles (re)produce a number of inter-related power dynamics. As stated above, these articles manufacture risk that incites individuals to manage themselves. These articles also (re)produce normalizing criteria that allow individuals to judge their own bodies against the hyperreal bodies of others, for example against celebrity bodies. Michelle Obama probably does not even have ‘Michelle Obama arms.’ This is not to say that Michelle Obama’s
arms are not fit and toned, but rather that her arms get iconified and the image and idea of her arms gains more significance then her actual arms. For example, *Chatelaine* attached the title “The Michelle Obama Arms Workout” after I had already written the article on upper body sculpting moves. The editors of *Chatelaine* attached significance to my exercises that I had not originally intended. I did not choose to title the article “The Michelle Obama Arms Workout.” My editors decided on the name—I assume because they thought it would sell magazines. There is no way to know if Michelle Obama even does the strength exercises I included in my article. In addition, such articles give the trainer professional credibility, which he or she can use at a later date as leverage to form docile bodies.

Magazine articles like the Chatelaine piece mentioned above, similarly to the Can-Fit-Pro text, are not simply objective factual texts. In Stephanie Roy’s deconstruction of three top-selling Canadian women’s magazines (*Chatelaine, Canadian Living, and Homemaker’s*), she posits that these magazines serve a particular social and political purpose. They construct health as an individual responsibility (Roy, 2008). Possibly most relevant to my research is how Roy found a direct enveloping of expert knowledge with everyday advice within these magazines:

Women’s magazines are an important and distinctive discursive form as they integrate expert discourse on health found in medical journals with everyday practices and knowledges. In addition to their presentation of expert and lay understandings, they also reinforce and reflect particular and possibly oppressive gender roles for women within their pages, creating a unique discourse about health and women which is important to examine (2008, p. 264).
Experts like myself are used to reinforce hegemonic discourses of health and manufacture risk, which incites individuals to manage themselves. Of course, not only will other experts write these stories, we will work hard to write these stories because being a ‘fitness expert’ for Chatelaine imbues us with prestige. Relations of power are maintained.

‘Appropriated risk’ is how I have labeled risk that may be connected to legitimized health concerns, like diabetes or heart disease, but that has been appropriated and framed in such a way as to highlight the importance of self-management and consumption, and to downplay social determents of health and the importance of a public support system that promotes health. For example, type two diabetes may be a real health risk for some, but it is most likely not an immediate risk for the majority of the readers of publications like Chatelaine, even though it is often used as a method of selling magazines. Since ‘risk vocabularies’ focus on how the individual should beat type two diabetes through exercise and a healthy lifestyle—and not why some demographic groups might not be able to afford more expensive foods, such as lots of fresh fruits and vegetables—social realities get obscured. Individuals are told that fitness is the way individuals should manage all risks, which in turn helps to legitimize the fitness field and neoliberal and classist discourses of health. As Jen Smith Maguire has aptly stated, “fitness is constructed as a panacea for all of the ills—individual and collective—of contemporary life” (2008, p 194). If individuals do not make the appropriate choices to manage risk, they are criticized and marginalized.

Neoliberalism and risk vocabularies are all predicated on giving individuals the illusion of choice and the responsibility for making the right choices (Leahy & Harrison, 2003, p. 133).
Unfortunately, only certain portions of society have the economic and social resources to easily make the prescribed choices. Risk vocabularies like fitness that emphasize individual responsibility, “[obscure] both what is out of the individual’s control and what should be a social responsibility” (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 195). A good example of the illusion of control over one’s health that permeates the current neoliberal discourses of health is a quote that I recorded from Facebook. One of my Facebook friends wrote on her wall that “every time you eat or drink, you are either feeding disease or fighting it” (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 113). Individuals should monitor their everyday moves, since monitoring their movements will help them control their health risks.

Understanding themselves as ‘at risk’ is a precursor for individuals deciding to exercise, discipline themselves, and seeking help from experts like Can-Fit-Pro–certified trainers. The risk can be ‘risk’ connected to aesthetics, like Oprah arms, or ‘risk’ connected to health concerns, like type two diabetes, as long as some form of risk exists. As Leahy and Harrison state, “understanding oneself as ‘at risk’ is needed at least at some level before one will discipline oneself” (2003, p. 170). The *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text is peppered with examples of the discourse of risk management. xxii Without ‘risk,’ organizations like Can-Fit-Pro would not be able to sustain themselves. The *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text (re)produces the individual as ‘at risk’ and therefore in need of Can-Fit-Pro’s expert knowledge. For example, the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text states that one of the reasons to exercise is to mitigate the chance of back pain (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 6). Others ways that exercise mitigates risk include by controlling blood sugar, increasing cellular sensitivity to insulin, and improving mental health (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 6).
**Foucault: conclusion.** Foucault’s concepts have been appropriated to help conceptualize the body within the fitness field. For example, Markula and Pringle (2006) and Pronger (2002) have done work on the docile body and the panopticon; Harwood (2009), MacNeill and Rail (2010), and Wright (2003) theorize about biopedagogy; and Evans and Davies (2003a, 2003b), Leahy and Harrison (2003), Lupton (1999), McDermott (2009), Nettleson (2010), and Smith Maguire (2008) theorize about risk. Foucault’s concepts of power, discourse, and subjectivity help me understand that power and discourse are not merely constraining. As a result of the insidious self-disciplinary nature of biopower, individuals want to be docile and fit bodies. Since biopower works by inciting desires, not by physically constraining individuals’ activities, Foucault’s theory of power is both constraining and enabling (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010, p. 7). The tension between the constraining and enabling nature of biopower can be observed within the fitness field. In relation to fitness and the body, disciplinary power constrains individuals by masquerading as something that enables individuals to choose actions that constrain them. The individual who desires to be fit, and who chooses to work out, may be simultaneously constrained by their need to discipline themselves and enabled by the physical and social capital being fit gives them.

In summary, biopower, disciplinary power, the panopticon, docile bodies, knowledge, science, governmentality, and subjectivity are all interconnected. The main tenet that links all of Foucault’s concepts together is that physical violence is no longer needed to control citizens. As Annandale has contended, the external gaze gets internalized to create docile citizens: “there is no longer need for physical violence to control citizens, all that is needed is a ‘gaze’ (or fear of
gaze) from a fellow citizen to incite the desire to be normal, disciplined citizens” (1998, p. 37). Gaze is one way that individuals became subjects of discourse, such as the biomedical discourse present within the fitness field. Expert knowledge creates the basis for the formation of a normalizing society. These norms may incite desires of eventual perfection by means of self-surveillance. The fear of other citizens constantly judging and failing to live up to their desires produces individuals who judge themselves.

Central and Recurring Themes

In addition to Foucault’s concepts and Bourdieu’s concept of the field, there are five themes that I found continually expressed within the literature on sociology of the body and physical fitness that influenced my theoretical lens. These five themes are ‘natural’ versus ‘naturalized’; neoliberalism, identity, and the self; ‘choice’ and desire; the importance of the mundane; and the rewards of physical fitness. In large part, the internalized gaze discussed above, and the ‘choices’ that result from internalized judgment and comparison to societal norms, can be understood in connection to these themes.

1. The body: ‘natural’ versus ‘naturalised.’ The body is enmeshed and entangled within greater political struggles (Foucault, 1977, p. 23-24), and through the act of living up to or ‘doing’ political and social norms, the body becomes a method of reproducing social norms (Garrett, 2003, p. 140). Our concept of the body is not innate. Both our biological and our social understandings of the body have been filtered through discourse. These biological and social understandings have then been naturalized. What we understand as the “ideal body” (Pronger, 2002, p. 4-5), what we expect our bodies to do, and how we expect our bodies to move are not
products of biological fact, but have become a commonsensical and unquestioned reality. One of
the problems with certification organizations like Can-Fit-Pro is that they understand the body as
‘natural,’ and thereby teach one selective way to understand and conceptualize the body. They
use exercise science terms such as “bioenergetics concepts, cardiorespiratory concepts and
skeletal anatomy concepts” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. iii) to understand the body. As individuals
we learn only one set of possible criteria for judging and managing our bodies and have almost
no way of understanding our body outside of neoliberal, medicalized discourses of health.
Managing our bodies becomes in large part an ‘if, then’ statement, which relies heavily on the
discourse of risk. For example the Foundations of Professional Personal Training textbook
states that, “if you decrease body fat” you will then “decrease the risk of major life-threatening
diseases, such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 6). Health norms
and assertions such as the above provide guidelines about how people should understand,
regulate, and experience themselves and their bodies (Roy, 2008, p. 465), and the result is that
“particular realities” of the body are formed, and therefore it becomes hard for people to
understand their bodies outside of a medicalized, scientific, and risk-based discourse of health
(Pronger, 2002, p. 8). Statements about health that sound completely value free are heavily laden
with value and deeply entrenched in particular discourses of health.


The fit body has become emblematic of “control, power and vitality.”

(Sassatelli, 2010, p. 1).

The study of the body cannot be dislodged from a study of the personality traits valued
within the discourse of neoliberalism since a primary reason individuals desire a docile body is
because the qualities needed to become docile (control and self-discipline) are the qualities given the most capital within a neoliberal discourse. Neoliberalism is the current hegemonic discourse within North American society (Rail, 2010). As a discourse, neoliberalism reproduces the values of self-determination and individual liberty. Individuals who are products of neoliberal discourse seek to be “critical and rational” (Woodward, 2009, p. 74). Neoliberal discourse stresses a meritocratic ideal that the individual, through hard work, investment, and dedication, can overcome social inequality. Individuals who are perceived as being out of control or ambivalent about their goals and direction in life are not valued within the neoliberal discourse. Neoliberal discourse creates the expectation that individuals should be hyper-reflexive, driven, and in control (Atkinson, 2010, p. 114). The constant self-monitoring and self-criticism that comes with hyper-reflexivity gives the individual the data regarding their life choices that allows for precise control and knowledge. This self-knowledge allows for individuals to implement strategies to constantly drive themselves in an attempt to reach short- and long-term goals. Individuals and social institutions who reproduce this discourse stress the importance of individual responsibility and do not prioritize the importance of governmental social responsibility, nor do they typically see such public systems as positive.

Sociologists who study the effects of neoliberal discourse on the body argue that often the body becomes a site of neoliberal investment (Lupton, 1995; White, Young, & Gillet, 1995; Sassatelli, 2010; Bargielowska, 2010; Smith Maguire, 2008; Woodward, 2009). Because of the manner in which the body has become a site of individual responsibility, attaining a ‘proper’ body becomes a symbol of individual success (Pronger, 2002; Smith Maguire, 2008). The body becomes a vehicle for self-production and self-promotion (Shilling, 2003; Smith Maguire, 2008).
Through being physically active and having a fit body individuals can demonstrate to the world that they have made the choice to improve their health and to be moral and ethical people (Pronger, 2002, p. 193). The body has become a status symbol, an identity marker of morality, and a “promotional object” (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 17-18, 195). It has become a billboard to display your self-worth and dedication to the world (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 195). When individuals make the ‘choice’ to be healthy, they actually start to embody neoliberal politics of self-control and self-discipline (Woodward, 2009, p. 1).

The body becomes an outer reflection of the ‘self’ (Woodward, 2009, p. 1). The body, the ‘self,’ and a person’s identity become intrinsically linked. The fit body has become “a claim of truth” (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 166). As Roy states, an individual’s identity “is worn on the body—the physical manifestation of one’s healthy inner or true self—shown through body work like exercise targeted to produce a lean firm physique, dieting, and ascetic measures surrounding one’s deportment and consumption” (2008, p. 456). How their body is configured has become a way that individuals demonstrate to the outside world that they have energy, vitality, and strength. Fitness has become a way to change oneself, to better oneself—a way to show the world how good a person one is. The project of changing the body becomes connected to changing the self (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 14). Since the body has become a “potent symbol of status and character” (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 1), when one engages in bettering the body the understanding is that one is by extension bettering the self. The fitness field is perpetuated by the idea that exercise will make you a better version of yourself. For example, at the boxing class I attended at Florida Jacks, a sign on the wall said “be yourself, only better.” In other words, “it is rational for you to pay for our services because we will improve you.” Can-Fit-Pro schools its graduates to
teach individuals the positive aspects of exercise, stating that “physical fitness is an improved physiological state that leads to improved health and longevity” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 4). According to Foundations of Professional Personal Training, there are many benefits of exercise including that it will improve one’s mental health, one’s self-image, and one’s ability to deal with and manage stress (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 6).

The Can-Fit-Pro text is written, in part, within this neoliberal discourse of health. When Can-Fit-Pro sets out to design their courses they have the potential to either reproduce or challenge the dominant health discourse. Can-Fit-Pro does not challenge the neoliberal discourse of health because their business only survives if individuals feel compelled to ‘choose’ to be healthy and manage their risk by enlisting the help of a personal trainer or other Can-Fit-Pro–certified health professional.

3. ‘Choice’ and desire

Free choice takes place in a space of unequal access to power where opportunities are not equal (Woodward, 2009, p. 74).

The word ‘choice’ has intentionally been written with quotation marks surrounding it because choices are always circumscribed by systemic sociopolitical structural issues, as well as cultural norms and expectations. Individuals’ choices are always framed by “normative understanding of appropriate performance and capital accumulation” (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 14). Within neoliberal discourses of health, choices are framed as limitless. If individuals do not make the appropriate choices, they may be seen as failing to live up to their ‘potential’ or to then ‘deserve’ whatever health problem they develop. Choice may be framed as limitless, but choices
are always limited. Foucault uses the analogy of a ship to illuminate the way choices are always circumscribed. In Foucault’s analogy, the sailors on the ship have ‘choice,’ but the choices are limited by the space and context they live within. Being a sailor on a ship means your existence has a certain meaning and there are only certain tools and spaces available to you (Foucault, 1991, p. 93). Someone who is being paid to work the ship is unlikely to spend time learning to complete tasks that are not necessary to their jobs.

Choice should be thought of as “less of a rational cost-benefit calculation and more as self-government towards culturally sanctioned projects of wellbeing” (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 205). This is because, what one ‘chooses’ is not just a result of “rational calculation” (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 199). What one chooses to do with one’s time, what one chooses to buy, and what ideologies one chooses to embody and therefore reproduce, are all connected to emotions, normative references within society, and one’s desires (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 15, 199). Choices are a result of desires and not simply manifestations of ‘natural’ instincts. Desire here is not just about sexual desire. Desire is productive. It is the impetus to make choices. The choice to go to the gym and the choice to dress in certain ways are connected to the desire to construct one’s body in certain ways. Desire is connected to the positive reinforcement that individuals gain from making the appropriate choice. For example, often when individuals choose to go to the gym, it is connected to the desire to be seen as moral and driven (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 15). Choice is also connected to the physical capital one often gains from having an attractive body. Physical capital is capital that bodies gain from appearing fit (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 21). Atkinson theorizes that Western individuals are often motivated and driven by external “pre-packaged” desires that grow out of neoliberal, meritocratic values (2010, p. 114). I ‘choose’ to race in triathlons and
marathons because the training makes me feel good, but also because participation in these races provides me with physical capital and a form of embodied expert knowledge. As Pronger points out, desire is connected to obtaining objects (in the case of Can-Fit-Pro, certifications) that have value (2002, p. 107). I desire this expert knowledge, and choose to obtain it, because it has a certain value within my field.

In short, participation in these races benefits my career. I am able to publicize the races I have completed on my website and offer clients running and triathlon training advice since I myself have gone through the experience. Racing also earns me respect from my colleagues, peers, and clients. The fact that I race benefits my career because many of my clients also race. My experiences allow me to connect with my clients; they also allow me another form of expert knowledge. It makes sense for me to dispense information on how and where to race since I have first-hand experience. Racing is not altruistic. On December 7, 2012, I had an interesting discussion with two of my friends about how I plan to race another full-distance Ironman in 2014. They both stated that one should be enough. What I told them is that one full Ironman may cause people who have never raced an Ironman before to respect me, but I needed to compete again so I could accomplish a finishing time that would be respectable to other Ironman distance athletes (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 156). As these examples clearly state, I may ‘choose’ to participate in endurance events, but my choices are heavily influenced by desire to construct my body and professional image in certain ways—to gain a certain amount of respect and prestige by being seen as an individual who can participate in endurance events and not only succeed, but to come out desiring more. This outlook, especially within our current neoliberal discourse of
individual determination, is usually greatly respected by clients. Therefore, we see that ‘choice’ is always circumscribed by larger socioeconomic and political factors.

4. The importance of the mundane. An analysis of ‘choice’ is important because it is one entry point into analyzing the seemingly irrelevant actions of mundane, everyday experiences. Once everyday ‘choices’ have been theorized as limited by sociopolitical realities, one can make the connection that the seemingly everyday actions, or ‘choices,’ are actually political. An analysis of choice “allows us to analyze the micro day-to-day fitness world but also how these micro acts are part of a broader culture of positivism, individualism which shape what we value and how individuals negotiate the self” (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 205). An analysis of choice allows us to link micro choices that individuals make on a daily basis to an analysis of the wider macro sociopolitical field that the choices take place within. The “homeliest routines of everyday life” that we make in relation to the body are naturalized (Miller & Rose, 2008, p. 12). The problem is, when anything becomes naturalized, it goes unquestioned and becomes a resource of disciplinary technologies. A nuanced analysis of the larger social structure cannot happen without an analysis of these seemingly mundane and common-sense choices.

As Foucault argues, power is not just exercised in grand demonstrations of force. Power is manifested in the everyday “unimportant gestures” and “behaviors and actions” that people exhibit (Foucault, 1977, p. 77). For example, when individuals go to the gym, their ‘everyday’ decisions have the possibility of reproducing gendered relations of power. When a woman decides to only do cardiovascular workouts as a way to stay lean, or a man decides to lift heavy weights in an attempt to get a body shaped like an inverted triangle, these seemingly unimportant
decisions reproduce hegemonic power relationships of gender. “Power is inscribed on the body by normalizing specific body practices” (Markula, 2001, p. 174), as evidenced in part by my own gendered decision to prioritize my running and cycling over weight training. Although I weight train and feel comfortable teaching others how to lift, I feel much more comfortable in the still significantly gendered space of ‘aerobic training.’ When I do lift heavy and test my strength it is usually in a boot camp class at Dynamic Conditioning Centre. Possibly as a result of my years teaching aerobics and step, I still feel more comfortable lifting in a group exercise setting.

As a Can-Fit-Pro–certified trainer, I teach my clients how to habitualize exercise so that the ‘choice’ to exercise becomes unordinary and uncriticized. Bourdieu’s sociological concept of habitus is useful here. Habitus accounts for how “well-practiced habits bridge individuals and the wider social things of which they are part” (Elliot, 2009, p. 143). The concept of habitus can be used to explain how “power inculcates itself within our personal and bodily dispositions” (Elliot, 2009, p. 143), such as my disposition to exercise daily and monitor my diet. These habits “mold us” (Elliot, 2009, p. 144) and become ingrained dispositions (Elliot, 2009, p. 145). They may seem unimportant, like meaningless choices, but they (re)produce existing relationships of power and allow life to seem unstructured when in fact it is highly structured (Elliot, 2009, p. 144). These habits are perceived as natural (Bourdieu, 1983, p. 172). Making exercise a habit for their clients is of primary importance to trainers. It is partly through habitualizing exercise that trainers get clients to continue to renew and buy sessions.

5. The rewards of physical fitness. Participating in the fitness field allows individuals to gain various rewards. Already discussed are the rewards directly related to the values and
ideologies associated with the discourse of neoliberalism. These rewards include the feelings experienced by individuals who are made to feel like they are making ethical and moral life decisions by exercising (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 20). Drawing on the work of Bourdieu, theorists including Jennifer Smith Maguire (2008) and Holly Thorpe (2009) argue that being part of the fitness field allows individuals to gain various forms of ‘capital.’ Bourdieu’s use of capital “refers to the different forms of power held by social agents” (as cited in Thorpe, 2009, p. 493). Bourdieu identified different forms of capital such as economic (wealth), social (social connections), cultural (artistic taste), symbolic (prestige), and corporeal (physical attractiveness) capital (1984). Research by MacDonald, Wright, and Abbott shows that rewards for a healthy and fit body are not merely external. Individuals internalize body values as a sensual experience (2010).

Scholars such as Smith Maguire (2008), Pronger (2002), and Shilling (1993, 2005) build on Bourdieu’s concept of ‘physical’ capital by applying it to the gym and physical fitness. Shilling defines physical capital as the manner in which the body is converted into “economic capital (money, goods and services), cultural capital (for example education) and social capital (social networks which enable reciprocal calls to be made on the goods and services of its members)” (Shilling, 1993, p. 127-8). One gains physical capital by demonstrating (through the outer form of the body) that one has a degree of physical control. This control is valuable within neoliberal discourses of health because it displays a “hyper-efficient performing self” (Shilling, 2005, p. 2). The body becomes a “ubiquitous sign” (Shilling, 2005, p. 2) and “a means for the attachment of the individual to society (and of course the society to the individual)” (Shilling, 2005, p. 62). Smith Maguire defines physical capital as “the ways in which the body’s shape,
size, deportment, [and] physical ability...serve as resources that may be used for economic or social gain” (2008, p. 40). Physical capital is based on the body being a site of investment and work (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 40). Individuals gain physical capital by possessing a body that looks fit, even if it is not actually strong.

This is because physical capital has an exchange value (Pronger, 2002, p. 105). An individual has the possibility of gaining symbolic capital by being a man and having a muscular body or by being female and possessing the slim body of a physically fit woman (Pronger, 2002, p. 105). Individuals can gain social capital by belonging to clubs with a particular clientele (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 98). The social capital of the clientele is then transformed into symbolic capital for the other members (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 98). Holly Thorpe also theorizes that ‘femininity’ is a form of capital (2009, p. 494). Understanding femininity as a form of capital provides one explanation of why the segregation within gyms continues to exist.

Women want to work out in such a way that they accumulate feminine capital. The subject of gendered workouts will be discussed again in more detail within “The gym and gender” section. Returning to Pronger, individuals desire certain versions of the body because of the value (physical capital) attached to certain bodies.

It is important to note that the physical forms that gain physical capital vary slightly within the field. On the whole, the gendered feminine physique discussed above is still the physical form that, from my experience, gains the most capital. Women tell me on a daily basis that they do not want to get too bulky. Therefore they prioritize cardiovascular fitness over weight training to maintain a slim, yet toned, physique. Through most of my professional career,
I have also prioritized cardiovascular fitness owing to the fact that I participate in endurance events. (One could make the argument that my ‘choosing’ to participate in endurance events was based on wanting, at least in part, to achieve gendered physical capital.) That said, despite the dominant notions of which physical forms will gain physical capital, it is my experience that in some gyms, like Dynamic Conditioning Centre in downtown Toronto, an untoned female body formed primarily through cardiovascular fitness is not respected. My colleagues at Dynamic Conditioning Centre have explicitly stated to me that they do not respect my endurance accomplishments and instead think that I should focus on increasing the amount I can bench and squat.

At Dynamic Conditioning Centre, regular cardiovascular training is actually openly criticized. Instead, female trainers are expected to do pull-ups, heavy squats, and be able to compete on the monkey bars. Of course, they are not expected to lift the same weight that a man would (in that way clear gender divisions still exist), but they are expected to prioritize weight training in a way that the traditional fitness field does not emphasize for female participants. For example, I spoke with one trainer on July 26, 2012, who I knew was training for a marathon. I asked her how her training was going. She said the training was going well, but spoke very quietly and asked me not to speak about it in the gym. She was not telling any Dynamic Conditioning Centre trainers or members that she was training for a marathon because she knew they would not approve (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 32-33). For this particular trainer, for her physical capital to be converted into economic and symbolic capital at Dynamic Conditioning Centre, she has to create a muscular, yet still feminine, physique. The form that receives physical capital might be slightly different, but the concept still remains. The bodies of trainers at
Dynamic Conditioning Centre omit certain signs and represent more to the outside world than simply a ‘natural’ body.

In addition to the external rewards that having a fit body brings, research by MacDonald, Wright, and Abbott shows that individuals internalize body values as a sensual experience. Someone who exercises regularly will only feel ‘normal’ when they meet their self-imposed exercise goals. If they do not meet their goals they will feel “sluggish” or “oily” (Wright, 2004, p. 26-27; MacDonald, Wright, & Abbott, 2010, p. 128). I know I feel different on days that I work out than on days that I do not work out. Often I feel guilty and fat on the days I do not work out. Other times I just feel ‘not myself.’ Either way, I feel noticeably different when I do work out. I have had many discussions with clients and other trainers about this internalized feeling of guilt from not exercising, which turns into simply feeling ‘icky’ or gross. For example, Dan, the professional cyclist at Absolute Endurance, confessed to me that his whole day was controlled by whether he biked or not. On days he did not cycle he felt “icky” and “fat.” On days that he did exercise he felt energized and more like himself (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 66-67).

From an intellectual perspective, I know that I look the same on days I do not exercise. Dan also admitted he knows that his feelings are irrational (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 67). That said, my ‘ickiness’ feels so obvious that I often think—quite irrationally—that everyone must notice. Although the impetus to exercise may begin as an externally enforced disciplinary tactic, the individual internalizes the desire. The docile neoliberal citizen is expected to exercise. When individuals fail to do so, their feelings of guilt are manifested as internal body discomfort.
The feeling of being oily or sluggish is a visceral embodiment of not conforming to neoliberal political expectations.

These five concepts—the natural body, choice, neoliberalism, the importance of the mundane, and the rewards of fitness—all share one important similarity. These concepts help us understand how no act, no matter how simple the choice seems, is a ‘natural’ inconsequential act, since ‘natural’ is a concept that in itself has been framed by discourse.
Chapter Three: Methodology

My research findings, observations, and conclusions have primarily been drawn from two inter-related sources: a commonly used fitness industry textbook and my own experiences as a professional trainer and endurance age-group athlete within the fitness industry. I have conducted a textual analysis of Can-Fit-Pro’s the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* and have also kept an auto-ethnographic journal. Discourse analysis was used to unpack both texts. I kept the journal for a period of six months, from June 1 to December 29, 2012. In keeping a journal as part of the research process, I sought to gain deeper insights into how Can-Fit-Pro’s schooling has affected my relationships with myself and my body, my professional peers, my clients, and my identity as a runner and a triathlete. Within the journal, I reflected on my life as a personal trainer, athlete, and fitness expert. Topics explored in the auto-ethnographic journal reflect my relationships with clients, my ambiguous relationship with my own body, how I have garnered physical capital and legitimacy through producing a particular type of body that in large part is maintained through competing in endurance events like marathons and Ironman triathlons, my identity as a trainer and as an athlete, how I have been ‘schooled’ as a trainer by Can-Fit-Pro, how my clients ‘school’ me, and how I have then ‘schooled’ my clients. When reflecting upon and analyzing the textbook and my journal, and in writing this thesis, I drew on
my memories, reflections, and experiences from the 11 years I have spent working as a personal trainer within the fitness industry.

Discourse Analysis

As stated above, discourse analysis was used to unpack both the Can-Fit-Pro textbook and my auto-ethnographic journal. Discourse analysis builds on Foucault’s understanding of discourse. The Foucauldian understanding goes beyond understanding discourse as merely the statements and words that have been used. Discourse is also a "system of representation" (Hall, 1997, p. 44). The significance of discourse is the seemingly invisible way discourse allows certain statements and beliefs to be known, repeated, and valorized, while others are forgotten, ignored, or criticized (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 29). Scholars, such as Markula (2003), Maguire and Mansfield (1998), and Markula and Pringle (2006), use this Foucauldian understanding of discourse as the basis for their analyses.

Discourse analysis is a methodology that allows scholars to tease out the negotiation of normative discourse: which discourses have been ignored, which have been repeated, and why? Evans and Davies describe discourse analysis as

a method that compels us to peel away the layers of the taken for granted, the orthodox and the obvious in society and school, not in a search for some essential “core reality” where none is to be found but towards
more complete understandings of the nature of authority, power and control (2003b, p. 44-45).

Discourse analysis allowed me to ask critical questions that informed my research, including the following: What discourse of health is emphasized within the Can-Fit-Pro textbook? Why would this discourse of health be emphasized? What benefit does propagating this particular discourse of health provide to Can-Fit-Pro? What health discourses are left out of the Can-Fit-Pro textbook and why? Discourse analysis helped me examine the ways in which Can-Fit-Pro is both engaged with the greater fitness field and financially invested in the field’s continued success.

I chose to perform a textual analysis, not in an attempt to denigrate or destroy Can-Fit-Pro, but as a method of questioning the taken-for-granted notions that are present within Can-Fit-Pro in order to understand what subjectivities are potentially produced when clients work with a Can-Fit-Pro–certified trainer. Discourse analysis is not about proving that one immutable hegemonic discourse exists. There are always negotiations within discourse and multiple discourses in existence at one time. That said, to quote Jan Wright, “not all discourses have the same salience” (2003, p. 24). I have deployed discourse analysis within my research because it has allowed me to analyze why, out of the multiplicity of health discourses that exist, some have more society-wide influence than others. Discourse analysis has given me the tools to analyze why some health discourses are hegemonic.

For example, as I will outline in Chapter Five, one of my research conclusions is that the Can-Fit-Pro textbook emphasizes the discourse of “risk management,” modified by healthiest risk discourse. As can be seen from Appendix A, the concept of ‘risk’ is highly present within
the text. Can-Fit-Pro uses the discourse of risk management as a key way to ‘sell’ the legitimacy of the field to both trainers and their clients. The field is reproduced only when trainers and clients ‘buy into’ the legitimacy and the importance of the knowledge within the textbook. Part of ‘buying in’ is believing that the expert knowledge within the text has the possibility of reducing negative life experiences, like injury, disease, unhappiness, and even litigation, while at the same time improving positive life experiences, like health and quality of life. Trainers consume the field by understanding the importance of health education, certifications, and liability insurance. Adequate education, insurance, and the predetermined limits of a trainer’s ‘scope of practice’ ensure that trainers will adequately manage risk by not getting sued, having enough clients, and having the requisite legitimacy to allow the trainer to be part of a network of skilled health professionals who all refer clients to one another.

Trainers then sell their services and health ideology to the clients who consume the field. Can-Fit-Pro teaches their trainers to sell their services to clients based on, in large part, ‘risk management.’ Can-Fit-Pro posits that clients need a trainer, and the knowledge and science that trainers possess, so that the clients can properly be assessed. This assessment will ensure the clients get the most out of their workouts and will help them to avoid injury.

The discourse that is not emphasized is that of the socioeconomic factors that influence participation in and access to the fitness field. The textbook includes only one paragraph explaining to trainers that various factors beyond the trainer’s knowledge and people skills may affect an individual’s choice to exercise and buy personal training services. The book cites “family, work, social and financial commitments” as examples of factors that might influence
exercise participation (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 40). Later in the book, the influence of socioeconomic characteristics on exercise is given one small paragraph (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 168). The paragraph states: “demographics have traditionally had a strong relationship with exercise. In particular, education, male gender, and higher income or socioeconomic status have all positively related to physical activity” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 168). A discourse that would raise awareness of the structural, systemic socioeconomic inequalities that would influence exercise participation is severely lacking in the Can-Fit-Pro text. This appears to be because an understanding of the social determinants of health does nothing to advance the production and consumption of the fitness field. The discourse of ‘personal choice,’ (i.e., people choosing to exercise to avoid risk and manage health) is a more useful discourse for Can-Fit-Pro to emphasize. It has the possibility of reproducing the fitness field.

Auto-Ethnography

While conducting my textual analysis of the Can-Fit-Pro personal training textbook, I kept an auto-ethnographic journal for six months. Auto-ethnography is a fairly nascent form of qualitative inquiry (Anderson & Austin, 2012, p. 131). It is an offshoot of ethnography (Sands, 2002, p. 123). Ethnography and auto-ethnography share an academic agenda: understanding a cultural phenomenon, experience, or social group through immersion in the subject. The difference is that in the former the researcher is an observer, while in the latter the researcher becomes part of the phenomenon being studied (Anderson & Austin, 2012). Ellis and Bochner define auto-ethnography as the fusion of the “author/researcher/researched, with the purpose of using the researcher’s personal lived experience to illuminate the phenomenon under study” (as cited in Allen-Collinson, 2009, p. 292).
I used auto-ethnography as one of my methods because it allowed me to be self-reflexive, which is one of my research goals, and to offer my readers a more embodied understanding of the ‘gym experience.’ My research goal was not to simply deconstruct the Can-Fit-Pro textbook, but to understand how the text’s discourse has ‘schooled me,’ and how it has influenced the way in which I experience and understand my body. Anderson writes that auto-ethnographic work “incorporates the author’s reflexive self-observation and presents the researcher as an active and engaged participant in the social world or activities being studied” (2011, p. 297). Since auto-ethnography allows for the researcher to exist within the world being studied, I hope it has allowed me to adequately share in this thesis my lived experiences within the field of physical fitness.

I consider the auto-ethnographic journal an adjunct to my textual analysis. It is a useful adjunct since I used it as a check-in on myself. This ‘check’ was needed since I have read the Can-Fit-Pro textbook multiple times during my 11 years in the fitness field. The first certification I ever held was from Can-Fit-Pro. I completed the certification when I was 18 years old. The certification was based around the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* textbook I have analyzed in this thesis. I used the journal as a chance to reflect on what I was reading to help ensure that I read the text with fresh eyes, as opposed to simply mindlessly rereading a familiar text. When I enrolled in the kinesiology undergraduate program at York University, I went in as a Can-Fit-Pro–certified trainer. It was a huge part of my identity. I have used the text as a reference for my columns in *The Globe and Mail*, my newsletter, and my answers to client questions. My previous readings were largely done uncritically. I read the book and took the
information at face value, accepting the scientific information as ‘truth.’ As it contained ‘truth,’ the textbook appeared beyond criticism.

Based on my previous uncritical relationship with the text, I was concerned that my research would lack objectivity. As I completed the deconstruction of the textbook, I used my auto-ethnographic journal to reflect upon my relationship with the textbook, as well as to help me ‘analyze my analysis’ of the textbook. This analysis of my analysis allowed me a semblance of distance from the text, offering a degree of objectivity. For example, on Thursday, November 8, and Friday, November 9, the theme of my journal entries was the use of “common fitness phrases” within the fitness field. The journal entry was inspired by research I had done on the previous day. My research led me to the realization that the textbook spends a considerable amount of space outlining how Can-Fit-Pro–certified trainers should communicate with their clients. The book does not just provide the science of exercise, but the language of exercise and the vocabulary of risk. The text gives phrases trainers should use when teaching exercises to clients (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 139), sample client-trainer scenarios and interactions (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 86-88, 91-92), and sample “what to do when...” boxes (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 142-143, 174). My journal entries for November 8 and 9 reflect on my use of those phrases with my clients and how other trainers use the phrases. When I sat in my gym and listened to other trainers conversing with their clients, I realized they were using the phrases I had read about in the Can-Fit-Pro text. This is just one of many examples of how the journal is an excellent way to reflect on how trainers apply the information within the Can-Fit-Pro text—how I have been (non-consciously) schooled by the text, and how it then influences how I interact with and school my clients.
Use of Auto-Ethnographic Narrative Writing

I have included auto-ethnographic narratives in this thesis in order to explore my lived experiences within the fitness field. As a method, auto-ethnography offers the possibility of injecting personal stories into academic work, allowing scholars to explore lived experiences, emotions, and desires. Markula and Denison posit that narrative writing allows scholars to explore the “social construction of reality” (2005, p. 171). Narrative writing is not suitable for all academic work, but because of my extensive experience within the fitness field, I believe that it is suitable for my thesis. The inclusion of personal stories and insights through narrative writing has allowed me to explore how I have been influenced by, but have also influenced, the field of physical fitness.

The rationale behind injecting personal stories into academic work is that stories are an integral part of how one understands the social order and oneself as an individual. Stories can help to explore the relationship between structure and agency. How individuals understand the world, and understand themselves, is connected to the stories they tell as well as the stories they have been told (Smith, 2010, p. 87-90). The stories we tell are connected to how we represent ourselves (Smith, 2010, p. 89). Smith states that

[S]tories are an important analytical tool because they allow for an understanding of a person as an individual with agency as well as someone who is socially situated and culturally fashioned, thereby giving info about the person and the society and culture in which they exist (2010, p. 90).
My personal stories from within the fitness field have allowed me to do exactly as Smith suggests: to explore how, as a fitness expert, I have a certain amount of agency within the field, but also how I am situated within a particular fitness culture that has rules and expectations.

Another rationale behind this first-person auto-ethnographic writing style is that the inclusion of the author’s voice facilitates the reader’s ability to understand the experience being studied in a more nuanced way. Scholars who employ auto-ethnography want the reader to be able to relive the physical experience (Allen-Collinson, 2011). Through auto-ethnographic narrative writing I hope that my readers are able to understand the ‘gym experience’ and the struggle individuals go through to achieve physical capital, not just on an intellectual level, but also on an embodied level.

Andrew Sparkes argues that the traditions of science tend to value the sense of sight over other senses (2001). Sparkes claims that this has reduced our “way of knowing” body experiences (Sparkes, 2009a). Auto-ethnography allows the researcher to bring in other senses like sound, taste, and smell (Sparkes, 2009a). This is important because senses other than the visual play a role in how individuals experience sport (Sparkes, 2009a). For example, Sparkes uses auto-ethnography to study how the sound of an athlete’s breathing, in part, determines their experiences while running, noting that runners use the sound of their breath, and the sound of other people’s breath, when evaluating how well they are racing (2009a). Jackie Allen-Collinson uses auto-ethnography to study how distance runners experience ‘hitting the wall’ (2011). Through auto-ethnography Allen-Collinson attempts to understand how an athlete experiences this phenomenon. Allen-Collinson is not simply interested in the scientific explanation of what
‘hitting the wall’ is (i.e., the ‘fact’ that the athlete was glycogen depleted). Instead auto-
ethnography enables the exploration of the subjective experience of ‘hitting the wall’: how the
athlete’s feet slow down as if in slow motion, and they feel like their feet are moving through
quicksand (Allen-Collinson, 2011, p. 304). My intent is to use my auto-ethnographic journal to
help me understand my embodied experiences both as a trainer and as an athlete to better
understand how I have been schooled, and how I then school my clients.

I have been a Can-Fit-Pro–certified personal trainer for 11 years and I have participated
in more than 15 Can-Fit-Pro conferences. I hold four of Can-Fit-Pro’s certifications: Personal
Training Specialist, Nutrition and Wellness Specialist, Group Exercise Specialist, and Older
Adult Specialist. I also have a variety of other certifications including: Pilates Equipment
Specialist, Medical Exercise Specialist, Pilates for Pregnancy, and Pilates for Special Needs.
These are industry self-regulated designations that I display on my website to offer myself more
legitimacy, and therefore garner more respect. It is not surprising that many of these
certifications have the word ‘specialist’ in the title. The term ‘specialist’ results in hierarchies
being formed not just between trainers who are and are not certified, but also between trainers
who are certified. We are ranked and deemed to hold more expert knowledge if we are
‘specialists.’ I have spent thousands of hours and tens of thousands of dollars attaining and
maintaining these certifications. I have included auto-ethnographic narrative writing because it
allows me to share my experiences of negotiating the demands of the field. Auto-ethnographic
narrative insights have helped me corroborate, refute, or tease out the complexities of the
scholarly work I have studied. I hope that my thesis lives up to Anderson’s claim that auto-
ethnography “opens a unique window” (Anderson, 2011, p. 10) to the phenomenon being studied and allows for a more nuanced analysis.

**Use of Auto-Ethnography**

As stated above, my research included keeping an auto-ethnographic journal from June 1, 2012, to December 29, 2012. Within the journal, I prioritized self-reflexivity and an analysis of my positionality within the fitness field. When I first envisioned the journal, my daily entries were to be divided into two distinct sections. Section one would be written in a more relaxed, conversational style. Section two would be a formal interview with myself, written in a more academic style. The list of the questions below is the original list that I had planned to ask myself. The questions were my attempt to synthesize many of the questions that had formed during the initial thesis proposal process. See Appendix B for an extended list of questions that informed my research.

**Interview Guide**

- Did I learn anything new today about myself and my conception of a ‘fit body’?
- Did any of my experiences today contradict any of the main concepts that inform my theoretical lens?
- Did any of my experiences today reinforce any of the main concepts that inform my theoretical lens?
- How did I engage with, or resist, dominant norms surrounding the body?
- Did I tell my clients anything about the body that I myself do not believe?
- Am I proud of any of my interactions with clients that occurred today that related to their understanding of a ‘fit’ body?
When I started to write in my journal, I discovered that answering the predetermined questions on a daily basis seemed forced and inorganic. In addition, the answers to the question were often repetitive since I had already talked about the topics within the free flow portion of the process. Therefore, I continued to write journal entries daily, but decided to only answer the formal questions once per week. Eventually I only asked myself the formal questions roughly once per month. I deconstructed both portions of the journal using a combination of deductive and inductive coding. I started out coding my journal twice per week. In September, when I started working more aggressively on my textual analysis, I began coding my work every few days. Initially, I coded my work using the deductive codes listed in Table 1. I went through my auto-ethnographic journal and found examples of the deductive codes. I then recorded the page references in a chart form. These references can be found in Appendix A. Influenced by how Charmaz suggested coding texts (2006), I wrote side notes in the margins to myself regarding the information I was coding. These notes helped to inspire new inductive codes. My inductive codes can be found in Table 2. Page references for my inductive codes can be found in Appendix A.

Codes for the Auto-Ethnographic Journal and Textbook Analysis

When I first started coding my auto-ethnographic journal and the Can-Fit-Pro textbook, I used the deductive codes listed in Table 1 below. Deductive codes are “pre-determined themes and categories” (Biddle, Markland, Gilbourne, Chatzisarantis, & Sparks, 2001, p. 795), and they were a useful first step in organizing my research findings. Almost immediately I realized that,
through the journaling process, themes and ideas were surfacing that could not be categorized using my deductive codes. Therefore, I started to introduce new inductive codes into my analysis. Inductive coding allows “themes and categories to emerge” from the research process (Biddle et al., 2001, p. 795). For example, on July 12, I realized that in almost every interaction with my clients I was unconsciously reframing their fitness experiences. Therefore I began coding my auto-ethnography based on the key word “reframing” to explain situations in which I actively participated in conversations with clients where I managed their exercise experiences through realistic goal setting and positive reframing (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 20). For example, one client who had been suffering back pain for roughly eight months was frustrated because he still was not completely recovered. I discussed with him that injury recovery is a process and his ‘bad’ day that day was still better than his best day six months earlier. I helped him leave the workout feeling more positive: I reframed his exercise experience (Auto-ethnography, p. 20). Another example came on November 1, when I wrote in the journal about a client who had lost a significant amount of weight, but recently had had trouble remaining disciplined (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 126). Throughout the session I helped her reframe her understanding of the experience. She had confessed to me feelings of guilt and shame over her recent ‘regression.’ I told her that we all have days when we eat bad food—indulging is a natural and positive aspect of being alive. I went on to explain to her that one way to feel better is to understand her changes in lifestyle and activity level as a paradigm shift. A week that she currently considers to be ‘slothful,’ she would have considered to be extremely active two years ago. After helping this client feel positive about her paradigm shift and resulting exercise accomplishments, I helped her reframe and re-examine her current exercise goals so she could move forward feeling positive and hopeful. Part of how I did this was by connecting her
struggle with something personal in my life. I often do this because it helps my clients feel like they are not alone. By the end of the session “we both decided to be rigorous—her with her diet and exercise plan and I would be rigorous with school” (Auto-ethnographic journal, p.126). A year ago, I would not have given this interaction a second thought. Now I realize that it is these types of client-trainer interactions that, over the long term, reproduce the fitness field. Through our interactions, both the client and the trainer stay entwined in the fitness field. The client does not quit because I help turn their feelings of guilt, shame and desperation into hope and pride. I continue to analyze, reflect upon, and reframe my goals because it is one way I stay invested in, and therefore connected with, my clients. In large part, I learned how to interact with clients through the Can-Fit-Pro text and the mandatory conferences and continuing education that allow me to stay certified with Can-Fit-Pro. My intent is that the combination of deductive and inductive coding has allowed me to be informed by theory, but not limited by my theoretical framework in order to stay open to surprise narratives and broader discourses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deductive Codes</th>
<th>Scholars Influencing My Use of the Code</th>
<th>Original Inspiration</th>
<th>Number of Times Found in Auto-ethnography</th>
<th>Number of Times Found in Can-Fit-Pro text</th>
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<td>Individual responsibility</td>
<td>Ayo, Sassatelli, Smith Maguire</td>
<td>Foucault, Bourdieu</td>
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<td>Choice</td>
<td>Ayo, Sassatelli, Smith Maguire</td>
<td>Foucault, Bourdieu</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Self-reflexivity</td>
<td>Foucault, Markula, my undergraduate work in women’s studies</td>
<td>Foucault</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Biopower, disciplinary power</td>
<td>Foucault, Markula</td>
<td>Foucault</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>75</td>
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<td>Panoptic gaze, panoptic surveyor</td>
<td>Foucault, Fusco, Markula, Pronger</td>
<td>Foucault</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>75</td>
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## Deductive Codes

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<tr>
<th>Deductive Codes</th>
<th>Scholars Influencing My Use of the Code</th>
<th>Original Inspiration</th>
<th>Number of Times Found in Auto-ethnography</th>
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<td>Docile body</td>
<td>Foucault, Pronger, Markula, Fusco</td>
<td>Foucault</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>110</td>
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<td>Knowledge</td>
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<td>Representation</td>
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<td>Foucault</td>
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<td>Truth</td>
<td>Foucault, Pronger</td>
<td>Foucault</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Biopedagogy</td>
<td>Wright, Harwood, MacNeill</td>
<td>Foucault</td>
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<td>Risk</td>
<td>Davies, Evans, Harrison, Leahy, MacNeill, McDermott, Nettleson, Smith Maguire</td>
<td>Foucault</td>
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<td>Appropriately toned</td>
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## Table 2: Inductive Codes

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<th>Number of Times Found in Auto-Ethnography</th>
<th>Number of Times Found in Can-Fit-Pro text</th>
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<td>Inductive Codes</td>
<td>Inspiration</td>
<td>Number of Times Found in Auto-Ethnography</td>
<td>Number of Times Found in Can-Fit-Pro text</td>
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<td>Goffman, interactions with clients, personal reflection</td>
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<td>Guilt</td>
<td>Pronger, client confessions, personal reflection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shame</td>
<td>Pronger, client confessions, personal reflection</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Judgment</td>
<td>Interactions with clients, clients’ confessions (I used the code of judgment as an all-encompassing phrase to include all the theoretical concepts of Foucault’s gaze, panopticon, disciplining power, and expert knowledge; I chose the word judgment because it is the layperson’s word that best expresses these theoretical concepts; I was finding it is a word often used by clients)</td>
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<td>70</td>
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<td>Confession</td>
<td>Foucault, Markula, interactions with clients, personal reflection</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>Foucault, Markula, interactions with clients, personal reflection</td>
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<td>Smith Maguire, Bourdieu, interactions with clients, personal reflection</td>
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<td>Positive aspects of exercise</td>
<td>Personal experience, interactions with clients</td>
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<td>Addiction to exercise</td>
<td>Personal experience, interactions with clients</td>
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<td>Inductive Codes</td>
<td>Inspiration</td>
<td>Number of Times Found in Auto-Ethnography</td>
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<td>Watcher being watched</td>
<td>Foucault, Markula, interactions with clients, personal reflection; more specifically inspired by a portion of a quote from Foucault: “supervisors perpetually supervised” (Foucault, 1997, p. 176)</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Reproduction of capital</td>
<td>Smith Maguire, Bourdieu, interactions with clients, personal reflection</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>Use of scientific jargon, charts, and graphs</td>
<td>Foucault, Pronger, reading the Can-Fit-Pro text</td>
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<td>Assessment forms and intake forms</td>
<td>Foucault, Pronger, reading the Can-Fit-Pro text</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Example of biopedagogy, sample client interaction, etc.</td>
<td>Foucault, Pronger, Goffman, reading the Can-Fit-Pro text</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>115</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Criteria for Evaluating Auto-Ethnographic Work**

There is a debate within the literature on how auto-ethnographic texts should be judged (Biddle et al., 2001; Sparkes, 2001). Some scholars argue that auto-ethnography should be
judged in a parallel manner to quantitative research. These scholars argue that auto-ethnographic work should be judged on traditional qualitative notions of “internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity” (Biddle et al., 2001, p. 800). The problem with these terms is that they pre-suppose that there is one definite ‘Truth’ that the author should be aiming to achieve. Other scholars posit that, since auto-ethnographic texts are inherently different than traditional qualitative texts, they should be judged on merits more appropriate to their medium (Biddle et al., 2001, p. 802; Sparkes, 2009b, p. 305). Sparkes posits that auto-ethnographic writing should be evaluated by asking questions like, does the piece “evoke in the reader a feeling that the experience described is authentic, believable and possible?” Does the piece “speak to the reader”? Does it affect the reader emotionally? Does it generate new questions in the reader? (2001, p. 546). One of the goals of my narrative writing is to encourage readers to ask themselves if their bodies have been ‘schooled,’ and if they have, what effect has this schooling had on their sense of self and their understanding of their bodies and the bodies around them? Therefore, my work will be successful if readers become, even slightly, self-reflexive about their seemingly mundane and ‘common-sense’ relationships with exercise, fitness and their bodies. I hope that readers become more aware of their own relationships with their bodies, and possibly become more self-reflexive about how their bodies have been schooled.
Chapter Four: Foucault in the Gym

As stated in Chapter Two, Foucault has had a huge impact on my theoretical framework. His concepts have also influenced the field of sociology of the body and physical fitness. Below are examples of his concepts being utilized by scholars within my field. Like myself, these scholars use Foucault to analyze the body and physical fitness.

Pronger, Markula, and Pringle: The Panopticon, Docile Bodies, and ASCM Analysis

The panopticon. Markula and Pringle (2006) and Pronger (1990) argue that the fitness field is an example of a modern day panopticon. First, fitness magazines are an example of the panoptic gaze. Pronger states that,

Magazines and videos are highly visual media, and the bodies portrayed in them are almost invariably extraordinarily lean. Most of the space in the magazines goes to display advertisements, many of which claim “scientific proof” for their products’ effectiveness, even when the claims are clearly at odds with current consensus in the exercise sciences (2002, p. 137).
Even though they are often based on claims that lack scientific proof, and bodies that do not reflect the reality of the body most people can achieve, they give readers a wealth of fitness information that the readers can use to discipline themselves and others (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 43).

Second, within a fitness facility anyone and everyone could be watching you at any time, and therefore individuals survey themselves to ensure that whoever is watching will get a satisfactory show. Individuals ask themselves questions like, am I dressed correctly, or do I look like I am being lazy? (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 79). Third, the supervisor within the modern panoptic society no longer has to be a prison guard; the supervisor can be anyone. As Foucault famously wrote, “a whole army of technicians took over from the executioner, the immediate anatomist of pain: wardens, doctors, chaplains, psychiatrists, psychologists, educationalists” (1977, p. 11). The fitness expert, as a type of “educationalist,” has become one of the technicians who succeeded the executioner. Fitness experts become the “panoptic power”—the watch-dogs of physical fitness norms—within the gym setting (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 79).

One of the ways in which experts fulfill their job as watch-dog is through assessments. The sole purpose of any type of assessment is to change people’s behaviour. If the goal is to change the behaviour, the behaviour has to be first judged unworthy. The goal of an assessment is not to simply help someone be active. If it were, then when an expert interacted with an active fit person, he or she would just say “great job.” Instead, “even if the participant is found to be extremely fit, the appraiser will suggest strategies for improvement” (Pronger, 2002, p. 139). I
know that this is true for me. I have to make a living. I do not turn people away if they are fit. I work on setting new and more intense goals that will help the client stay invested in the field and their fitness. Therefore, the panoptic power of the fitness field serves to invest, or reinvest, individuals in the fitness field. My research conclusions regarding “the panopticon,” “gaze,” and my inductive code of “judgment” can be found in Chapter Six.

**Docile body**

Markula and Pringle, again drawing from Foucault, argue that the fitness field works to create docile bodies, mainly because docile bodies are the best consumers of the information propagated within the field (2006, p. 75). Pronger was also highly influential in connecting the concept of the docile body to an analysis of fitness texts (2002). Drawing on Foucault, Markula and Pringle argue that within the gym setting there are four interconnected ways that docile bodies are created. First, docile bodies are formed through the regulation of spaces. Foucault argues that highly regulated spaces are perfect for the creation of docile bodies (Foucault, 1977, p. 141-149; Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 75). Gym spaces are heavily regulated spaces and therefore, to apply Foucault, these spaces may produce docile gym enthusiasts. To quote Pronger, “At most facilities, exercise machines have pictures that portray how the body is to be inserted into the machines, as well as written texts on how to use them” (Pronger, 2002, p. 140). These pictures and written descriptions teach members how to appropriately use the machines. Often, gyms do not even need the trainer to point out when a client is using the machine incorrectly, the machine has the capacity to “inform the user when he or she is not working hard enough” (Pronger, 2002, p. 140). This regulation of space—regulation of how members use machines—produces docile and powerful bodies.
I am sure many gym members would argue that they are allowed to use the gym space in any way they would like, until, that is, they try using the space in nontraditional ways and get in trouble. I worked at a gym called Trainers Fitness Centre for over five years. It was located beside a performing arts school. The students from the school would continuously try to come in and practice their dance routine in the aerobics room. Usually they came in the middle of the day when there was hardly anyone else in the gym and no classes were being held. There was a constant push and pull with management; the students would try to sneak in and use the space until management stepped in and told them to use the gym in a more appropriate way.

In my experience, these students are the exception. Most members do not try to use the space in nontraditional ways. In fact, most members are heavily invested in performing appropriately at the gym. No one I know would go sit on the treadmill and knit a sweater instead of walking or running. In fact, when I suggest to my clients that they walk sideways on the treadmill to challenge their balance and proprioception, it takes them awhile to agree. They tell me they do not want to look silly.

The majority of members are docile; they use the gym equipment and space in the prescribed way. The gym is always divided into particular sections: usually a cardio section, a weight lifting section, a spinning room, and an aerobics studio (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 75). I have never witnessed a gym member knit on the treadmill or take a nap on the leg press. They use the equipment within appropriate norms: they run or walk on the treadmill and use the leg press to work their legs.
A new style of gym, the ‘boutique gym,’ such as the studio I work at, ensures that the space is even more tightly regulated. In boutique style gyms, which are becoming more and more popular, no membership is allowed. Individuals can only use the gym when they are working out with a trainer. This ensures that the space is always regulated and used in prescribed ways; clients hardly ever even use a piece of cardio equipment without the trainer standing and observing. The gym is locked when a trainer is not there working with a client, so the client could not use the space on their own even if they wanted to fit in an extra workout. I have one client who likes to always come and walk on the treadmill before his sessions. This often causes the client I train before him to be annoyed, since by walking on the treadmill he is interrupting the earlier session. I often take my earlier client into the other room so he or she can have privacy. The privacy that a boutique studio allows for is a large part of why individuals pay to train there. In addition, the boutique element offers what Bourdieu coined symbolic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1983; Smith Maguire, 2008). I am highly aware of the hypocrisy of my writing a thesis critiquing how the body has become a symbol of status and morality while at the same time in a professional capacity capitalizing on the fact that I work at a boutique studio that offers my clients and I both symbolic and cultural capital.

The second way Foucault theorizes docile bodies are created is through the regulation and organization of time (Foucault, 1977, p. 152). Within most gym settings, time is regulated. All gyms have timetables of when the group exercise classes occur. Foucault stresses the importance of time-tables as part of the slow formation of the docile body (Foucault, 1977, p. 152). In many gyms you have to sign up for particular cardiovascular machines, and there are
time limits for how long you can use said machines. These time restrictions “impose certain rhythms,” regulate the space, and make people understand their time at the gym as regulated blocks of time (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 77).

The third way Foucault theorizes docile individuals are formed is through the “art of rank” (Smith Maguire, 2008). Within any regulated and functional space, different individuals are ranked differently (Foucault, 1977, p. 141-149). For example, at the gym you can tell new people from regulars, and members from employees. Employees, such as trainers, have specific knowledge that gives them the power to correct and impose their disciplinary gaze on you while you work out. Docile bodies are controlled by a desire to increase their ‘rank’ and learn the codes of conduct and postures that are appropriate within that space (Foucault, 1977, p. 152). On Sunday December 9, 2012, I completed a journal entry that dealt with the topic of rank. I may not work at a big box gym, but the issues that Markula and Pringle discuss regarding rank still exist. Within my studio, rank exists between my clients as well as between the trainers. My clients tend to get possessive and make statements such as, “I have been with Kathleen the longest” or “I referred my friend to you, but really you are my trainer.” They gain some sort of symbolic capital from being the one who ‘discovered me’ and had the discipline to continue to train with me the longest. There are only three trainers who work in the gym and we have a distinct rank. I bring in the most business and have the most clients, so I get the first pick of the room I want to train my clients in (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 159).

It is important to note that even the lowest ranked individual within a regulated space is still ranked higher than someone not involved in the space. For example, any gym space is
regulated by who has the money to buy a membership and participate in the fitness field and the opportunity to become a docile body (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 75). Economic ability allows individuals to join a gym. Once they have become gym members, individuals have the ability to become docile bodies. Becoming a docile body within a gym setting allows the individual to establish social capital and rank.

The fourth way the docile body is formed is through the “disciplinary gaze” (Foucault, 1977, p. 184). Since the use of space and time is controlled, and everyone is struggling to understand if they are conducting themselves appropriately and observing how others are conducting themselves, everyone becomes a potential object for the disciplinary gaze. The disciplinary gaze is not just about looking. It is about judging who is normal and who is deviant (Foucault, 1977, p. 184). The disciplinary gaze is often called the normalizing gaze. The normalizing gaze is “about quantifying and classifying” how every individual compares to the norm (Foucault, 1977, p. 184). I know that I, often unconsciously, judge other people while I am working out at the gym. For example, when I was in Barbados in December for a vacation, I found myself judging the other people in the hotel gym (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 157). I tried to tell myself to stop, but judging others and comparing their actions to my own is so much a part of my self-identity (because of what I do) that it was almost impossible for me not to watch them. I suspect that they were also watching and judging me, and comparing my workouts to their own workouts.

The normalizing gaze is a subtheory of Foucault’s theory of the dispersed panoptic gaze as a form of disciplinary power. The normalizing gaze disciplines individuals because since they
are always afraid of being watched and assessed against the ‘norm,’ they struggle to achieve said norm. This is how, through gaze, the norm itself becomes a panoptic structure (Foucault, 1977, p. 187-192). Within the gym, experienced exercisers and trainers know how equipment is ‘supposed’ to be used. For example, in my auto-ethnographic journal I wrote that clients “come to me and say things like ‘people at my gym do things so wrong’ or ‘my husband or child really needs a trainer because I know that he or she does not know what they are doing’” (p. 128). In one way, it is flattering. I know that what they are doing is giving me a compliment; telling me that the gym members and their family are in need of my expert knowledge. On the other hand, it also proves that they have been judging others, both at the gym and at home, showing that individual gym members experience the ‘gaze’ of other members and that they are tacitly pressured to ensure that they are fitting into the norms of gym use and the norms of body comportment.

A conversation I had with a fellow runner on December 9, 2012, is a good example of how a ‘norm’ can become a panoptic structure. I met a woman on the bus that was taking us to the start line of the Barbados half marathon. When I wished her luck on her race she said that I should save the luck for her friends who were ‘real runners.’ She felt she did not deserve the label of a ‘real runner’ because she planned to walk part of the race (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 159-160). The norm—at least the norm that she had formed in her head—of what a ‘real runner’ is, had become a panoptic structure. For this particular runner, and for many other people I have spoken to and trained, the norm of what a ‘real runner’ is becomes a comparison point, and acts as a panoptic structure. Normalizing gaze, the ranking of bodies, the
control of time, and the control of space are all interlocking systems that work together to create docile bodies.

**Possible critique of the concepts of panoptic gaze and docile bodies.** Understanding the trainer as a panoptic figure that, through the legitimacy of biomedical expert knowledge, helps to form docile bodies is an interesting and important conceptual framework. I argue that Foucault’s concepts of the panopticon, docile bodies, and the gaze are directly useful because his concepts do not allow for the possibility of an immutable truth, since the power/knowledge nexus always allows for negotiations of power. However, Foucault is sometimes criticized for being too deterministic: Elliot states: “Foucault’s work renders discourse and language as a one-way intrusion of power into the lives of people” (Elliot, 2009, p. 83). Following this criticism, using concepts like the panopticon and docile bodies has the potential to simplify the process individuals go through when trying to become fit, as well as to simplify the trainer-client relationship.

I disagree with this criticism. As stated in Chapter Two, within the section “The complex relationships of power that exist within the fitness field,” Foucault’s concept of power does not allow for a claim that there is one immutable understanding of the trainer-client relationship. It is important to remember that although trainers have expert knowledge that legitimizes some amount of ‘gazing’ at their clients, clients also ‘gaze’ at the trainer. Trainers may hold expert knowledge, but clients hold economic power. Therefore, the fitness field is a complex web of power. There is no simple explanation for the relationships of power that exist within the field. As in all fields, some individuals have more ability to influence discourse, and therefore hold
more of the power within relationships, but it would do the analysis a disservice to understand trainer-client relationships as simply a unilateral power relationship.

American Council of Sports Medicine case study. This thesis is an attempt to unpack how the Can-Fit-Pro textbook *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* is enmeshed in the wider sociopolitical and economic requirements of neoliberalism. Markula and Pringle, using Foucauldian concepts such as disciplinary power, the norm, and expert knowledge, have done a somewhat similar textual analysis of the ACSM textbooks. The ACSM textbooks are the American version of the Can-Fit-Pro textbook. Markula and Pringle use the ACSM textbook to show how medical knowledge is used to legitimize the fitness field, turning to Foucault in their analysis.

The ACSM produces guidelines on how and when people should stretch, strength train, and perform cardiovascular activities (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 58). These guidelines are extremely detailed and fundamentally corrective. Similar to the Can-Fit-Pro text, the ACSM guidelines never simply encourage people to ‘be active.’ Instead, the ASCM textbook teaches trainers how to incite individuals to actively ‘work’ on their health on the basis that they have flaws that need to be corrected. The guidelines provide acceptable heart rate zones, prescribed repetition ranges, techniques to overload the muscles, and protocols on how to test the client’s level of fitness (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 60). As Pronger states, drawing on work from the Canadian Association of Sports Sciences, appraising and then guiding individuals is significant because it is part of a process of promoting a “physically active, wellness-oriented lifestyle” (2002, p. 139). In other words, trainers assess clients and provide them with detailed exercise
guidelines with the intention of further investing them within the fitness field. The point of assessing and then guiding clients is to lead to them toward “a different life” (Pronger, 2002, p. 139)—a life fully invested in the fitness field. I would add that the added significance is that these guidelines serve to also further invest the trainer. I know that when I assess a client I also consciously and unconsciously assess myself, comparing the client’s results to my own strengths and weaknesses, the result being that we both become further invested in the field.

The same precise guidelines and information on corrective exercise found in the ACSM textbook can be found in the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* textbook. Heart rate zone information can be found on pages 41 to 45 (Anderson et al., 2008). Repetition ranges and resistance training protocols can be found on pages 78 to 82 (Anderson et al., 2008). Techniques to overload the body through manipulation of training variables can be found on pages 124 to 137 and 143 to 148 (Anderson et al., 2008). Protocols on how to test a client’s level of fitness can be found on pages 99 to 122 (Anderson et al., 2008).

Markula and Pringle argue that the detailed nature of the fitness guidelines in the ACSM serves four purposes. One, fitness guidelines imbue fitness practitioners with the right to survey gym members and clients. According to Foucault, constant surveillance is needed for true disciplinary power to exist (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 59). Two, the detailed nature of the guidelines creates a need for “fitness experts” to disseminate the knowledge. Three, fitness guidelines and tests “enlighten” individuals about “problems” that they never knew they had before the tests. These problems now become their responsibility to fix (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 62). Fourth, detailed fitness guidelines encourage participants to constantly assess their
level of fitness. Assessing their fitness helps them to understand that their identity is partly dependent on the category of fitness they fall into (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 60). The concept of ‘object’ and ‘subject’ will be explored in more detail in a subsequent section. Simply put, scientific classification and the resulting categories and norms produce individuals who are both subjects and objects (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 25).

Below, I have included my personal experience of attending a five-day Paul Chek course. My experience mirrors Markula and Pringle’s assertions about how fitness tests, and their resulting guidelines, create docile bodies and help to create individuals who are both subjects and objects. The experience also reiterates a point that I have made many times throughout this thesis, that trainers are invested in the power relationships of the field and are highly docile bodies. A preemptive note regarding this quotation—I find it interesting that I chose to use the word hysterical to describe my reaction to the Paul Chek course. As a women’s studies graduate I understand the problematic gendered history of that word, yet I am not sure if I can find a more appropriate word to describe my reaction, which, in many ways, was stereotypically female. Looking back at my reaction I realize just how stressed I felt by the idea of my peers gazing and judging my body.

I did the Paul Chek level 1 course and I almost quit. It was a five day course and I was hysterical after day one. HYSTERICAL! I cried and tried to convince myself that I did not have to go back. Why? Talk about panoptic gaze and norms. I felt judged. It was a room full of personal trainers and we had to take each other’s measurements. I guess I felt
that mine were not good enough and I hated the feeling of being under the microscope of other trainers (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 1).

Gaining a Paul Chek certification imbues trainers not only with the power to judge their clients, but the right to judge one another. The tests we were learning from Paul Chek were extremely detailed. For example, one test was to measure the degree to which our heads sat forward on our spine. As Markula and Pringle point out, the detailed nature of the guidelines that result from the Paul Chek tests creates a need for “fitness experts” to disseminate the knowledge and “enlighten” individuals about “problems” that they never knew they had (2006, p. 62). I am somewhat ashamed to admit that I wrote a blog post for The Huffington Post enlightening individuals on the problem of “forward head syndrome,” a concept that I learned in part from Paul Chek (Trotter, 2013b).

An unsophisticated reading of Foucault could create an expectation that all participants in the fitness field will embody the norms of health and fitness. This is the opposite result of the normalizing process. Foucault did not argue that this normalizing process produces a society of clones. Not everyone walking around looks like they work out. The fitness field, including trainers schooled by ACSM and Can-Fit-Pro, survives because many individuals do not fit into the norm. The normalization process allows the individual to analyze how big the gap is between themselves and the norm (Foucault, 1977, p. 184). Personal trainers and other experts within the field give individuals information on how much effort will be needed to ensure they reach that norm. Textbooks like that of the ASCM and Can-Fit-Pro’s Foundations of Professional Personal Training give trainers the tools to assess where the individual lies on the fit continuum and how
the individual can reach the norm. Foucault says it best: “the power of normalization imposes homogeneity; but it is individualized by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialties and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another” (Foucault, 1977, p. 184).

The ACSM guidelines are an example of how scientific classification has the capacity to create both ‘subjects’ and ‘objects’ (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 25). A person becomes an ‘object’ when they are tested. Fitness testing produces “texts on his or her body specifically” and allows the fitness trainer to produce an individualized exercise program “to fill the body’s lacks” (Pronger, 2002, p. 138). Fitness tests reduce the body to data. Based on results from the tests, human beings act in certain ways. Exercise science as a discourse (Pronger mentions the ACSM as existing within the exercise sciences) is “engaged in trying to change the reality of the body....It is the applicability of the exercise sciences, their power to inform human practice, that makes them meaningful” (Pronger, 2002, p. 130). The ACSM and other organizations, like Can-Fit-Pro, that use exercise guidelines and tests, help to reduce individuals to data and propel individuals to act in a certain way. These actions produce both the ‘subject’ and the subject’s identities. This object-subject relationship does not just happen once; it is the repetition of this process that fully disciplines human beings. People become objects of classification. They then become subjects through embodying their desire to conform to the norms. Assessments allow the trainer to prescribe a “way of life” (Pronger, 2002, p. 138). The fitness industry has a history of categorizing bodies. This can be seen from William Sheldon’s somatotyping, a method to typologize bodies by categorising individuals as mesomorph, ectomorph, or endomorph (Vertinsky, 2007, p. 295). Sheldon’s method of categorising bodies is an example of how
scientific analysis, expert knowledge and popular fitness information are often intertwined. Sheldon’s method, although not based on hard science because he took pictures of individuals and merely judged their body shape based on photos, was utilised by the fitness field and espoused as fact throughout popular fitness media. Interestingly, somatotyping was taught while I was studying kinesiology in my first year of university, roughly 10 years ago, even though Sheldon’s scientific method has been heavily refuted (Vertinsky, 2007, p. 295).

Through fitness assessments, like the ones discussed in the ASCM guidelines or Sheldon’s somatotyping, the individual continues to be both an ‘object’ and a ‘subject’ because the individual feels compelled to be monitored and reduced to data on a regular basis in order to measure their progress. This continued measurement affects their subject position, which affects their identities. Individuals then embody these identity categories and act in certain ways. This leads to the categories getting problematically understood as natural. In the end, this is why biopower and disciplinary techniques are so problematic. Subjectivities are produced by internalizing and naturalizing hegemonic norms. How the culture of fitness is structured influences how individuals “learn, internalize, and operationalize oppressive cultural discourses, such as classism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, and homophobia” (Pronger, 2002, p. 122).

Conforming to the norms of a culture means (re)producing these discourses, which leads to the production of particular subjects. The body ends up embodying the gendered and racialized norms that get written into discourses. Normative discourses become extremely hard to change because the norm “never appears as external to the bodies it subjects and subjectivates” (Butler, 1990, p. 183). What Foucault managed to highlight through his concepts—including biopower, disciplinary power, the norm, and discourse—is the insidious nature of relations of power, and
how relations of power and norms get written on and through the body through the everyday ‘choices’ people make.

**Conclusion.** Through panoptic power, gaze and the regulation of time and space within the gym, docile fit bodies are produced. As seen through the above examples, Markula and Pringle and Pronger directly applied Foucault’s concepts to their analysis of the body, physical fitness, and fitness textbooks. Markula and Pringle did not develop new theories, but instead simply applied Foucault’s original concepts to new topics. Other scholars have extrapolated on Foucault’s original concepts in order to develop new ones. Scholars such as Atencio (2010), Evans and Davies (2003a, 2003b), Harwood (2009), McDermott (2007), MacNeill and Rail (2010), and Wright (2003) have introduced the concept of biopedagogy. Biopedagogy seeks to explain how bodies are taught appropriate modes of comportment. Scholars I have referenced within this thesis who have theorized the concept of ‘risk vocabularies’ include Evans and Davies (2003a, 2003b), Fusco (2005), Leahy and Harrison (2003), McDermott (2007), Nettleton (2010), and Smith Maguire (2008). Scholars use the concept of ‘risk vocabularies’ to explain how discourses of risk, through manipulating the fears already present within society, are used as methods of discipline. The origins of the concepts of biopedagogy and risk vocabularies were explored in detail in Chapter Two.
Chapter Five: Sociology of the Body, the Gym, Gender, and Space

Introduction

Chapter Five is dedicated to exploring work scholars have done on the body, physical fitness, and embodied experience. Before I delve into this work in detail I first describe a ‘map’ of sociology of the body outlined by Nettleton that has helped me orient and understand these scholars’ work within the context of sociology of the body (2010). Although all the work produced by the scholars can be situated slightly differently on Nettleton’s ‘map,’ all the scholars I mention share one important theoretical similarity. They all understand that the ritualistic performances that take place in the gym—from the clothes that individuals wear, to the gendered classes that individuals ‘choose’ to take part in—are examples of how seemingly mundane daily experiences are lived expressions of social politics.

Sarah Nettleton and the Three Divisions Within the Discourse of “Sociology of the Body”

Nettleton posits that the academic discipline of sociology of the body can be broken down into three factions: the social regulation of the body, the social constructionist camp, and the phenomenological approach (2010, p. 49). Nettleton’s divisions, although simplistic, are helpful in navigating the field of sociology of the body. The divisions offer a basic theoretical map of the body. This map has helped me orient and understand scholarly work done on physical fitness and the body within the context of sociology of the body. I conclude that individuals
within the fitness field produce and consume the fitness field through an interesting amalgam of Nettleton’s three factions (2010, p. 49). In the following paragraphs I have attempted to orient my research within Nettleton’s map.

Nettleton refers to the first faction as “the social regulation of the body.” Nettleton posits that theorists who work within this faction argue that the body is controlled and regulated by social systems and institutions, such as law and medicine (2010, p. 49). These systems and institutions control, monitor, and use the body to meet their particular political, social, and economic needs (Nettleton, 2010, p. 48). These regulating institutions control both the individual body and the population as a whole (Nettleton, 2010, p. 49). These theories seem overly deterministic, and therefore do not fully capture the complex relationships of power that personal trainers, clients, and fitness enthusiasts constantly negotiate while existing within the fitness field.

Nettleton refers to the second faction as “the social constructionist camp.” Nettleton posits that theorists who work within this faction argue that discourse and language constitute certain understandings of the self (2010, p. 48). Particular understandings of the self then lead individuals to manage and control their bodies in circumscribed and pre-packaged ways.

Nettleton calls the third faction, "the phenomenological approach.” Nettleton posits that theorists who work within the phenomenological approach seek to understand how the body lives and acts, focusing on the “sociology of embodiment.” My understanding of the concept of embodiment is that it is useful because it can help to understand the body as not just something
that is acted on and controlled, but as a ‘lived’ body. For example, I have two clients who have Parkinson’s disease. Dr. Micheal Atkinson once explained embodiment using the experiences of these clients at the gym. To paraphrase greatly, he explained to me that I may have the initial inclination to understand the experiences of these clients through a single lens—a lens that assumes gaze and judgment from others gym members and the internal gaze of the individual. Gaze and judgment may be present at the gym, but in addition the client also experiences their body as a ‘lived body.’ By this I mean that instead of consciously thinking about how other gym members are gazing on them and therefore judging them, they are living out the feeling, having to think about every motion. Theories of gaze seek to explain how individuals are positioned as subjects within discourse, as related to panoptic surveillance. If individuals are not as consciously aware of being gazed at, panoptic gaze has less of an impact on the formation of their subjectivities. Their lived experiences become significant. Sociologists who prioritize the study of embodiment seek to understand the lived body (Nettleton, 2010, p. 48) as well as how everyday mundane experiences are lived expressions of social politics. Nettleton describes this process as consciousness becoming “embedded in the body” (2010, p. 56). The discipline of sociology of embodiment is concerned with analyzing lived experiences as well as theoretical ideals.

As stated above, I conclude that individuals who participate in the fitness field produce and consume the field through an interesting amalgam of Nettleton’s three factions. No theoretical field is as compartmentalized as Nettleton makes the field of sociology out to be. Theoretical disciplines are rhizomatic - grounding, alluding and responding to each other. Within the fitness field, educational institutions produce the scientific knowledge that Can-Fit-Pro uses
to legitimize field-specific language and knowledge. Bodies being controlled through institutional structures are an example of how Nettleton’s first faction, “the social regulation of the body,” understands the formation of the ‘fit body.’ This field-specific knowledge is then written in texts like *Foundations of Professional Personal Training*, and taught at Can-Fit-Pro conferences, using certain discourses of health and fitness. These discourses constitute certain understandings of ‘the self.’ Understanding the self as formed through discourse would be an example of “the social constructionist” understanding of the fit body.

Particular understandings of the self then lead individuals to manage and control their bodies in circumscribed and pre-packaged ways. Management of the body leads to the repetition of certain rituals, performances, and seemingly mundane daily experiences. The seemingly mundane experiences are therefore lived expressions of social politics and discursive power relations. The lived experiences, and embodied understanding of the self that is formed through these mundane experiences, constitute an example of how the “sociology of embodiment” faction would understand the formation of the fit body.

No single faction of sociology of the body can fully explain the formation of the fit body and the reproduction of the fitness field. Therefore, I have tried to use a portion of the theories found within the three factions offer a three-dimensional and nuanced understanding of the production and consumption of the fitness field. I understand the blending of the three camps in the following way. Theorists who work within “the social regulation of the body” camp argue that the body is controlled and regulated by social systems and institutions, such as law and medicine (Nettleton, 2010, p. 49). This information is useful when combined with the
understanding that educational, political, and social institutions would not be able to monitor and control individuals without the dominant discourses that incite desires within individuals and legitimize norms put forward by the institutions. (The “importance of discourse” is an argument put forward by “the social constructionist camp” [Nettleton, 2010, p. 48]). Discourses that reproduce the norms of the institutions are given ‘legs’ only when individuals live and embody those norms. Embodiment is given significance within “the phenomenological approach.” Therefore, institutional control, discourses, and embodiment are not merely interrelated, but also mutually reinforcing.

The training I did for the Barbados half marathon (officially called Run Barbados\(^{\text{xxxv}}\)) provides a good example of how the boundaries between Nettleton’s camps are porous and constantly in flux. My coach, Elaine, trained me using field-specific scientific knowledge such as heart rate training zones. Expert knowledge like the use of heart rate zones is imbued with legitimacy owing to its scientific nature. It is produced within the Can-Fit-Pro text as part of the wider discourse of risk management and individual responsibility.\(^{\text{xxxvi}}\) Elaine used expert knowledge to produce my program; I completed the training program; and this led me to complete the race.

Through participating in the race I completed multiple seemingly mundane racing rituals. For example, I picked up my race kit, wore a race number as I raced, lined up at the start line with my fellow runners, and wore the race T-shirt home after completing the race. All of these seemingly mundane experiences led to specific lived experiences, which led to a specific formation of my sense of self. These experiences are not as banal as they first seem. They are
lived expressions of social politics. For example, the T-shirt is a visual representation—a symbol—of who is ‘fit’ enough to participate and who is not, who has the wealth to participate and who does not, and who has the discipline to participate and who does not. The shirt is the material embodiment of the physical, social, and symbolic capital that the race gives all of the participants (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 159-162). Wearing a race shirt allows participants to form a ‘self’ that feels accomplished and disciplined.

**The Gym and Gender**

[Gender is] a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being (Butler, 1990, p. 33).

Political struggles occur in specific gym spaces. Hegemonic definitions of femininity are both reinforced and resisted in these gym spaces (Johnston, 1998, p. 245).

Historically, women have been left out of the arena of physical fitness and sport. Physical activity and sport has typically been an arena that blatantly reproduces gender norms (Dworkin, 2003, p. 133). Women are no longer blatantly excluded from physical fitness. A gym is no longer thought of in simplistic terms as a “locus of hegemony” (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 31). The work of scholars including Lloyd (1996), Haravon Collins (2002), McDermott (2009), Markula (2001, 2003, 2004, 2006), MacNeill (1988), Markula and Denison (2000, 2005), Sassatelli (2010), and Maguire and Mansfield (1998) shows that although the norms of physical activity have evolved, unfortunately gyms are still highly gendered spaces. Before the fitness boom in the 1970s, the
action of a woman being physical and active would have been considered counter-hegemonic (MacNeill, 1988). This is because before this time physical activity was largely considered dangerous for women (MacNeill, 1988; Vertinsky, 2007). With the rise of classes such as aerobics, the norms of gendered physical activity have changed (MacNeill, 1988). In congruence with capitalist ideals of materiality, women have been encouraged to be active consumers and spend money: buy fitness goods, join a gym, and get a personal trainer (MacNeill, 1988). Since women are no longer banned from physical activity, gendered physical norms are maintained and regulated through more tacit and complex negotiations. Roberta Sassatelli states that, “while women are no longer so patently excluded or invisible in sporting domains, new feminine physical activities such as aerobics may become ghettos that reproduce the gender order” (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 31).

The body most females desire is still, on the whole, very different from the body most males desire. This is because the “biological division into the two sexes [is] socially mediated” (Alsop, Fitzsimons, & Lennon, 2002, p. 67). Our biological beings become gendered; because of social divisions, norms, and relationships of power these biological differences gain significance (Alsop et al., 2002, p. 67). Because of these social divisions, gendered norms, and relations of power, woman and men, in heteronormative societies, desire different versions of the ‘fit body.’ In a hegemonic heteronormative society, the body most women desire is highly prescribed and often woman have trouble desiring alternative versions of a fit body. Within gyms women are given the space and the tools to produce their bodies in a way that is appropriate and expected for the female body. The North American idealized goal for the gendered female body is slim, with minimal cellulite and appropriate tone. The normal ideal for the male body has not evolved
significantly. It is still a body with muscle and low body fat (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 148-165). A great example can be found in my journal entry from November 1, 2012, in which a male client confesses to me that one of the reasons he started training with me was to gain muscle. He thought gaining muscle would help him get a girlfriend (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 126-127). Sherri Dworkin did a study where she asked a group of women to describe the ‘look’ they wanted on a continuum from non-muscular on the left to muscular on the right. Most women in Dworkin’s study fell between the left and the middle of the continuum (Dworkin, 2003, p. 139). The women wanted either no muscle or minimal muscle. The women in Dworkin’s study stated that they did not want to be situated on the right of the continuum because they had a fear of getting too muscular. They feared getting big would make them less enticing sexually and that they might be thought of as a lesbian (Dworkin, 2003, p. 143-147). Slim, supple, and sculpted is considered the ideal, whereas fat or too muscular is not ideal (Lloyd, 1996). As a trainer, many of my female clients will say to me that they want to lift weights in order to become toned, but that they do not want to get too bulky. Male clients confess the desire to be muscular (Auto-ethnographic journal). xxxvii

The Gym and Aerobics

Scholars such as Haravon Collins (2002), Lloyd (1996), MacNeill (1988), Maguire and Mansfield (1998), Markula (2001, 2003, 2004, 2006), Markula and Denison (2000, 2005), and McDermott (2009) have studied the relationship between classes, such as aerobics, and the reproduction of a certain version of femininity. Aerobics classes are targeted to women and women dominate participation (McDermott, 2009, p. 340). Ninety percent of the people who participate in aerobics in the United States are women (Lloyd, 1996, p. 82). These classes are
‘sold’ to women based on what the class will do for their bodies (McDermott, 2009, p. 349). Aerobic exercise is publicized as the exercise that will help women lose fat and gain that “slim yet sculpted” look (Lloyd, 1996, p. 80). Fitness classes like aerobics help to set up the norms by which female bodies are judged (Lloyd, 1996, p. 87).

Even within fitness classes that are not as blatantly gendered as aerobics classes, it is my experience that the gender order is still clearly maintained. For example, on July 11, 2012, I participated in a boot camp class at Dynamic Conditioning Centre in downtown Toronto. Dynamic Conditioning Centre does not teach aerobics classes. Rather, they value strength over endurance. They do not encourage anyone, not even their female cliental, to improve cardiovascular fitness. Both men and women participate in the boot camp classes. Even though Dynamic Conditioning Centre expects me to work hard in the class and to be strong, the men are still expected to be stronger. On July 11, I was working with a fairly heavy medicine ball. The instructor in the class criticized the man working beside me, who was using the lighter medicine ball, by chastising him for not giving me the easier weight (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 19). The class setting may be different, but the gender order is still reproduced. Gender expectations and assumptions regarding ability, as well as expectations regarding desired results, are still blatant.

Haravon Collins (2002) and Markula (2001, 2003, 2004, 2006) acknowledge that although it is simple to criticize physical fitness classes such as aerobics, the analysis needs to be more nuanced since women often state that they feel true joy and empowerment when they exercise (Haravon Collins, 2002, p. 85-93). Some women, including myself, will argue that they get empowerment and joy from exercise. The complex, somewhat conflicting relationship
between being disciplined to exercise and gaining enjoyment from exercise is one of the themes of my auto-ethnographic journal. Many clients tell me that they feel much better after exercise. One of my clients wrote about her workout with me on her Facebook wall on November 10, 2012. It said “Just finished workout with friend and trainer Kathleen. What a great way to start the day” (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 136). I know for me exercise can turn a disastrous day into a fantastic day. On November 11, 2012, I wrote,

[D]oing the Can-Fit-Pro textual analysis can make me feel “down” about exercise and critical of what I do...but then I go for a run like the one I did today and I love it and I remember how good it makes me feel and I think it has that potential for others as well (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 135).

I struggle daily with the reality that I know exercise has the potential to be a form of disciplinary power, but I also do believe that it has the potential to be positive and freeing. I believe that I have a ‘push-pull’ relationship with exercise similar to what Brian Pronger expresses in his book Body Fascism. He states,

I am not saying that regular physical activity, careful diet, and other disciplines of the body are necessarily bad....As a very active person, I find great pleasure and a deep sense of well-being in physical exercise....I am, however, critical of the dominant discourses of physical education and fitness (2002, p. 22).

Being critical of something you love can be hard. From personal experience it means that even when I am running and biking and enjoying myself there is always a nagging voice in the back of
my mind questioning why I am enjoying the experience, what norms I am unintentionally and intentionally reproducing, and what relations of power I am investing myself within. I have indexed this complex relationship between being disciplined to exercise and gaining enjoyment from exercise as “positive aspects of exercise.”

Analyzing this complex relationship between exercise enjoyment and discipline is particularly difficult since the fact that a women feels empowered by exercise does not mean she is not engaging in the dominant gendered self-normalizing process. In fact, women like me, who feel empowered through exercise, may be the most likely women to be actively engaging in the normalizing process. The feeling of empowerment gained from being physically active comes from the physical and social capital they gain from actively participating in the fitness field. I am the perfect example. I get joy from exercising and from tracking my workouts. In short, I gain happiness through being a perfectly docile body. I am completely entangled in the field—so much of my identity is (problematically) gained through the physical and social capital I gain from being a disciplined docile body.

The dynamic is made even more complex because many women state that they gain feelings of empowerment through exercise. Similar to the above point about happiness, feelings of empowerment and a self-normalizing gaze are not mutually exclusive. Women can feel empowered by their engagement in physical activities, while “simultaneously longing to obtain the ideal body” (Markula, 2006, p. 29). Women, such as myself, can even be aware of the myriad problems that accompany being physically active and still enjoy the activity. Markula argues that the women she interviewed within her ethnographic study were often critical of gendered images.
in exercise tapes and magazines, but at the same time they desired to be like them (Markula, 2003, p. 70). Women can be aware of the problems that accompany aerobics, but still actively conform to the norms of feminine beauty so that they will be judged positively and gain the privileges that having the appropriate female body brings (Maguire & Mansfield, 1998, p. 112-114). This is connected to what Judith Butler refers to as a “system of compulsory heterosexuality” (as cited in Alsop et al., 2002, p. 97). It is a binary gender system that seems natural, and thus goes unquestioned, and that results in men and women performing their genders, acquiring capital, and ultimately forming their subjectivities in particular ways. Either consciously or unconsciously women internalize the panoptic gaze and make choices to conform based on hegemonic ideals that have become common sense to them (Haravon Collins, 2002, p. 103). Lenskyj argues that aerobics classes are an example of a “heterosexist agenda at work” (1990, p. 239) because within these classes heterosexual attractiveness is a more important goal than aerobic fitness (Lenskyj, 1990, p. 239). From my own experience, I am not sure I would feel comfortable stating that attractiveness is more important than aerobic fitness, but I would certainly state that for most participants I have spoken to, these two goals are at least equally important. I also feel comfortable agreeing with Lenskyj that it is often fitness instructors who help to reinforce competitiveness between gym members in regard to body shape and size and workout attire (1990, p. 239).

As stated above, scholars such as Haravon Collins argue that aerobic classes are problematic because they valorize and naturalize women as sex objects and reproduce a very particular image of female beauty (Haravon Collins, 2002, p. 85-93). Lloyd takes her criticism one step further, arguing that aerobics are dangerous because the discourse of fitness defines
aerobics as inherently ‘healthy,’ when actually the fitness discourse is connected to compulsive eating, anorexia, and bulimia (1996, p. 80). In short, aerobics make women insecure about their bodies which leads to potentially, dangerous health outcomes (Lloyd, 1996, p. 79). Lloyd postulates that aerobics classes are produced not to improve women’s health, but to further patriarchal and capitalist ideals, having been invented to sell products and reproduce norms of femininity and sexuality (1996, p. 86).

**Resistance, Agency, Gender, and Exercise**

Attempting to theorize what resistance or agency would look like for women within the realm of physical fitness is fraught with complications. Liberal feminists originally argued that agency for women would be possible when they had knowledge and control of their own bodies (Woodward, 2009, p. 18). Liberal feminists theorized that control would lead to empowerment. Concepts like ‘empowerment,’ ‘enjoyment,’ and ‘control’ of one’s body have been appropriated and are now used to ‘sell’ the fitness field. The original feminist goal of women gaining strength and empowerment through control of their bodies has been appropriated to sell products and to incite individuals to discipline themselves (Bargielowska, 2010, p. 12). Large companies like Nike and Lululemon, as well as individual personal trainers, use concepts like ‘empowerment’ and ‘control’ in relation to physical fitness to sell products. Many modern women may have gained control of their bodies, but because of disciplinary and normative relations of power, that control has not lead to the empowerment that liberal feminists had hoped for.

Judith Butler argues that gender is a performance: “gender is socially constructed such that it takes on the appearance of being something natural, something given in our anatomy”
when really it is formed through continued, repeated acts (as cited in Alsop et al., 2002, p. 103). When one performs gendered acts, the acts become re-inscribed as natural. “What we take to be ‘natural’ is therefore an effect rather than a cause of our gendered acts” (Alsop et al., 2002, p. 99). It is between the repetitions of gendered acts that change can occur. Since gender is reproduced by the constant repetition of gendered acts, it is ‘in-between’ these acts where gender is unstable (Elliot, 2009, p. 218). The power to change gendered norms is through slight changes in meaning surrounding the gendered acts (Alsop et al., 2002, p. 103). Through the process of reassigning meaning, resignification and change are possible, if only for an instant (Alsop et al., 2002, p. 105). An example of an ‘in-between’ moment could be when a women chooses to embrace her muscles and strength instead of desiring a ‘firm yet feminine’ physique. When I interview new clients about their goals, I have never had a women say she wanted to be stronger without the added caveat of “but not too muscular or manly.” I hope that in the not too distant future a female client will embrace the ‘in-between’ and tell me she wants to be stronger, without mitigating the goal by saying, “but still look like a girl.”

The literature suggests the gym is a place of complex negotiation for women attempting to destabilize gender norms. Kathy Van Ingen offers an example of how exercise has been used to destabilize gender norms in her article “Shape Your Life and Embrace Your Aggression: A Boxing Project for Female and Trans Survivors of Violence” (2011). In this article, Van Ingen discusses how boxing could potentially be used to help women and transsexuals deal with a history of abuse and violence (2011). Women simultaneously are empowered and constrained through fitness and working out (Dworkin, 2003, p. 132). “Despite the fact that many fitness activities make women feel more physically powerful, their experiences are limited by fit,
slender, toned bodily ideals that do not come naturally or easily” (Dworkin, 2003, p. 132). The *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* is written under the semblance of gender ‘neutrality.’ For example, within the table of contents, headings like “bioenergetic concepts” and “muscular concepts” are stated without any reference to gender (Anderson et al., 2008, p. iii). The text does not blatantly state that trainers should train women differently, but Can-Fit-Pro nonetheless offers their trainers the tools that, as Bacchi and Eveline would say, have the possibility to “make gender happen” (2010, p. 7).

For example, Can-Fit-Pro offers appropriate repetition ranges for trainers to use if their clients want to gain “hypertrophy” or “muscular endurance” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 79-81). In my professional experience, muscular endurance is code for slender but shapely. Scientifically, hypertrophy refers to muscle bulk. I have found that it is used as a code word for masculine. When clients come in wanting to gain either hypertrophy or muscular endurance, that goal effects what machines trainers use with them. What machines are used affects how people with different gender identities use the gym space. For example, the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text says, “As the client’s goals become more serious and focused on developing muscle mass, time in the weight room must increase” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 80). The book also states: “clients who work toward muscular endurance could benefit from resistance machines” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 81). This type of scientific information imbues the trainers with the knowledge to “make gender happen” since women usually want to gain endurance and men want to gain hypertrophy (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010, p. 7). Thus the end result is that gendered gym spaces are maintained. It is also worth noting that although *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* does not offer overt information on how to train women and men...
differently, Can-Fit-Pro does offer workshops on the subject. At Can-Fit-Pro conferences there are often sessions offered such as “How to market to the female customer” or “Equal but different.” Paul Chek, who often presents at Can-Fit-Pro conferences, and whose courses are eligible for Can-Fit-Pro continuing education credits, offers a correspondence course titled “Equal but not the same.”

Of course, the text also allows for many, as Butler would say, ‘in-between’ moments (Elliot, 2009, p. 218). The problem is, training is a business. For any ‘in-between’ moments to take place so that gender stereotypes can be destabilized, one of two things has to happen. The trainer has to get a client who already wants to break gender stereotypes (and therefore the trainer is still giving the client what they want), or the trainer has to have enough capital and expert knowledge that the client wants to listen to the trainer’s advice, regardless of gender stereotypes. Unfortunately, from my experience, both of these situations are rare. This is because, as shown in the preceding sections, mundane ‘choices’ and desires, such as the desire to gain muscle or get ‘toned’ are often inscribed with wider social, political, economic, and gendered norms. Although my ‘expert knowledge’ can shape the way that individuals relate to and view their bodies and the associated norms, I do not have the power to completely divorce their conception from other more pervasive norms because I exist within a pre-existing structure of gendered norms. For example, I have to tailor my columns to The Globe and Mail’s expectations. I have been told by my editors to stay away from topics for an older demographic—for example to stay away from osteoporosis. I have also been told to make my writing less scientific and more approachable. I will not get published, and therefore will have no power to influence anyone with my expert knowledge, if my writing is not deemed acceptable.
The Gym and Class

Neoliberal discourses of health posit that being physically fit and healthy is the responsibility of the individual. The problem with this individualistic notion of health is that the gym is a private space that is only accessible to people who can pay for a membership. Personal training is even less financially accessible. In the United States, 73% of health club members make $50,000 USD or more annually, which puts them in the top 20% of income earners in the United States (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 120). Since physical fitness facilities are primarily accessible only to the middle to upper classes, Jennifer Smith Maguire argues that the fitness field is strategically placed to benefit from fears of obesity and inactivity, but has no ability to actually fix the majority of systemic health inequalities. Obesity and inactivity are framed as individual concerns, but obesity and inactivity levels increase as socioeconomic status decreases (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 201). Smith Maguire argues that inactivity, health, and obesity need to be reframed as a social responsibility and an issue related to poverty and inequality.

Not only do middle- to upper-class individuals have more access to fitness facilities owing to finances, intense body preoccupation is often something that only the middle to upper classes have the time and the ‘taste’ for (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 15). According to Bourdieu, and scholars like Smith Maguire who have been influenced by Bourdieu, ‘taste’ is not simply natural. Consumers tastes for particular goods are ‘produced’; “cultural needs are the product of upbringing and education” (Bourdieu, 1983, p. 1). Sculpting a particular body is not just about health. If one applies Bourdieu, we see that the ‘taste’ for fitness, the desire to regulate the body, and the available time to dedicate to sculpting the body are all connected to our cultural needs.
our upbringing, our education, and the production of physical, cultural, and social capital (1983). Certain classes have an investment in reproducing these forms of capital in particular ways (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 109). There is also an interaction between class and gender in participation levels. White-collar women are more likely to exercise than working-class women (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 36).

No single element, including gender or class, can explain why some people exercise and others do not; or why large numbers of people start exercising every January 1, but many drop out. More than half of people who start exercising regularly end up dropping out, irrespective of their demographic characteristics (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 37). The gym is inscribed in structures of gender, class, and sexuality but cannot be reduced to any one element (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 39). Although it is inadvisable to reduce fitness trends to one element like gender or class, I would argue that the tendency in our society is to focus on the individual’s role in determining their health and not the socioeconomic context that is actually the principal determinant. I do not remember one Can-Fit-Pro course in which the instructor discussed how the trainer should be aware of how an individual’s gender or class could possibly affect their lifestyle choices. Instead, Can-Fit-Pro instructors focus on teaching the course attendees how to sell fitness.

Due to space constraints I have focussed on how the Can-Fit-Pro text ignores the implications of certain social determinants of health, specifically gender and class. It is important to note that social determinants of health are more complex than simply socioeconomic class and gender - race, sexuality and the intersectionality of all these variables have an impact on how individuals understand and relate to their bodies, but are beyond the realm of this thesis.
Space Theory

Space is bound into power/knowledge relationships and therefore the spaces of 
gyms are central to the subjectivity of gym users (Johnston, 1998, p. 
247).

[The gym is a space where] corporeality is socially, sexually, politically and 

Similar to Foucault’s criticism of any naturalistic understanding of ‘the self,’ theorists 
use various iterations of ‘space theory’ to problematize the naturalistic understanding of space 
(Gupta & Ferguson, 1992, p. 6). Proponents of space theory argue that space should not be 
conceptualized “as an autonomous determinant, separate from the structure of social relations” 
(Van Ingen, 2003, p. 202). Space, both how it is organized and how individuals use it, has 
consequences and implications. Cultural and political practices shape space. Space then 
constitutes and shapes the people who exist within it. Particular understandings of the body 
become institutionalized through how spaces are organized.

Space theory, as an analytical framework, is yet another tool that facilitates my 
understanding of the gym as more than just a natural, unimportant environment. Spaces, 
including gyms, are created and recreated (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992, p. 6). How the gym is 
organized, and how different gendered beings use the gym, affects how individuals conceptualize 
their selves and their identities. The gym, like many sport spaces, is “replete with discourses of 
gender, race, class, sexuality, and nationhood” (Fusco, 2005, p. 285). Gyms produce certain
types of bodies, and these are usually intensely gendered ones. There is also a strong connection between how individuals govern themselves in public spaces like locker rooms and the discourse of risk (Fusco, 2006). Individuals feel they are being surveyed and judged on their hygiene and therefore monitor themselves and act according to social expectations (Fusco, 2006). Through these examples we see that space theory helps to uncover the myriad ways that individuals’ actions in public spaces are directed by perceived risk and the normalizing gaze.

Sassatelli refers to the gym as an “artificial environment” (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 43). She states it is an artificial environment because gyms are closed spaces (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 43). I disagree with her assertion that a gym is an artificial environment because I do not believe the gym can be, or should be, divorced from the dominant discourses and power relationships that it exists within. Yes, as Sassatelli states, the interior layout is carefully thought out, the equipment is to be used in a particular way, and certain interaction patterns are expected (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 43), but it is done so to give the illusion that a gym is a completely artificial environment, when in fact it is an environment that helps to (re)produce dominant norms of gender, class, sexuality, and capitalist production. Gyms are usually broken down into different sections: an aerobic studio, a spinning studio, an aerobic machine section, and a free weights section (Johnston, 1998, p. 248). These spaces are often segregated along gendered lines. In Johnston’s participant observation, she calculated that in the free weights section there were typically between 20 and 40 men and between zero and four women (Johnson, 1998, p. 248). How a closed space like the gym is organized is closely linked to Foucault’s theory of ‘expert knowledge.’ In order for gyms to make money they need to convince their members that the space has specialized knowledge and equipment, and that one will only be able to get fit if one pays for it (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 43).
The sections within the gym do not have signs that say “men only” or “women only,” but nevertheless, a gendered use of space is often maintained. Different theorists would explain the maintenance of segregated space in different ways. Drawing from Foucault one could argue that individuals self-survey and monitor their behaviour to ascribe to certain norms. Drawing on the gender section earlier in this thesis, one could argue that the manner in which a woman will use the gym space is directly related to the type of body thought to provide the most gendered and heteronormative sexual capital. Johnson argues that one way gendered spaces are maintained is through the meaning that is extracted from the images that are placed throughout the gym (1998, p. 248). Photos throughout the gym are of individuals who are participating in particular activities and who ‘fit’ the expected gendered norms of muscle tone (Johnston, 1998, p. 248). Johnston also posits the idea that there is a tacit understanding of who the space belongs to. Applying Foucault’s concept of ‘gaze’ is useful here. Members gaze on others, and members internally gaze on themselves, which helps to create an environment where (mostly) everyone knows their place and (mostly) everyone maintains the status quo and individuals are positioned as gendered and heteronormative subjects. Although no one specifically tells women they are not allowed in the weight room, no one makes the opposite sex feel welcome. In Johnston’s participatory interviews she found that often women who lifted heavy weights were subjected to innuendos or off-handed sexist comments (1998, p. 250).

Not all gyms have the intent of producing the same type of bodies. Different fitness spaces facilitate different identities and conceptions of the self. For example, individuals who belong to a more upscale gym can use their gym membership as a display of economic capital. A
more ‘serious’ environment, like a boxing gym, would allow individuals to garner gendered capital. Other, less expensive but more ‘personality’ driven gyms give the individual the possibility of gaining symbolic capital (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 60-64). I train at two very different gyms and both allow me different, almost conflicting, symbolic capital. I train at Absolute Endurance, a gym specifically designed for endurance athletes. There I am respected for my participation in endurance events like Ironman triathlons. I also take boot camp classes at Dynamic Conditioning Centre, a strength-based facility. The trainers at Dynamic Conditioning Centre openly discourage my endurance participation and encourage me to do more strength training exercises. Dynamic Conditioning Centre values strength and function over endurance. I work at a boutique studio. My clients love the exclusivity and privacy of the studio. They gain social and symbolic capital from not only having a trainer but training at such exclusive boutique studio. According to Bourdieu, both overall volume of capital and how the capital is distributed (economic vs. social vs. cultural) work to establish class distinctions (1984, p. 114). As someone who sells ‘cultural services,’ I benefit from clients who desire social and symbolic capital. My ability to generate economic capital—to be economically successful—“merges with the accumulation of symbolic capital” that is based primarily on my reputation and image (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 291). My image is produced through having a fit body that brings physical capital and specialty certifications that imbue me with expert knowledge. As one can see, the gym one belongs to, and the gym a trainer works at, becomes a symbol of the individual’s social status and unique and personal taste.

As a business, a gym is set up to be “consumed” (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 5). People who work at the gym have a particular investment in reproducing normative ways of using the space.
For example, part of being a successful trainer is producing clients who have particular relationships to the space. The client needs to feel comfortable enough to return. As Roberta Sassatelli says,

[F]itness trainers have to get consumers to partake in a meaningful experience, inducing them to experience things in a particular way, furnishing them with a series of cognitive and emotive instruments to read and enjoy the space which they are entering (2010, p. 2).

Goffman’s theories can be useful when attempting to understand how particular interaction rituals and performances produce certain versions of “the self” (1967). Goffman was concerned with “social interaction” (Giulianotti, 2005, p. 11). Goffman understood public performances as a type of ceremony that reflected the common values held by society (Giulianotti, 2005, p. 11). The ways individuals perform in daily life, and interact with each other through scripts, are all connected to social rules of interaction (Giulianotti, 2005, p. 11). Although Goffman is sometimes criticized for lacking an analysis of power structures (Giulianotti, 2005, p. 13), I believe his theories can be useful if you understand the “social interactions” and “scripts” that he advocates analyzing as part of existing relations of power.

Within closed spaces like the gym, members interact through certain codes of conduct or patterns. Goffman calls these interaction rituals “scripts” (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 43). Individuals are not born innately knowing how to interact using scripts. Behaviour is learned and repeated through the use of scripts. Individuals learn scripts mostly through tacit regulations. Theorists do not utilize the concept of scripts simply to refer to what people say. Scripts also refer to what people do not say as well as to how people hold their bodies (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 43). I believe an
analysis of scripts can be linked to a wider analysis of gender, performance, disciplinary power, the panopticon, and the norm. Foucauldian concepts like disciplinary power help to explain why individuals choose certain scripts over others.

Sassatelli posits that scripts are what allow people to know how to perform as a gym member (2010, p. 43). Goffman’s theories are significant because he is not theorizing about how one or two individuals interact. Goffman theorizes about how groups of people interact. Goffman describes his research as the study of “syntactical relations” between people and within groups (Goffman, 1967, p. 2). These syntactical relationships, maintained through scripts, are taken for granted as ‘common sense’ or natural and are therefore infrequently analyzed (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 98). When these scripts, or lines, get repeated according to expectations, individuals gain positive social responses and they feel good about how they handled themselves. Scripts make social interaction easy since social scripts of behaviour are accepted. Sticking to the script makes one feel confident and like one belongs in the situation (Goffman, 1967, p. 6).

*Foundations of Professional Personal Training* actively teaches trainers the ‘scripts’ of how they should interact with clients. Through case studies, sample scenarios, sample client-trainer questions and answers, “what to do when…” boxes, and sample exercise breakdowns, trainers learn how to appropriately interact with their clients (Anderson et al., 2008). For example, Appendix A of the textbook consists of over 50 pages of detailed exercise breakdowns and images. The images show the trainer where he or she should stand to spot the client. The written description breaks down precisely how the trainer should teach the exercise to the client (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 197-252).
Within the gym setting it is the trainer’s job to teach their clients appropriate scripts by framing the meaning of the environment for their clients. Within the gym setting, the ‘frame’ provided by the trainer helps give members a context for understanding what being fit means. The frame helps clients “understand what is relevant in the gym, what is appropriate and what is valued” (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 98). From the initial meetings trainers help initiate members into the gym and teach them what the gym is all about. Through ‘framing’ the situation trainers help get the members into the mood to work out and spend money to work out (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 82). For example, I helped a client who was feeling frustrated by her stagnated progress feel more positive about herself. The client told me,

[S]he hated her excess skin and the fact that she felt fat naked. I suggested she embrace how far she had come and how fit she had become. When we started training she could barely walk for twenty minutes. Now she does yoga twice per week and runs 6.5 km twice per week (Auto-ethnographic journal, p 7).

Trainers help regulate the meaning of their clients’ experiences, what the gym is, and how their bodies fit in it (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 82).

A trainer’s ability to frame their client’s experiences relies on what Foucault would call “expert knowledge.” An individual only has the power necessary to frame the experience for someone else if they also have the expert knowledge to warrant being listened to. When trainers frame the experience for their clients, the clients listen because of the knowledge the trainer possesses. Personal trainers and other gym staff help “client’s expectations coincide with what is
provided by the fitness centre and, conversely, [stretch] the interaction details of fitness provision to align with clients attitudes” (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 82). The trainer ‘performs’ as an expert in their interactions with the clients to be able to frame the clients’ experiences. Trainers “use their own body and their own emotions directly to demonstrate correct movements and correct attitudes” (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 83). Sassatelli is correct when she says that trainers use their own body and emotions within the reframing process. I suffered from a hip injury in September 2012 and had to work to reframe my own experiences. I actually wrote a blog for The Huffington Post on the process of reframing my negative injury experience into a positive one (Trotter, 2012a). ‘Reframing’ is one of my inductive codes, and it helped me tease out the situations in which I framed my clients’ experiences. After keeping my auto-ethnographic journal for six months, I learned that I frame people’s experiences more often than I had originally expected. It is a daily part of my job.

Jennifer Smith Maguire (2008) borrows from Bourdieu (1983) and Silk and Andrews (2011) when she calls personal trainers “cultural intermediaries.” As Bourdieu states, cultural intermediaries are “perfect consumers” because they both consume the product and make “available” the “distinctive games” located within the field (Bourdieu, 1884, p. 371). Personal trainers are cultural intermediaries because they both sell (i.e., help produce) and consume the fitness lifestyle by embodying the norms and expectations of the fitness field (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 149). The trainer’s body becomes a motivational tool for their clients. Their body becomes a mark of their own discipline and physical capital. The trainer’s body becomes a “promotional object” (Smith Maguire, 2008, p. 170). It is a way to get more clients. ‘Scripts,’ ‘frames,’ and other interaction rituals between clients and trainers are all significant when
analyzing the fitness field because it is through interaction that power relations are either maintained or challenged. “Power is exerted through codes of conduct, forms of surveillance and social hierarchies” (Andrews, Sudwell, & Sparks, 2005, p. 888). Certifying bodies like Can-Fit-Pro are instrumental in providing the trainer with the credibility to be able to frame their clients’ understanding of fitness and health.

Can-Fit-Pro, like other businesses within the fitness field, would be aware that being a personal trainer is not simply about teaching clients correct movements (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 117). Can-Fit-Pro is a business and for it to be successful it needs trainers who successfully sell the product of personal training. Part four of the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* is dedicated to “The Professional Personal Trainer” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 163-197). This section is divided into two parts, both of which are concerned with how trainers can gain and maintain clients. The first section, titled “Psychology of Personal Training,” is dedicated to understanding how to motivate, communicate with, and successfully set goals with clients (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 163-177). The second section, called “Business of Personal Training,” is dedicated to explaining how trainers should advertise and market themselves so that they can gain new clients and maintain existing ones (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 177-197).

In order for Can-Fit-Pro to maintain their business they need to successfully teach their trainers to teach their clients how to take individual responsibility for their own health. Individuals dedicated to ‘choosing’ to be healthy are much more likely to become and then stay paying clients. Part of teaching a client how to take individual responsibility for their health is teaching them how to appropriately use the gym space. The gym space is only designed to be
used in a particular manner. It has norms, implied codes of conduct, and established relationships of power. Members become docile bodies in part when they understand and abide by the rules of the gym space.

Conclusion

An analysis of the fitness field has the potential to become simplistic if one understands the disciplining nature of the field as merely a top-down process. Disciplining power does not create docile bodies from overt top-down oppression. The disciplining nature of the fitness field—the recognition of panoptic structure, of the norm, and of internalized gaze—does not mean individuals are simply puppets being controlled by discourse. Bodies are not simply controlled and situated. The body is “situating as well as being situated” (Woodward, 2009, p. 7). Woodward means that discourse affects the body, but the body is a “lived body” (Sassatelli, 2011, p. 3). The body interacts with and effects discourse. There is always a “negotiation of meaning” surrounding, for example, what it means to be fit (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 8). What individuals understand as their “ideal fit body” is constantly in flux (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 8). For example, I have a client who has been following Weight Watchers for years. In the past she has enjoyed the structure of the program. In November 2012, she came to me and confessed that she no longer wanted to monitor herself so closely. She felt that the weight training we had been doing had made her feel strong and fit. Feeling strong made her realize that she wanted to work out and be fit without constantly monitoring herself with Weight Watchers. This is an example of how an individual’s relationship with his or her body, and what he or she thinks is ‘ideal,’ is always in flux and in a state of negotiation (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 124).
An understanding of the body as simply a blank slate on which discourse can imprint relies too heavily on what Nettleton has called “the social constructionist camp” of sociology of the body (2010). As I stated originally in this chapter, the body must be understood as interacting with both institutions and discourse in a complex and nuanced way. This will allow for an understanding of how the body lives within discourse. Bodies do not just except discourses. Through our daily, often mundane, acts every individual has the potential to rewrite and re-imagine the discourse their body exists within. As Sassatelli argues, the complex negotiations that the lived body engages in on a daily basis cannot be ignored (2010, p. 3-8). One needs to take experience into account.

That said, the problem is that any description of internal sensual experience can only be described with language. Phenomenological experiences might exist prior to, or outside of, language, but one cannot express them without the logic and pre-existing rules of language. Language does not exist outside of discourse (Garrett, 2003, p. 142). Within discourse, individuals have different relations and access to power. With any attempt to highlight the importance of the lived body, I caution that some versions of lived experiences will be made more readily available than others. This is why I believe that the theoretical approach that is most useful is one that uses an amalgam of Nettleton’s three factions of sociology of the body. To review, the three camps are: “the social regulation of the body,” “the social constructionist camp,” and “the phenomenological approach.” An understanding of the body as an entity that can be explained using an appreciation of the interconnectedness of Nettleton’s three camps allows for an understanding of the importance of discourse while acknowledging that people do not just accept gendered or class-based meanings associated with the body.
Chapter Six: Textual Analysis of Can-Fit-Pro’s *Foundations of Professional Personal Training*

Chapter Introduction

The purpose of writing and researching this thesis is to examine how a personal training text, as well as personal trainers, teaches individuals what a ‘fit’ body should look and ‘perform’ like. The research findings, observations, and conclusions are drawn in part through a textual analysis of the Can-Fit-Pro text book *Foundations of Professional Personal Training*. I argue that trainers are ‘schooled’ by Can-Fit-Pro and then pass on the information and ‘school’ their clients. This process invests both the trainer and the client into the fitness field, serving to (re)produce the pre-existing norms, relationships of power, and hegemonic discourses that exist within the fitness field.

There are several concepts that are ubiquitous within the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text. These concepts include neoliberal biopedagogy, individual responsibility, ‘choice,’ biomedical expert knowledge, the docile body, norms, and disciplinary power. I posit that within the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text these concepts can be understood as existing within three main, highly interconnected, hegemonic discourses.
The first of the three hegemonic discourses found within the text is the discourse of “biomedical expert knowledge,” which highlights the importance of education for both trainers and their clients. The end result of education is varying degrees of expert, field-specific knowledge. Expert, field-specific knowledge is legitimated through science. Expert knowledge is used to legitimize and ‘sell’ the field. It reproduces the field and allows the field to be stratified. The existence of field-specific expert knowledge and certifications allow individuals to be labeled as people who ‘hold knowledge’ or people who do not. Within the framework of this discourse trainers need to be educated to attract clients, and clients need to only hire trainers who are properly educated.

The second of the three hegemonic discourses found within the text is what Foucauldian scholars would call “biopedagogy.” As described in detail within Chapter Two, biopedagogy is a pedagogy of “how to act.” The term biopedagogies is used by Wright to describe the normalizing and regulating practices in schools and disseminated more widely through the web and other forms of media, which have been generated by escalating concerns over global obesity epidemic…biopedagogies not only place individuals under constant surveillance, but also press them towards increasingly monitoring themselves, often through increasing their knowledge around obesity related risks, and “instructing” them on how to eat healthfully, and stay active (2009, p. 1).

Biopedagogy is any type of education that teaches society how to regulate and discipline itself.
A large portion of the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* textbook is dedicated to teaching trainers how to best communicate and motivate their clients. The end result of this communication and motivation is the creation of ‘docile bodies’ who ‘act’ in a way that reproduces the field. In other words, the text is dedicated to helping trainers become biopedagogical tools. Successful long-term client-trainer relationships are vital to the reproduction of the field.

The third and most omnipresent discourse is “risk management,” mediated by healthiest risk discourse. I posit that the discourse of risk management permeates and informs all other discourses found within the text. Can-Fit-Pro uses the discourse of risk management as a key way to ‘sell’ the legitimacy of the field to both trainers and their clients. Discourses of “expert knowledge” and “biopedagogy” only become relevant if both the trainer and the client ‘buy into’ not only the legitimacy but the dire importance of the knowledge within the textbook. ‘Buying in’ is a production of successful risk-management discourse. ‘Buying in’ is believing that the expert knowledge within the text will help manage health risks, positively affecting one’s mental and physical health. The three discourses, when combined, lead to the production, consumption, and reproduction of the fitness field.

Can-Fit-Pro is not the only business that uses a combination of risk management, expert knowledge, and biopedagogy as a sales method. Procter & Gamble (P&G), for example, also relies heavily on these three discourses in their marketing of their Crest Oral Health line. I know this because in August of 2013, I participated in a P&G ‘expert panel.’ Six experts were asked to participate in a round-table discussion about how to motivate people to adopt healthy habits.
Many of the experts who participated used risk management to help their clients adopt healthier habits. For example, the dentist who participated in the discussion stated she used the health risks associated with lack of flossing to promote the importance of her services. P&G is planning on taking the information from the panel discussion and putting it in a free pamphlet. The pamphlet, which will be full of the expert knowledge collected, will be used as a method of selling Crest Oral Health products (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 53-54). Through this example we see that the discourse of “biopedagogy and client communication” is inseparable from the discourse of biomedical “expert knowledge” and “risk management.”

**Introduction to the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training Text***

*Foundations of Professional Personal Training* is the primary text used by Can-Fit-Pro in their Personal Training Specialist certification course. The textbook is divided into four sections. Section one is titled “Fitness Theory and Application” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 3-98). It is broken up into seven chapters: “Principles of Fitness, Health, and Wellness Concepts,” “Nutrition Concepts for Personal Trainers,” “Bioenergetics Concepts,” “Cardiorespiratory Concepts,” “Skeletal Anatomy and Flexibility Concepts,” “Muscular Concepts,” and “Injury Recognition Concepts.” Section two is titled “Screening and Assessment” and includes two chapters: “Preexercise Screening” and “Fitness Assessment” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 99-162). Section three is titled “Program Design” and comprises two chapters: “Program Design Concepts” and “Typical Personal Training Programs.” The final section, titled “The Professional Personal Trainer” includes two chapters: “Psychology of Personal Training” and “Business of Personal Training” (Anderson et al., 2008, p.163-177).

Textual Analysis: Foundations of Professional Personal Training

The discourse of “risk management.” The fitness field can only reproduce itself if trainers feel it is financially valuable to become certified and if clients think it is financially valuable to hire a trainer’s services. Can-Fit-Pro uses the discourse of risk management as a key way to ‘sell’ the legitimacy of the field to both trainers and their clients. For the trainer, he or she has to believe the information Can-Fit-Pro is teaching has the possibility of increasing client sales, increasing their symbolic and educational capital, and decreasing their chance of being sued. Trainers consume the field by understanding the importance of health education, certifications, and liability insurance. Adequate education, insurance, and working within predetermined limits of ‘scope of practice’ ensure that trainers will adequately manage risk by not getting sued, having enough clients, and having the legitimacy to be part of a network of skilled health professionals who all refer clients to one another. For the client, he or she has to believe that the information the trainer possesses has the possibility of reducing negative life experiences like injury, disease, and unhappiness. The client must believe that the expert knowledge the trainer holds can increase positive health outcomes like reaching health, fitness, and aesthetic goals. The premise of the Foundations of Professional Personal Training text is
that clients need a trainer, and the knowledge and science that trainer possesses, so that the clients can properly be assessed. This assessment will ensure the clients get the most out of their workouts and help them avoid injury.

Can-Fit-Pro certified personal trainers are not the only fitness professionals to operate under strict scope of practice regulations. As of spring 2013, kinesiology is a regulated profession in Ontario. As a regulated body, kinesiologists will operate under a strict scope of practice. The scope of practice of kinesiology is “the assessment of human movement and performance and its rehabilitation and management to maintain, rehabilitate or enhance movement and performance” (http://www.oka.on.ca/index.php?page=regulation). It is yet unknown how the regulation of kinesiologists will affect the personal training business. I don’t believe it will influence Can-Fit-Pro’s business model significantly since the majority of their trainers do not hold kinesiology degrees. I found out about the formation of the College of Kinesiologists of Ontario through my academic contacts, not my fitness professional ones.

Analysis of title page, table of contents, and introduction

Even before one has a chance to read and analyze the text in its entirety, the title page, table of contents, and introduction all blatantly indicate that Can-Fit-Pro deems risk management—through adequate education and healthy client communication—vital to being a successful trainer. The introduction states that “Can-Fit-Pro was established to assist all fitness professionals in their quest for ongoing education and continued professionalism” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. v). Can-Fit-Pro states, using bold text, that it certifies professionals who can
“provide a reliable source of **fitness knowledge, and safe, effective exercise**” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. v). Within the introduction, the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text puts forward a code of ethics for trainers in which it is stated that trainers need to “educate others to perform safe and effective exercise” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. vii). The code of ethics also states that trainers should “motivate others to pursue a healthy, happy and balanced life” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. vii). The *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* states within its introduction that, as an organization, one of Can-Fit-Pro’s goals is to educate fitness professionals so that they, in turn, can educate Canadians on ways to be physically active, eat healthfully, and have a healthy body weight. Can-Fit-Pro states that their goal is to increase the number of Canadians who are physically active by 20% (Anderson et al., 2008, p. vi). This statement helps to legitimize Can-Fit-Pro’s existence, at least in part because inactivity is understood as a health risk. By stating that a large proportion of Canadian society is inactive, Can-Fit-Pro conveniently identifies a problem that they are in the business of fixing.

From the use of words like “safe” and “effective,” and phrases like “continued professionalism,” “motivate others,” and “educate Canadians” (Anderson et al, 2008, p. vii), one can see that even within the introduction, Can-Fit-Pro is trying to connect hiring a Can-Fit-Pro–certified personal trainer, who has appropriate expert knowledge to motivate clients to exercise, with the discourse of “risk management.” A Can-Fit-Pro–certified trainer will have adequate expert knowledge and communication skills to help any client reach their health and fitness goals, while keeping the client injury free.
Carol Lee Bacchi states that when deconstructing a text, one should look at what the text states as the “key problem.” She states that what is important is how that problem is represented. Bacchi calls this method of textual analysis “problem representation” (Bacchi, 1999, p. 1). Through deconstructing the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text, and attending conferences within my 11 years as a personal trainer, I know Can-Fit-Pro shapes the ‘problem’ of obesity and inactivity levels as a one that must be dealt with on an individual level. Representing the problem in this way shapes the assumptions and values within the field to guarantee the need for the continued existence of the organization and the people that profit off of it. Trainers with a Can-Fit-Pro designation are conveniently available to help individuals take that responsibility.

**Main body of text.** The discourse of risk management is not just limited to the introduction, of course; it is peppered throughout the entire text. The discourse of risk management takes on two, interconnected forms. The first form is information that Can-Fit-Pro teaches the trainer with the intent of it being taught to the client: It is information that will help clients understand how hiring a trainer will minimize their risk and maximize their returns. The second form that the discourse of risk management takes is information trainers need to minimize their chances of being sued. Within the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* this information is often addressed under the topic heading of “scope of practice.”

**Risk management: information to be taught to clients.** The trainer becomes certified by Can-Fit-Pro so that they have expert knowledge to teach their clients. This information gives them the legitimacy to sell their personal training services. The legitimacy that expert knowledge
entitles the trainer to is an example of the discourse of risk management because the expert knowledge is always connected to improving the client’s health, and therefore mitigating the possibility of health problems in the future, or to decreasing the client’s current health problems. The *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* offers information like, “increased physical activity strengthens the heart, circulatory system, and lungs. These systems assist in producing movement and they adapt to training to make people feel healthier, move more easily, and live longer” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 34). This type of scientific, expert knowledge can be used to legitimate the existence of personal training and sell the trainer’s services. Drawing on Lupton’s analysis of the “risk society,” I argue that the result is a population that is managed and regulated, at least in part, via risk discourses and strategies (Lupton, 1999, p. 1). Safai offers another element to the analysis, stating that any desire for risk taking within society is tempered with what she calls the “culture of precaution” in which we are taught to resist urges to take risks and instead to conform to hegemonic norms (2001).

In some ways, the entire text can be understood as an example of this form of risk management. As an example, the book states: “scientists say you should accumulate 60 minutes of physical activity every day to stay healthy or improve health” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 5). Another example comes in the form of a chart that lists the benefits of physical activity and then gives a tangible example of each benefit. For example, it is stated that strength training “improves core strength.” The book then gives the tangible example that, stronger abdominals and back muscles will improve posture and therefore decrease one’s chance of back pain (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 63). Both examples show that the text provides scientific expert knowledge that frames exercise as important because it helps manage current or future risk.
Brian Pronger states that mainstream fitness texts are “grounded in three exercise sciences: exercise physiology, biomechanics, and exercise psychology” (2002, p. 139). I would agree with Pronger based on my analysis of the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text. When you look at the section titled, ‘Analysis of title page, table of contents, and introduction’ on page 159, of this thesis you can see that the topic headings of the personal training text can be categorized within the discourses of exercise physiology, biomechanics, or exercise psychology.

The language within the text is wielded in a way that makes it clear that if a client embraces the information being presented by the trainer they will minimize their health risk (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 6). Yet another example is how the book states that if a person does not have enough vitamin C, they risk their gums bleeding and the destruction of their muscles and tendons (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 15-16). As a final example, the text states: “many studies have shown the benefits of cardiovascular training, especially for helping reduce the risk of heart disease. Cardiorespiratory training also reduces resting [heart rate], normalises [blood pressure], and improves the ability to perform daily activities” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 40). The expert biomedical (scientific) knowledge, and the fear that it produces, leads to consumption of the field. It is also important to note that, since this information is taught to the trainer, and then by the trainer to the client, it is an example of how the discourses of “expert knowledge,” “biopedagaogy,” and “risk management” are interconnected and reproduced.

**Risk management: ways for the trainer to minimize personal risk.** *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* teaches the trainer that to minimize their personal risk they should stay within their “scope of practice.” Scope of practice is first mentioned on page viii of the introduction. Page viii states nine ways that personal trainers can stay within their scope of
practice so that they minimize risk to the client and, by extension, minimize the chances of potential lawsuits. Can-Fit-Pro capitalizes on the link between scope of practice and mitigating potential lawsuits by partnering with insurance companies. I am certified by an insurance broker that I found through Can-Fit-Pro. Since this broker has a business affiliation with Can-Fit-Pro, as a Can-Fit-Pro member, I get a deal on insurance.\textsuperscript{xlvii} Trainers are taught to minimize the risk of client injuries through client management and proper assessment, and to minimize their own litigation risk through proper insurance and documentation.

The text states that, for a trainer to stay within their scope of practice and minimize risk they need to perform assessments and follow proper program design protocols. Can-Fit-Pro trainers should “evaluate client needs based on the counseling foundations in the Personal Trainer Specialist program and provide the client with a safe and effective exercise plan based on their needs, abilities and goals” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. viii). A Can-Fit-Pro–certified trainer should monitor their clients by taking their “resting and exercise heart rate and blood pressure regularly” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. viii). Can-Fit-Pro teaches that for trainers to stay within their appropriate scope of practice they need to monitor their clients. In short, they need to make their clients into docile bodies.

The text also makes clear that many things, such as nutrition counseling, are out of a trainer’s scope of practice. The text states that when an issue is out of their scope of practice, a trainer should always refer their clients to a more qualified expert (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 12). For example, if a client wants help with his or her nutrition plan, a trainer should respect the scope of his or her own abilities at all times and refer the client to a nutritionist for specific
advice (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 17). When all health practitioners respect their personal scope of practice, the consumption of the field increases because clients use more than one expert. Can-Fit Pro, unsurprisingly, also certifies nutritional consultants.

In addition, respecting one’s scope of practice leads to stratification of expert knowledge within the field. *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* makes it clear that qualified medical professionals have more expert knowledge than trainers. A personal trainer should therefore always defer to a doctor. *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* clearly states: “diagnosing a client’s pain is beyond the scope of practice of a personal trainer” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 86). Trainers are directed to send the client to a physician at the onset of any type of pain because a physician “has more knowledge” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 86). The trainer is advised to discontinue training until they get written permission from a licensed health care provider (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 88). Again, this demonstrates the interconnectedness of discourse. Risk management discourses are connected to biopedagogy, the stratification of expert knowledge, and the importance of expert knowledge. A trainer needs to know what is outside their scope of practice. A trainer also needs to know how to verbally communicate with the client to ensure he or she goes and meets with another, more qualified, health care provider. Although Can-Fit-Pro does not dictate a required level of physical literacy or physical ability from its trainers, it is often stressed at conferences and during certifications that trainers should always practice on themselves, and be able to do the exercises that they are requiring their clients to do. However, the organization does not mandate that if you cannot perform an exercise you have to refer your client to another professional because it is out of your ‘scope of practice.’ That is a
good thing because I make many of my clients perform pull-ups when I myself cannot actually do a full pull-up.

The text also makes it clear that for a trainer, part of managing one’s professional risk and staying within the appropriate scope of practice is assessing and categorizing one’s clients. The book states that a trainer should “develop a client specific exercise plan” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. viii). In order for a plan to be “client specific,” an assessment must first take place. For example, the book states that a trainer should base their program on elements such as resting blood pressure, resting heart rate, and body mass index (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 9, 100). These numbers can only be found through assessments. The text suggests that once the data is collected the trainer can designate the client’s health risk as either “none,” “increased,” or “high.” According to Can-Fit-Pro, categorizing a client in such a way will allow the trainer to develop a program that is safe and that minimizes health risks (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 9-10, 123-141). Through these examples we once again see the connections between the discourses of risk management, expert knowledge, and biopedagogy. These discourses work together resulting in a fitness field that is stratified by expert knowledge. There is a continuum of who has and who does not have expert knowledge. This stratification, and the comparison and judgment that it fosters, reproduces the fitness field. Scope of practice can restrain trainers because it limits the potential client pool. When a client gets injured it is not uncommon for me to loose income from them for a period—they visit their physiotherapist instead of seeing me. Physiotherapists are ranked higher than I am in the stratification of expert knowledge.

*The discourse of expert knowledge.* The text is framed in a way that highlights the importance of education and expert knowledge. Education allows trainers to gain expert
knowledge. Expert knowledge allows trainers to charge clients for their services. Any reference to expert knowledge should refer back to Foucault’s power/knowledge nexus. The body is controlled within a “process of multiple force relationships” (Pronger, 2002, p. 115), one of which is the knowledge that the trainer holds over the client. The ‘truths’ (knowledge) produced through texts like *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* are utilized by trainers to form a particular understanding of the fit body (Pronger, 2002, p. 124) Without trainers who value learning these ‘truths,’ and who therefore value being and staying certified, and without clients who value the expert knowledge their trainer possesses, the field would not survive. The *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text highlights the importance of education and stresses that getting and staying certified is about making a “commitment to yourself” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. vi). Through this comment we see yet again that no one discourse exists in isolation. The discourse of education is closely linked to discourses of individual responsibility, risk management, and the importance of self-care.

The text also makes a point of stating that Can-Fit-Pro hosts North America’s largest fitness professional conference and trade show (Anderson et al., 2008, p. v). The annual conference and trade show is a chance for trainers to recertify themselves and become excited about being part of the fitness field (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 53-57). The fact that the text mentions the trade show highlights the fact that trainers are not ‘schooled’ by Can-Fit-Pro just once, but rather are continuously schooled and are additionally ‘schooled’ by the commercial sector as well. To stay a certified trainer and member of Can-Fit-Pro trainers are expected to earn continuing education credits and maintain valid CPR certification. Conveniently, Can-Fit-Pro also offers CPR certification courses. As a Can-Fit-Pro member one receives perks: six issues of
the Can-Fit-Pro magazine, discounts on conferences, member rates on insurance, discounts on certain fitness products, access to the Can-Fit-Pro interactive website, and access to the Can-Fit-Pro online registry for fitness professionals (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 169).

The above example demonstrates yet again that the discourse of biomedical expert knowledge is closely connected to other discourses such as risk management and neoliberal biopedagogy, as well as sub-discourses such as disciplinary power and gaze. By becoming a Can-Fit-Pro personal trainer, and gaining the expert knowledge taught within the course, one becomes a Can-Fit-Pro member. Being a Can-Fit-Pro member entitles trainers to discounts on liability insurance. Insurance falls under the discourse of risk management and therefore connects the discourse of risk management to the discourse of expert knowledge. Being a Can-Fit-Pro member also entitles the trainer to discounts on conferences and other Can-Fit-Pro certifications. Certifications fall under the discourse of expert knowledge and therefore connect the discourse of expert knowledge to the discourse of risk management. Finally, being a Can-Fit-Pro member entitles that trainers have access to, and inclusion in, the fitness registry. An online personal training registry falls under the discourses of expert knowledge, disciplinary power, and gaze, and therefore demonstrates how these three discourses are connected.

*Expert knowledge and gaze.* The concept of gaze is an important part of the discourse of expert knowledge. To recapitulate Chapter Two, gaze is an example of a panoptic structure and relations of power. The concept of a panoptic structure is based on a belief that there has been a diffusion of the panoptic gaze throughout society (Annandale, 1998, p. 36). Within modern society we no longer need the actual prison guards within the panoptic building to feel like we
are being watched (Annandale, 1998, p. 36). Panoptic methods of surveillance have become
“generalized to affect society as a whole not just prisoners” (Foucault, 1980, p. 71). Within
modern society there is the constant possibility that we are being watched. Since there is no
original surveyor, the panoptic gaze is able to function “in a diffused, multiple, polyvalent way
throughout the whole social body” (Foucault, 1977, p. 208-209). Foucault theorized that the
mere possibility of this omnipresent gaze forced the individuals to self-survey and self-discipline
(Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 143). What this means is, we ‘gaze’ at ourselves and others.
Through gazing, we judge both ourselves and others, compare other people to ourselves, and
compare past images of ourselves with our current image of ourselves.

There are numerous examples of how *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* uses expert knowledge, in conjunction with discourses of risk management and gaze, to sell products. For example, the book states that

[M]uscle is a very adaptive tissue. With proper training, muscle grows stronger
and larger, which enables us to perform everyday activities more easily.
Conversely, they can also become smaller and weaker if they are not
used on a regular basis. Therefore, resistance training should be part of
everyone’s exercise routine (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 78).

This information is worded in a way to make expert knowledge both beneficial and essential.
This information encourages each individual to ‘gaze’ at themselves to critique their own body in
order to decide if they need the expert knowledge being provided and position themselves in
power relations. The information teaches individuals to gaze at and scrutinize themselves.
Foundations of Professional Personal Training also states that individuals should strength train because, “a reasonable amount of strength and endurance may help clients be more efficient in daily tasks and reduce the chances of having low back pain” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 78) and “The physical activity guide to healthy active living recommends 2 to 4 strength workouts per week” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 78). Again, there is a strong connection between the expert knowledge that highlights the benefits of strength training, risk management, and an internalized gaze. The product, in this case strength training through personal training, is ‘sold’ as legitimate using statements like the ones quoted above. Through these types of statements, individuals learn to judge themselves. Can-Fit-Pro exists because people judge themselves ‘in need’ of expert knowledge and therefore become open to the judgment and assessment of personal trainers.

One final example is that the text states: “errors in program design can be costly. An improper resistance training program can lead to injury, dissatisfaction or lack of enjoyment, lack of results and loss of clients” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 81). This statement motivates both the trainer and the client to stay educated to mitigate risk. The trainer needs to educate himself or herself to have the appropriate knowledge to keep clients injury free. This type of statement motivates the client to pay the trainer to learn proper technique and see results. Gaze does not just motivate clients to internally gaze and assess themselves. Statements like the one above also cause the trainer to assess if they have enough expert knowledge to mitigate risk and successfully train clients. Can-Fit-Pro has a vested financial interest in having trainers decide that they do not hold enough expert knowledge and therefore need to spend more money on extra certifications. ‘Schooling’ trainers that they need to constantly certify themselves to stay ahead of the
competition so they can reaffirm their expert knowledge and continue to attract clients is a key way that the industry reproduces itself. Organizations like Can-Fit-Pro help to produce the market for courses and ranked “expert knowledge,” they are then strategically placed to benefit from the demand for courses.

To use Bourdieu’s terms, to be successful, trainers need to maintain their *cultural and economic capital*. This is done, in part, by possessing certain knowledge that their clients have a ‘taste’ for—knowledge, for example, of how to put together a ‘proper program.’ Trainers who possess this capital can use it to maintain ‘dominance’ (or maintain “rank,” to use a Foucauldian term) over trainers who do not have the same cultural capital. In addition, having a trainer who has the knowledge to put together a proper resistance program gives the client cultural capital, since cultural capital is a reflection on ‘taste’; it is a way that individuals “demonstrate social sophistication” (Elliot, 2009, p. 147). Clients gain cultural capital by having a trainer—especially a trainer who works at an elite or expensive gym—because the act of having a trainer demonstrates to the world their social sophistication and commitment to exercise and their body. Not surprisingly, cultural and economic capital are linked since “social sophistication requires certain economic capital” (Elliot, 2009, p. 147). Personal trainers are expensive. Trainers gain cultural and economic capital by having the knowledge that enables them to charge clients for their services. Clients gain cultural capital by having the economic capital to purchase the trainer’s services.

*Field-specific language and scientific vocabularies.* It is not just through financially purchasing expert knowledge that trainers and individuals consume and reproduce the ‘field.’
Both trainers and laypeople consume the field through the use of field-specific language and scientific jargon. This language and jargon are then used to judge other people’s compliance with the rules of the field. Judgment of oneself and others is the end result of gaze. This judgment produces the hierarchies that are used to reproduce the field. In part, *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* teaches trainers expert language and jargon through charts, graphs, and tables (Anderson et al., 2008).

Personal trainers are not the only people who use field-specific language and vocabulary. Clients and exercise enthusiasts learn field-specific language from personal trainers and through reading and listening to fitness media. Clients are often very proud of their ability to judge their friends and family using information I have provided them with. One particular client told me that he had learned enough through working with me over the years that he could help his less knowledgeable partner work out (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 169). This type of comment is not uncommon. Clients often tell me the individuals at their gym “do exercises wrong” or that their friends or spouses really need a trainer because “they are doing everything wrong” (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 128). Through these examples we see that field-specific language and knowledge does not just stratify trainer and clients, it also stratifies clients and non-clients.

Expert knowledge also stratifies experts within the field. For example, I overheard a conversation between two of my colleagues. One trainer was criticizing the other trainer for not knowing what a particular exercise was. He said something like “get with the program,” which obviously signaled that he though the other trainer did not have enough (current) expert knowledge (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 128). Expert language produces hierarchies and
stratification between trainers and clients, between clients and other clients, between clients and their friends, and between trainers.

*Screening and assessments.* The *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text highlights the importance of screening and assessing clients. The use of screening and assessment protocols is an important part of the discourse of expert knowledge.

Physical fitness facilities produce a cornucopia of texts on the body. Fitness appraisal and exercise prescription, for instance, are staples of fitness centers; the more commercial operations give staff members an opportunity to appraise the body of a client by testing and writing texts about them (Pronger, 2002, p. 138).

Assessments help establish the trainers initial base of knowledge about the client. “Fitness appraisal, in both its scientific and its more casual mirror comparison forms, extracts signs of a wayward life: not enough exercise, the wrong kind of exercise, unhealthy eating habits” (Pronger, 2002, p. 205). The interactions within the assessment establish an environment where the client feels comfortable confessing and confiding in the trainer. The assessment also establishes the hierarchy of knowledge between the trainer and client. The assessment protocols provided in the text allow a trainer to compare their clients’ results with national fitness norms. This comparison allows the trainer to quantify their clients’ fitness levels (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 115).

Assessments are closely connected to the reproduction of the field, and call for the trainer to compare the client’s results to existing norms. This can result in individuals internally gazing
at themselves and deeming themselves in need of expert guidance. The purpose of the assessments is for the client to be judged as ‘in need’ so the expert can proscribe a new “way of life” (Pronger, 2002, p. 138). The desired result of assessments is the creation of individuals who are open to being ‘schooled’ by personal trainers. Once an individual becomes open to being ‘schooled’ by a trainer, the next step is one-on-one personal training sessions. Can-Fit-Pro teaches trainers how to communicate with clients during these sessions. I refer to this communication discourse as biopedagogy. The discourse of biopedagogy is explained in detail in a following section.

**Conclusion.** Assessments, fitness norms, and the discourse of expert knowledge cannot be separated from the hegemonic, overarching discourse of risk management. Risk management permeates every aspect of the Can-Fit-Pro text. Pre-screening and assessments ultimately are a part of the discourse of risk management. Trainers assess and screen their clients to make sure the client is healthy enough to exercise. This helps to ensure the trainer cannot be sued. *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* states that,

> [I]t is the legal and ethical obligation of every trainer and facility to ensure that clients entering a facility are reasonably safe. Pre-exercise screening is a crucial first step in the personal training process. It is part of a fitness professional’s duty of care and therefore is part of their legal responsibility (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 100).

The *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text repeatedly emphasises the legal importance of having every client sign a PAR-Q (Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire),
stating that it is the trainer’s “legal responsibility to have a signed par-q” from every client (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 100-101, 108).

The discourse of expert knowledge is closely connected to scientific jargon, gaze, confession, stratification of the field, norms, the importance of screening and assessments, client communication, and risk management. The expert knowledge the trainer holds can only be understood as influential if the clients are willing to be taught. Therefore the discourse of expert knowledge is inextricably linked to the discourse of biopedagogy. Both expert knowledge and biopedagogy can be understood as existing within the wider discourse of risk management.

The discourse of biopedagogy: client communication and motivation. To recapitulate Chapter Two, biopedagogy can be defined as, a “pedagogy of bios when ‘bios’ is defined as ‘how to’—how to live, how to eat, how much to eat, how much to move, how to move” (Harwood, 2009, p. 15). Biopedagogy is the process of teaching individuals appropriate modes of conduct—it is education that teaches individuals how to conduct their “conduct” (Miller & Rose, 2008, p. 14). Being a personal trainer and fitness writer is about teaching people how to eat, sleep, drink, and move. It is a job based on teaching clients ‘how to’ live. Since the Foundations of Professional Personal Training text teaches trainers ‘how to’ teach clients ‘how to’ participate within the field, it exists within the discourse of biopedagogy.

Foundations of Professional Personal Training is framed in a way that makes it clear that part of the responsibility of a trainer is to influence others. In the preface of the text it is stated that one of the goals of Can-Fit-Pro is, through programs like the Can-Fit-Pro certification, to increase by 20% the “proportion of Canadians who are physically active, eat healthy and are at healthy body weights by 2015” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. vi). Foundations of Professional
Personal Training defines a personal trainer as “an individual who works one-on-one or in a group setting” where the “goal is to improve the client’s level of fitness or health” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. ix). In my experience, people are thirsty for biopedagogical information regarding how they should conduct themselves. Even when I am not working, people ask my advice on how they should act. For example, when I phoned MasterCard to register my new credit card, the woman on the phone asked me nutrition advice and confessed that she had terrible eating habits and needed my help (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 169). I often do not tell people what I do for a living because I do not always want to have to talk about work.

Can-Fit-Pro would not approve of this. Foundations of Professional Personal Training makes it clear that Can-Fit-Pro believes it is a trainer’s job is to continually espouse the benefits of fitness so that people are motivated to change their behaviour and ‘buy into’ the field of fitness. For example, the text states: “as fitness professionals, we have a responsibility to guide and motivate others to improve their level of health and wellness. We must promote the benefits of regular activity and help people understand why they should be active” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 5). Of course, the text is not encouraging individuals to be active and eat better in an unstructured manner. The book specifies particular ways individuals should be active and healthy. This specificity legitimizes the need to pay for expert knowledge.

For example, the book breaks down specific health and fitness guidelines that individuals should proscribe—recommendations for specific exercise duration, repetition schemes, and types of exercises (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 6). The text does not say individuals should simply be more active, drink more water, and eat healthfully. The text gives specific guidelines on water consumption, exercise recommendations, and food portion size (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 17).
These specific recommendations lead to personal trainers becoming biopedagogical tools. Individuals need to know how to monitor themselves so that they can know if they are successfully living up the recommendations. Can-Fit-Pro certifies trainers who know how to monitor clients and how to teach clients how to monitor themselves.

Self-monitoring and monitoring others are both important parts of the industry (Markula & Pringle, 2006; Pronger, 2002). “The products of physical fitness, such as fitness appraisals and exercise equipment such as heart rate monitors, offer objective calculations of individual bodies’ productivity to the projects of self-creation and self-preservation” (Pronger, 2002, p. 176). Monitoring yourself, monitoring others, and being monitored by fitness experts such as a personal trainer or a physiotherapist are important parts of the (re)production of the fitness field. If the trainer does not know how to properly assess and monitor the client, the trainer does not know how to appropriately train the client. Can-Fit-Pro teaches their trainers to believe they need baseline information so they can appropriately train the client. Baseline information ensures the client does not get injured. For example, the text states that trainers should “closely observe clients who wish to exercise every day to ensure they do not overtrain” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 41). Specific norms and assessment information help convince the client he or she needs to hire a trainer over the long term so that he or she can measure improvements, and again we see the interconnectedness of expert knowledge, biopedagogy, and risk management.

*Foundations of Professional Personal Training* teaches the trainers they certify to teach clients disciplinary techniques that the clients can use to monitor themselves. Trainers are taught to teach their clients to read food labels and to keep a journal about their food and exercise habits.
Biopedagogical disciplinary techniques of ‘assessment’ and ‘monitoring’ are not limited to personal training. There is a plethora of fitness media (including my column in *The Globe and Mail*) that helps individuals learn to monitor themselves.

There are even smartphone applications that will help individuals monitor their food and water intake. One of my clients showed me an iPhone app that she had downloaded that reminded her to drink enough water. When you turn the iPhone on, a message on the screen says, “Did you remember to drink enough water today? Record your water consumption so you don’t get dehydrated” (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 136). Expert knowledge legitimizes the existence of the app and the intense monitoring that the app provides. The importance of hydration is an example of the discourse of expert knowledge and risk management. The expert knowledge provided helps mitigate the negative health implications of dehydration. This expert knowledge, based on the discourse of risk management, leads to someone downloading a biopedagogical disciplinary tool, like the app. Downloading the app is an example of someone consuming the field. Downloading the app leads to the individual changing their water consumption. Changing one’s water consumption is an example of biopedagogy. Biopedagogy is connected to the discourses of expert knowledge and risk management.

*The art of communication.* In order for a personal trainer to be a successful biopedagogical tool, the trainer needs to be able to communicate with the client in a way that motivates the client to listen. This ability to communicate with clients is what I call the ‘art’ of communication. Biopedagogy is only worthy of analysis if the person being taught ‘how to act’
listens and, at least in part, absorbs the advice. The field can only survive if enough people are
not only willing to listen, but want to pay to listen to a trainer’s advice. Part of being a successful
trainer is understanding your communication style and what you communicate about with each
individual client you train. Communication styles exist on a continuum. I have some clients who
only want me to discuss the physical act of training. I have other clients who mostly just want to
chat. For the most part, the communication needs of the client differ slightly from session to
session. That is why I call client-trainer communication an ‘art.’ As a trainer you have to know
how to change your communication style not just from client to client, but session to session.
This is why it makes sense that the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text dedicates
a large portion of the book to teaching trainers how to best communicate with—and motivate—
their clients.

It is made clear that for a trainer to be successful they have to understanding that
their relationships with clients are based on more than just the proscription of exercises.
*Foundations of Professional Personal Training* states:

[I]n order for personal trainers to be truly effective they need to have a keen
understanding of the clients they are working with. This means they
need to go beyond the physical components of the exercise program and
understand what motivates the clients, what scares them, what frustrates
them, and what gets them excited. They need to know what types of
questions to ask in order to get this information (Anderson et al., 2008,
p. 164).

The *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text states that “the best trainers are able to
adapt their skill set to the client they are working with” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 165). To
paraphrase, a good trainer needs to be a chameleon. They need to be able to adapt to the needs of each individual client and communicate in a way that best motivates each client. As I say to my clients, a good trainer puts the ‘personal’ into ‘personal training,’ both in the exercises picked and in the communication styles used. Communication is the main way that trainers help to create docile bodies. By communicating things like results of assessments, exercise protocols, and gym etiquette, trainers become disciplinary panoptic bodies that help to form docile bodies.

The text makes it clear that in order for trainers to be successful, they need to communicate well with different types of people. Trainers need to adjust their approach depending on the type of client they are working with:

[T]he same approach will not work with all clients. You may have one client who needs a lot of follow-up, so you must constantly keep in touch with him to keep him motivated and on track with his goals, whereas another client may simply want a lot of variety in her program and enjoy reading articles you bring in for her (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 171).

This quote demonstrates clearly that the type of trainer-client relationship that Foundations of Professional Personal Training recommends is one that is adapted for each individual client. The trainer needs to be a flexible biopedagogical tool. In the first instance the trainer is in constant contact with the client. This constant contact is the way that the trainer ensures he or she successfully teaches the client ‘how to’ adhere to exercise. In the second instance, the trainer keeps the client motivated, and teaches the client ‘how to’ act through bringing the client fitness articles.
Foundations of Professional Personal Training teaches trainers how to communicate with their clients by including biopedagogical learning tools such as case studies at the end of each chapter, outlining answers to questions personal trainers will commonly be asked by clients, providing sample scenarios, providing sample “what to do when…” questions and answers, and listing exercise cues that the trainer can use when teaching clients an exercise. For example, the section titled “Sample Scenarios” demonstrates how trainers should communicate with their clients during common training scenarios (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 79-81). This section teaches trainers ‘how to’ act in common client-trainer interactions, and therefore is an example of how the textbook is a biopedagogical tool. For example, in one box the trainer is taught how to interact with a beginner client. The text states that, “an inexperienced client can have major safety and confidence problems when getting started. Beginners should use weight machines that put them in a fixed position and allow for muscle isolation” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 81). Conveniently, on pages 174 to 265 there are photos of trainers teaching their clients exercises. These pages do not just demonstrate how the client should be positioned, but demonstrate how the trainer should stand when spotting the client. They also provide a breakdown of the verbal cues the trainer should use when walking the client through the exercises. The sample scenario section and the exercise description section work in tandem to teach the trainer which type of exercise to do with each type of client, and how to walk the client through each exercise.

The book serves as a biopedagogical tool since most common situations that the trainer will have to experience are outlined in advance. One final example demonstrates the success of the text as a biopedagogical tool. Within the text there are charts that break down in detail how a trainer should teach a client a new exercise. For example, if the trainer is teaching the leg press,
he or she is first told to bring the client to the machine. The trainer is then instructed to, “introduce the exercise verbally, mentioning the name, the muscle groups worked, and the purpose as it is relevant to the client” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 139). The text continues by stating that the trainer should say, “This is the leg press. It mainly works the thighs and is great for improving jumping, picking up heavy objects and overall fitness” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 139). The text then tells the trainer to “talk the client through the movement” by “asking how and where the client feels the exercise” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 139) and instructs the trainer to ensure the client’s “back is stable, their eyes are facing forward, and their knees track over their toes” (Anderson et al, 2008, p. 139). What makes these instructions worth referencing, is that without being aware, I have used these phrases almost verbatim hundreds of times throughout my career. I am a perfect docile body because unconsciously I monitored my actions and acted appropriately.

Through my auto-ethnographic journal I found that one of the key ways I communicate with clients is through ‘reframing’ negative situations. Through reframing the situation for my clients, I help them think more positively about their exercise experience. This helps them stay connected to, and invested in, the field. For example, when a client came in feeling badly about herself because she had missed a couple workouts I helped her feel better about the situation by saying that sometimes a break is beneficial. That instead of feeling guilty, she should feel proud of herself because of how strong she had become. She left feeling better. Conveniently, she therefore stayed motivated to continue to exercise and to continue to pay me—she stayed invested in the fitness field (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 24). I wrote a journal entry about the hypocrisy of my situation on Saturday, December 22. That day I was working on an article for
my column in *The Globe and Mail* that suggested ‘reframing’ as a motivational tool. I was also working on this section of my thesis that problematizes reframing as a communication method (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 170). This demonstrates how complex an individual’s relationship with and participation in the fitness field is. I am critical of many aspects of the field while at the same time I am consciously and unconsciously a docile body who reproduces the field.

**Conclusion.** The discourse of biopedagogy and client communication is inseparable from the discourses of expert knowledge and risk management. All three discourses work together to reproduce the field. In order for a trainer to be a successful biopedagogical tool and create docile bodies, individuals need to feel the trainer’s expert knowledge will legitimately help them mitigate current or future risk. The discourse that is not emphasized is that of the socioeconomic factors that influence participation in, and access to, the fitness field.

*Foundations of Professional Personal Training* includes only one paragraph explaining to trainers that various factors, other than the trainer’s knowledge and people skills, may effect an individual’s choice to exercise and buy personal training services. The book cites “family, work, social and financial commitments” as examples of factors that might influence exercise participation (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 40). The influence of socioeconomic characteristics on individuals’ ability to ‘choose’ to exercise is given one small paragraph. The paragraph reads, “Demographics have traditionally had a strong relationship with exercise. In particular, education, male gender, and higher income or socioeconomic status have all positively related to physical activity” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 168).
A discourse that would raise awareness of the structural, systemic, socioeconomic inequalities that influence exercise participation is severely lacking in the Can-Fit-Pro text. This appears to be because an understanding of the social determinants of health does nothing to advance the production and consumption of the fitness field. The discourses of neoliberal biopedagogy, biomedical expert knowledge, and risk management mediated by healthiest risk, used in a way that emphasizes the importance of ‘personal choice,’ (i.e., people choosing to exercise to avoid risk and manage health), are more useful discourses for Can-Fit-Pro to emphasize. These have the possibility of reproducing and proliferating the fitness field.
Chapter Seven: Insights From My Auto-Ethnographic Journal

Introduction

I was conflicted about how I should discuss my auto-ethnographic findings. I didn’t want to confine my journal findings to one single chapter since my journal findings complement the research observations and conclusions I gathered through my textual analysis of the *Foundations of Professional personal Training* text. I also did not want to limit my journal findings to ad hoc stories peppered throughout the thesis. I compromised by including auto-ethnographic insights throughout the entire text, as well as dedicating this entire chapter to outlining the major insights I gathered from keeping my auto-ethnographic journal.

One of the findings of my Can-Fit-Pro textual analysis is that the fitness field is (re)produced through taken-for-granted objective truths about the body. Therefore, I attempted to be extremely honest with myself within my auto-ethnographic journal with the purpose of understandings how the fitness ‘truths’ I hold have been influenced by my Can-Fit-Pro ‘schooling.’ I used the process of keeping a journal as a way to self-reflect on my experiences as a trainer, my experiences as a runner, and my relationships with my clients, their bodies, and my own body. I tried to uncover emotions and reactions about my body that I had never admitted to
myself, let alone to others. For example, on page nine I reflect on a knee-jerk reaction I had to a comment the receptionist at my gym made to me concerning my body.

When I was up at Absolute Endurance I had SUCH a knee jerk reaction to something an employee said. She said, “your form has really changed.” She meant it as a compliment, but I hate it when people comment on my body—which is weird since I make my living in a body conscious world. Why do I dislike it so much? Is it because I try (pretend??) that I don’t care about how I look and when people comment it makes me realise that I do care? Or is it that it makes me wonder what I looked like before? I guess I don’t like the idea that people are watching and/or judging me. Even though I study the ‘gaze’ and the ‘disciplining norm’ I guess I don’t want to accept it applies to me. Maybe I have the knee jerk reaction because I don’t want to be happy about the comments because that shows I do care about looks even though I don’t want to care (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 9-10).

My journal ended up being over 150 pages. Owing to practical space and time constraints, I synthesised my findings and highlighted three main insights: “The always evolving web of consumption and production,” “no one is free from judgement,” and “reframing: the mirage of fitness.”
1. The Always Evolving Web of Consumption and Production

Can-Fit-Pro–certified personal trainers are required to take courses to maintain their certification. Courses increase a trainer’s status, their expert knowledge, and their intellectual capital. They disseminate the information they learn to their clients. The result is that the expert knowledge circulated within the field is continually evolving. The evolution of the field helps to legitimize the consumption of expert knowledge. Clients cannot just hire a personal trainer once. Since the field is always evolving, consumption needs to be continual. The dissemination of new knowledge, or old knowledge re-branded, is one reason why the field is a continuously evolving web of consumption and production.

Trainers continually consume the field by taking courses. Trainers learn new information and then produce the field by teaching the information to clients. Continuing education is one way that the field is maintained. For example, I took two courses by Charles Poliquin in 2012. These courses changed my eating habits as well as the way I train myself and my clients. The continuing education credits I earned through taking these courses count towards maintaining my Can-Fit-Pro certification. Since clients observe my behaviour, changing the way I train and eat inevitably affects my clients (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 120, 151). My client Samantha is a good example of this. I stopped being a vegetarian after taking Poliquin’s Biosignature certification. When Samantha asked me about the course, I told her how what I learned had changed my eating habits. She was intrigued by my story. About a month later she also abandoned being a vegetarian and started eating meat (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 120). My consumption of the field led to both my client and I changing how we consumed the field—how
I was ‘schooled’ affected how I (consciously and inadvertently) ‘schooled’ my client. The consumption and production facilitated through the dissemination of knowledge by educational bodies such as Can-Fit-Pro and Charles Poliquin ensures that the field is an always evolving web of consumption and production.

2. No One is Free From Judgment

As stated in Chapter Two, Foucault posited that individuals are always both the surveyor and the surveyed (Foucault, 1997, p. 177). Disciplinary power, the disciplinary gaze, surveillance, and the creation of docile bodies are not simply top-down processes. In fact, that is why disciplinary power is so insidious. Normalizing judgments come from everyone, from peers as well as supervisors (Foucault, 1997, p. 177). I strongly believe Foucault is correct. In fact, there are so many examples of the “surveyor being surveyed” within my auto-ethnographic journal it would be impossible to name them all. I will offer a few key examples. One of my good friends, for example, has a contentious relationship with her body and food. My friend is extremely fit. She is a personal trainer, a nutritionist, and an Ironwoman, yet she continually confesses to me she feels pudgy, frustrated, and ‘less than.’ She judges her body intensely. She feels a trainer should not be fat, and that her body does not live up to the standard in her head. (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 99-100, 110, 122, 171). My friend does not just judge her clients, she judges herself.

Dan, the professional cyclist at Absolute Endurance, provides another good example. He was obviously watching and judging me because he critiqued my cycling and told me that I was not being coached very well. He told me that I was not working hard enough and then gave me
an interval training program to rectify the problem (Auto ethnographic journal, p. 69). Last, I quote myself. In a blog for *The Huffington Post* published December 26, 2012, I said:

As a personal trainer, I believe it is my job not only to help my clients achieve their goals, but to actually practice what I preach. For me, eating well and exercising are not the hard parts of “walking the walk.” (I do love chocolate, but I believe anything in moderation is healthy.) The portion of “the walk” that is hard for me is embodying the positive psychological components of health that I try to foster in my clients. I teach my clients that being healthy is not just about changing physical habits. Health is about getting into the habit of thinking positively about oneself, of forming a positive internal dialogue (Trotter, 2012c).

We all judge one another. The trainer does not simply survey the client. The clients survey themselves, other clients, and the trainer. Trainers survey their clients as well as other trainers. Trainers survey themselves. I survey myself so intensely that I blog about it in an international publication. We internalize ‘gaze’ and become panoptic structures. The fitness field survives through the production of docile panoptic structures.

3. Reframing: The Mirage of Fitness

I posit that one way the fitness field is able to reproduce itself is that, in large part, what it means to be ‘fit’ is an image—a mirage minus the reality behind the haze. Not a mirage in the sense that there is a ‘false’ fitness reality covering a ‘true’ fitness reality. Instead, I understand the mirage of fitness as a frustrating journey towards an ever-changing goal, creating a reality
where you just never feel completely successful—a reality where you always feel ever so slightly lacking, and hence the need for your continued investment in the field. The field is perpetuated by the constant ‘reframing’ of goals and experiences. Trainers are taught that in order for their clients to be successful they have to continually challenge them by changing and modifying their goals (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 123-162). For example, one of Can-Fit-Pro’s primary training principles is “progressive overload,” which means that to increase one’s fitness one must continually challenge oneself (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 7). The field is predicated on this constant need to not only survey oneself, but to change the evaluation parameters. Clients continue to be financially and ideologically invested in the field by being taught to believe that they need to regularly consume the field’s ideological and material goods. Expert knowledge within the field makes it clear that you have to continually reframe your goals to be successful—I understand this as the ‘mirage of fitness.’

Continually reframing goals can lead to a feeling of frustration since one is constantly striving for but never fully attaining the embodied reality of fitness one expects. The embodied reality of being fit is never realized because the end goal is always changing. The mirage-like quality of many of the goals of fitness is further buttressed by the ever-evolving state of expert knowledge in the field. Can-Fit-Pro requires continuous education in order for a trainer to remain certified, and this means that there is always another technique to be taught—a new ‘better way’ to get fit. This is yet another way for the docile body to continually strive to conform to its expected norms. It is a viscous cycle—clients become docile by wanting to be challenged by the new, ‘better way’ to get fit. Trainers become docile by continually having to update themselves on the ever-evolving state of expert knowledge in the field.
I can offer another example of the ‘mirage’ of fitness. In one of my “Ask the Trainer” columns in *The Globe and Mail*, I offered advice on how readers could attain better balance. The reader question that I answered was, “I have terrible balance. Are there exercises I can do to improve it?” In the column I outlined three progressive exercises readers should do to achieve adequate balance. Then, in the “Trainer’s Tip” section of the column I made sure to point out that once you have mastered the balance exercises, to continue to improve one has to increase the intensity of the exercise regimen (Auto-ethnographic journal, p. 161). This column is an example of why I think the disciplining nature of fitness is so problematic. The disciplining nature never stops—there is no definitive end. One works to achieve a fitness goal, like improving balance, but once you reach that norm the bar is raised higher. Through disciplining oneself to attain ever-changing, and often unattainable, fitness goals, the mutable ‘feeling’ of fitness that accompanies these goals (such as success) is never actually embodied or actualized.

I blogged about my feelings of frustration regarding the mirage of fitness in *The Huffington Post* on December 26, 2012. In this blog, I discussed how my running goals changed as I became fitter. Since my running goals continued to evolve, I never allowed myself to think of myself as a ‘real’ runner, and therefore never experienced the feelings that I believed would accompany reaching particular running goals:

When I started running all I wanted was to be able to run a sub 2:15 half marathon so I could call myself a “runner.” Then I wanted to run a sub two-hour half marathon. Then a sub 1:50 half. I repeatedly changed the time I thought would make me a “real runner.” I would accomplish the
goal and then I would simply change the criteria in my head. That meant I was never fully happy in my accomplishments. I never let myself think of myself as a “real” runner. We all (myself included) have to learn to value the process of working towards goals, not just achieving them. I will not stop setting athletic goals, but I will try to live in the present and enjoy being a runner as opposed to thinking of what I will feel like when I accomplish my next goal (Trotter, 2012c).

Being a ‘runner’ actually means nothing because what being a ‘runner’ means is different from person to person and, more importantly, each individual’s understanding of what it means to be a ‘runner’ changes through time. When I first started running, I thought being able to run five kilometers would make me a ‘runner.’ Once I could run five kilometers easily, I thought a half marathon would make me a ‘runner.’ Then I decided a half marathon was almost like cheating and ‘real runners’ ran full marathons. After completing a full marathon, I decided I was more of a jogger and to be a ‘real’ runner I needed to run a marathon at a certain speed. A ‘runner’ no longer simply means someone who runs. The lived experience of reaching ‘it’ is simultaneously exhilarating and frustrating because every time you think you have ‘become’ the runner, your understanding of what being a runner is evolves. Never being able to reach a fitness goal, because the goal itself is elusive and always changing, is one way that the field reproduces itself. The business of personal training is particularly predicated on the ‘mirage’ of fitness. A trainer has to help the client’s goals continually evolve so that they feel in need of the trainer’s expert knowledge and guidance. I set goals for myself as an athlete and strive to continually push
the boundaries of what a runner ‘is’ not only to challenge myself, but to model appropriate goal setting for my clients.

Fitness field participants never reach a clear definitive fitness ‘end’ because the ‘end’ is constantly evolving and therefore the participants never actually embody the emotions that are expected to accompany achieving health and fitness goals. An individual may look from the outside like they have reached their fitness goals, but since the individual does not ‘feel’ the emotions they believe should accompany their body transformation, the individual still does not like their own body and therefore continues to discipline themselves by establishing new goals. For example, Sherri Dworkin did a study in which she asked a group of women to describe the body that they would like to achieve. Half of the women already looked “like the body they claim to not have” (Dworkin, 2003, p. 140). There is a strong disconnect between the feelings that are anticipated as an end result of disciplining oneself with normative values, and the feelings that actually accompany reaching, or not reaching, a specific ‘norm’ or goal.

My lived experiences within the field of training have left me with the observation that often the fitness industry flourishes because of this very disconnect. Individuals continue to discipline themselves in the hope of achieving a ‘feeling’ of being ‘fit,’ but when they never actually embody the ‘fit’ feeling that they expect, they continue to discipline themselves by reframing their experiences and establishing new goals. People continue to judge themselves and diet when they have actually reached ‘normative’ or objective standards of health and fitness.

In addition, often, when it comes to how their body looks, people within fitness cultures do not care about being healthy in the traditional “lack of disease” definition of health
Instead, what people want is to look healthy. Many people want their body to represent health even in the absence of health. Often, individuals do not self-discipline in order to reach a norm established from scientific data; instead individuals discipline themselves based on images from magazines or television. I do not establish my criteria regarding what it is to be ‘a runner’ from norms in the Can-Fit-Pro text; at least in part my idea of what it is to be a runner is established from reading running magazines like *Runners World* or *Canadian Running*. The image and the understanding of the expected emotions of the experience of working out precede one’s lived experience of going to a gym (Markula, 2003, p. 66). Individuals may also consume images of what it means to be fit and toned before they ever set foot in a gym. I had looked at images of runners before I ever started to run. Like my experience of ‘becoming a real runner,’ often the lived experience of reaching a weight loss or fitness goal does not live up to one’s expectations. When one reaches a fitness goal, it does not feel exactly how one anticipated. This is particularly problematic when this spurs the individual to attempt to continue to lose weight, even when weight loss is no longer healthy, in the hopes that the pre-packaged feelings will eventually appear. One of my clients grappled with the problem of ‘looking fit’ versus ‘being fit’ in early 2012. She runs but has always been heavier than she would like. In the spring of 2012 she lost a significant amount of weight, which caused friends and family to constantly compliment her on her weight loss. The problem is, she is no longer eating enough to sustain her running. Now my client looks fit, but is actually athletically capable of less. For many people, and often for me too, the impetus to work out may not be about *being fit*, but a desire to have a body that *represents fitness*. The commercialized fit body is “increasingly linked to people’s sense of identity”; what has become important is the appearance of a fit body and the appearance of self-control (Shilling, 2005, p. 2). Fitness participants may want to look healthy, fit, and
beautiful even if that means supplementing or dieting in a way that actually negates the health benefits of working out.

Conclusion

Keeping the auto-ethnographic journal was an interesting experience. Although I know that I will have to spend more time self-reflecting and problematizing my relationship to my body and dominant hegemonic norms before self-change can fully occur, I also know that the insights I gathered from keeping the journal have allowed me to analyze my surroundings with a new critical lens. For example, six months after finishing the journal I attended a triathlon training camp in Mount Tremblant. In the first group meeting, I noticed the athletes all acted in ways that could be categorized under the three themes discussed in this chapter. For example, the three coaches were all both triathletes and coaches, demonstrating the ‘the web of consumption and production’ that helps to maintain the field. The coaches themselves made self-denigrating remarks about their own fitness levels. One coach even joked that because people knew who she was, she had to make sure she performed well in training. She knew she was being watched. This demonstrates the intense ‘judgment’ of ourselves and others that exist within the field. Last, I felt extremely uncomfortable in the group. Everyone in the group seemed to me to be more of a ‘triathlete’ than I am—they seemed fitter, stronger, faster. My feelings demonstrate, in addition to my insecurities, how being a ‘real’ triathlete (or runner, etc.) is a ‘mirage’—a mirage that keeps individuals judging themselves so that they consume and produce the field.
Chapter Eight: Conclusion

In summary, the *Foundations of Professional Personal Training* text is a selective representation of reality. It has been framed in a certain way, for a particular purpose. It (re)produces wider sociopolitical values. Scientific ‘truths’ stated within the text help to maintain certain power relations. Within the fitness world, science and the sale of products work together. The science within the Can-Fit-Pro textbook helps to give the fitness field legitimacy. People then feel comfortable buying their products. Trainers use scientific tests to appraise potential clients. These tests then prove to the clients that they are lacking in some way, and this means that the trainer can legitimately sell their services (Pronger, 2002, p. 127). Even if individuals are fit, trainers and other fitness experts have the ability to use scientific fitness tests to demonstrate how they could be fitter or better (Pronger, 2002, p. 139). The insidious nature of the disciplinary power wielded within the fitness field is that it does not just use scientific knowledge as the foundation on which to base its legitimacy, but actually (re)produces the expert knowledge, science, and scientific texts that it is based within (Pronger, 2002, p. 124). Every relationship I have with a client begins with an online questionnaire followed by an initial assessment session. Both allow me to assess the client’s exercise history, goals, and current level of fitness. My assessment conclusions are never that the client is not in need of services. Even if the individual is extremely fit, I still find ways to ‘sell’ my services. I find ways they could be more fit, or ways
they could reduce their chances of injury so that they believe my expert knowledge will be useful.

*Foundations of Professional Personal Training* has been framed using three interconnected discourses: neoliberal biopedagogy, biomedical expert knowledge, and risk management mediated by healthiest risk discourses. All three discourses work together to reproduce the field. In order for a trainer to be a successful biopedagogical tool and create docile bodies, individuals need to feel the trainer’s expert knowledge will legitimately help them mitigate current or future risk. The text uses these three discourses to ‘school’ trainers. The trainers become biopedagogical tools who then ‘school’ their clients to become ideal consumers of the field, thus ensuring its continued relevancy and enhancing the revenues of organizations like Can-Fit-Pro. The discourse that is not emphasized is that of the socioeconomic factors that influence participation in and access to the fitness field, and in this thesis, I have focussed on how the Can-Fit-Pro text ignores the implications of certain social determinants of health, namely gender and class. It is important to note that social determinants of health are more complex than simply socioeconomic class and gender - race, sexuality and the intersectionality of all these variables have an impact on how individuals understand and relate to their bodies, but are beyond the realm of this thesis.

There have been other scholars who have performed textual analyses of fitness textbooks. For example, many of the authors I cite in the literature review draw heavily from Brian Pronger’s seminal book, *Body Fascism* (2002). *Body Fascism* questioned the supposedly objective scientific discourse used in fitness textbooks. Foucault’s concepts of disciplinary
power, the panoptic norm, and the self are often used by scholars to analyze how the body is disciplined and controlled through exercise. Markula and Pringle (2006) are examples of scholars who have used Foucault to understand the body as situated within the fitness field. Markula also is a Pilates instructor and as such is somewhat invested in the field, but she is not structured as severely by the realities of the field as I am since she makes her living primarily as an academic. As a researcher, one of my original contributions to the field is that, since I make my living completely from within the fitness field, my research offers a fresh analysis of and perspective on the extent to which fitness textbooks ‘school’ trainers and their clients, as well as the complicated web of power relations that trainers and clients exist within.

Analyzing a field is, to some degree, less complicated, and absolutely has fewer possible negative repercussions, for scholars who do not make their living within the field. Scholars such as Pronger and Markula make their living as academics. I make my living as a trainer. I am therefore more invested in the relationships of power that exist within the fitness field. This could be viewed as a positive or a negative element of my research. I choose to view it as a positive. Through my auto-ethnographic accounts I was able to give clear examples of how relationships of power are complex, how expert knowledge only gains traction if participants within the field judge the expert worthy, and how biopedagogy can be extrapolated from its original usage in deconstructing obesity in the school system to explain trainer-client relationships.

In addition, I extended two concepts. First, I built on the theories of ‘risk’ by discussing what I call ‘appropriated risk.’ In short, this refers to how the fitness field appropriates health
risks to sell products, legitimate the field, and invest both the trainer and the client in the field. Second, I built on the concept of biopedagogy by highlighting the importance of what I call the ‘art’ of communication. By using the phrase, ‘art of communication’ I am referring to the fact that, in order for a personal trainer to be a successful biopedagogical tool, the trainer needs to be able to communicate with the client in a way that motivates the client to listen. Biopedagogy is only worthy of analysis if the person being taught ‘how to act’ listens and, at least in part, absorbs the advice. The field can only survive if enough people are not only willing to listen, but want to pay to listen to a trainer’s advice. Part of being a successful trainer is understanding how to mold both your communication style and what you communicate about to each individual client you train.

*Foundations of Professional Personal Training* would be significantly enhanced—in terms of actually promoting actual fitness and actual health—through teaching trainers to understand socioeconomic and political factors that influence an individual’s access to and propensity to exercise. In addition, I recommend that *Foundations of Professional Personal Training*, and Can-Fit-Pro as I whole, highlight the importance of self-reflection. I suggest that all fitness professionals, as cultural intermediaries, embark on some form of self-reflection since as a personal trainer I feel I have been significantly enhanced by reflecting on my position within the fitness field, my interactions with my clients, my relationship to my body, and how I conceptualize what it means to be ‘fit.’ I believe these suggestions should not be limited to personal trainers. Personal trainers are educators - they teach and school the body. Other education professionals - such as school teachers, professors, coaches - could benefit from self-reflection, an awareness of the importance of critically analysing any text that they are using in
their practice, and an awareness of the social determinants of health, socioeconomic and political factors that influence access to the knowledge they are dispersing.
### Appendix A. Results of the Indexing of the Texts Under Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Pages in the Auto-Ethnography that Refer to the Concept</th>
<th>Pages or Sections in <em>Foundations of Professional Personal Training</em> that Refer to the Concept</th>
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<td>v.vi.5.6.7. An individual’s choice to make a behavior change (165-167). SMART goals (170171)</td>
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<td>2. Choice</td>
<td>2.3.31.40.53.55.90.91.112.13.114.117.119.120.123.127.130.136.137.141.142.149.152.158.164.165.166.171.172.173</td>
<td>v.vi.ix.4.5.6.17/18/19. Factors influencing choice(40). An individual’s choice to make a behavior change (165-167). SMART goals (170171)</td>
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<td>3. Self-reflexivity</td>
<td>1.3.4.12.21.25.34.40.57.58.84.92.130.162.173</td>
<td>An individual’s choice to make a behavior change (165-167). SMART goals (170171)</td>
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<td>iii. 5.6.12-20. 28-30.40-47.53-56. 78-83.100-120. 124-139. 142-159. 165-167. 170-174. 265-297.</td>
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<td>8. Subjectivity, identity</td>
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<td>Chapter 9 - categories based on assessment (110-120). “At risk” categories (113). Strength categories (115). Personality styles (171). Individual’s exercise preferences (172-173). Fears and perceptions (173)</td>
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<td>9. Representation</td>
<td>16.21.26.32.35.37.39.42. 43.44.46.49.51.83.86.87.89. 94.95.99.100.101.111.126.127.128.139.148.159.160.161.162</td>
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<td>2/3, 12, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 39, 40, 41, 44, 50, 55, 56, 57, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 66, 77, 81, 82, 86, 87, 92, 105, 130, 137, 138, 139</td>
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<td>Chapter 8: Preexercise screening (99-108), Chapter 9: Fitness Assessment (109-120).</td>
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<td>17. Assessment forms</td>
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<td>102, 103, 104-106, 112, 119, 166, 172-173, 184, 192</td>
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<td>Exercise prescriptions (7, 40).</td>
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<td>B. Shame</td>
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<td>Fear and perceptions (173).</td>
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<td>C. Guilt</td>
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<td>D. Judgment (of other people’s bodies and of one’s own; connected to norms, panoptic gaze, internal gaze, etc.), comparison</td>
<td>1.7. 9. 10.12. 17.18.21.22.23.24.25.26.27. 28.29.30.31.32.33.34.35.36. 37.38.39.40.41.42.43.44.47. 49.50.51.55.56.57.59.61.62. 63.64.65.67.68.71.73.74.75. 77.78.79.80.81.82.83.84.85. 86.87.89.90.91.92.93.94.96. 98.99.100.101.102.103.105. 106.107.108. 110.111.112.113.116.117.11 8.119.120.121.122.123.124. 125.126.127.128.129.130.13 1.132.133.134.135.136.137. 138.139.140.141.142.143.14 4.145.146.147.148.149.150. 153.154.155.157.158.159.16 0.161.162.163.164.165.166. 167.168.169.171.172.173.17 4</td>
<td>iii.vi.vii.17/18, 40-45, 53-56, 99-108, 109-120, 124-139, 141-159, 163-175.</td>
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<td>F. $, consumption of field</td>
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<td>G. Self-monitoring</td>
<td>2/3. 5. 6.7.10.12.18.23.24.25.28.29.30.32.33.34.37.38.39.40.42.48.50.52.55.59.61.62.63.64.65.67.68.73.74.75.77.78.80.82.83.84.85.86.88.90.91.92.94.96.99.100.101.102.103.106.107.112.113.114.116.121.122.123.124.125.126.127.128.129.13.132.134.136.137.138.139.140.141.142.143.145.147.148.149.150.151.153.154.155.157.159.160.161.162.164.165.166.171.173.174</td>
<td>vi.vii.40-45,53-56,99-108,109-120,151-152,165-167,170-171.</td>
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<td>I. Positive aspects to exercise</td>
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<td>J. “Watcher being watched”</td>
<td>32.1.2.3.5.8.9.11.12.24.26.2 7.28.33.35.36.37.38. 23.21.39.44.55.56.57.63.66. 67.68.74.82.87.93.98.99.100 .105.107.113.114.122.123.1 28.129.132.133.134.135.136 .138.143.145.148.155.158.1 63.164.165.168.170.173.174</td>
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<td>K. Addiction to exercise</td>
<td>49.52.48.58.59.64.65.66.67. 68.74.75.83.88.99.142.157.1 60.161.165.166</td>
<td>iii.vii.viii.1.3.5.6.7.9-10, 12, 30, 81, 85-95, 99-108, 109-120, 113, 142-143, 147. Avoiding risk through proper exercise technique (197-264). Risk assessment through normative charts (265-270).</td>
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<td>M. Reproduction of capital</td>
<td>10.11.21.32. 33. 35. 36. 37. 39. 41. 43. 44. 45. 46. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 55. 57. 60. 63. 64. 65. 73. 76. 78. 79. 82. 87. 89.91.94.96.97.99.101.102.1 07.108.109.110.111.114.127 .128.131.132.144.148.149.1 50.155.156.157.158.159.161 .162.164.167.168</td>
<td>iv. v. vi. vii. viii. ix. 30 (further education). Chapter 8: Preexercise screening (99-108). Chapter 9: Fitness Assessment (109-120).</td>
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<td>N. Examples of how or when expert knowledge influences consumption of field (consumption by both trainers and clients)</td>
<td>1.2.3.21.26.33.48.69.73.77.8 0.85.87.88.95.97.101.104.10 6.107.108.109.110.112.113. 114.115.116.117.118.120.12 3.124.130.131.133.136.137. 138.139. 142.145.146.147.148.150.15 1.152.153.154.155.156.157. 163.164.166.168.169</td>
<td>8-10.17-20.30.32.47.56.83-84.87-88.90-91.94-95.102-106.108.124-139. 142-159.174.175.194-195.197-264.</td>
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Appendix B: Questions Informing the Research Process

A. Is the Can-Fit-Pro textbook an example of a biopedagogical tool? If so, why and how? What are the positive or negative effects of this?

B. To what extent, if any, do trainers teach their clients how to maintain an appropriate body? What do I define by ‘appropriate’? Would I define ‘appropriate’ differently than other trainers would?

C. Could trainers be successful (as trainers) if they didn’t teach their clients how to maintain their body in a particular way? Is teaching body management an inherent part of being a trainer?

D. To what extent has the body come to be a visual sign (Hall, 1997, p. 18)? If it has become a visual sign, what is it a sign of? How is it connected to the concept of ‘fitness’ put forward by Can-Fit-Pro?

E. What problem does the Can-Fit-Pro textbook put forward as their main objective to fix? How would trainer’s actions be different if the problem were defined differently?

F. Are trainers “panoptic surveyors” of the norm? Do trainers actually have that amount of power or are we as scholars investing them with that amount of power? Is the client, as the person with the money, actually the individual who holds more of the power? If trainers are “panoptic surveyors,” do we teach our clients to be surveyors as well? Do trainers teach their clients to judge and survey other individuals?

G. Which practices, assumptions, and advice does Can-Fit-Pro offer their trainers that “makes gender happen”? (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010, p. 7). Does the proliferation of gendered norms benefit the fitness industry?

H. Does the Can-Fit-Pro textbook reproduce certain heteronormative understandings of gender and sexuality?
References


Dworkin, S. (2003). A women’s place is in the...cardiovascular room? Gender relations, the body, and the gym. In A. Bolin, & J. Granskog (Eds.). *Athletic intruders: Ethnographic*
research on women, culture and exercise (pp. 131-158). New York, NY: New York, State University Press.


_Ethnography and Education, 4_(3), 301-319.


Endnotes
i Drawing on Bourdieu’s concept of a cultural field, and Jen Smith Maguire’s use of the same concept, I conceptualize Can-Fit-Pro as situated within a larger field, the ‘fitness field.’ A field is “the structured space of positions in which an individual is located” (Elliot, 2009, p. 146). A field, such as the fitness field, pre-exists the individual and serves as a “relational force” that helps to proscribe the power dynamics that exist with that field (Elliot, 2009, p. 146). Pre-existing power relations within a field result in tacit and overt rules of comportment that affect how individuals and groups can interact within the field. “Social fields are not autonomous ‘social facts’, but depend for their continuation on the social practices of groups and individuals” (Shilling, 2005, p. 62). The concept of a field will be discussed in more detail within Chapter Two.


iii The main principles of neoliberalism include “minimal government intervention, market fundamentalism, risk management, individual responsibility and inevitable inequality as a consequence of choice” (Ayo, 2012, p. 99). Although there is often an emphasis on the implications of neoliberalism for the market and government structures, neoliberalism should be understood as more than an economic or political term. Neoliberalism is “inherently social and moral in its philosophy” (Ayo, 2012, p. 101). The philosophical and moral elements of neoliberalism play a central role in this document.

iv The concept of the “docile body” is explained in detail on pages 39-41.

v Discourse will be explained in greater detail within the “Methodology” chapter of this document. The concept of discourse, as used by Foucault, denotes more than merely the sum of statements used to describe a particular phenomenon. Rather, discourse, as theorized by Foucault, is the means by which unwritten rules become verbal manifestations, and thus encourage certain beliefs to be held by those who participate in the discourse. People who speak using the same discourse often unconsciously share a particular political, sociological, or socioeconomic point of view. To quote Foucault, “Discourse is practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Discourses are not about objects; they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own intervention” (Foucault, 1972, p. 49).

vi All names have been changed throughout this thesis.

vii Sensitizing concepts are principles that guide the researcher (Maguire, 1988, p. 188), while still allowing the researcher to have a dialogue with the text or subjects being studied (Liu, 2004, p. 250-251). Researchers who use sensitizing concepts do so because they understand what is being studied as “multifaceted and multivoiced” (Liu, 2004, p. 251). This is in direct opposition to definitive concepts, often used in the sciences. Researchers who use definitive concepts view the subject being studied as monolithic and unchanging (Liu, 2004, p. 251).

viii The findings from my textual analysis can be found in Chapter Six. The findings from my auto-ethnographic journal can be found in Chapter Seven.

ix Discourse will be further discussed in Chapter Three.
Examples of the discourse of “risk” can be found on the following pages of *Foundations of Professional Personal Training*: iii, vii-viii, 1, 3, 5-7, 9-10, 12, 30, 81, 85-95, 99-108, 109-120, 123, 142-143, 147, and 197-270.

x A computrainer is a machine that you put your bike on. It allows you to practice riding on your racing bike even though you are indoors. It is great for winter training.

xi I wrote about my experience performing assessments in my auto-ethnographic journal on pages 146 and 151.

xiii Other institutions that also play a role in teaching individuals how to act in relation to fitness, health, and the body include public institutions such as schools and the health care system, as well as private institutions such as health clubs, summer camps, and amateur and professional sports leagues.

xiv Although Can-Fit-Pro–certified professionals are currently part of the vanguard of ‘body school for grown-ups,’ the increasing professionalization and regulation of kinesiology at the university level may lead to the undercutting of personal trainers as the source of this expert knowledge.

xv Part of their system of training personal trainers includes an ongoing recertification process. Each trainer has to accumulate a certain number of continuing education credits each year. An easy way for trainers to gain these credits is by attending Can-Fit-Pro’s annual conference in Toronto. Information about recertification can be found at [www.canfitpro.com/faqs#whataboutrecertification](http://www.canfitpro.com/faqs#whataboutrecertification).

xvi Information on how to obtain Can-Fit-Pro continuing education credits from attending a non–Can-Fit-Pro course can be found at [www.canfitpro.com/en/staying-certified/non-canfitpro-approved-cecs](http://www.canfitpro.com/en/staying-certified/non-canfitpro-approved-cecs). In order for a course to become eligible for Can-Fit-Pro continuing education credits, the provider applies directly to Can-Fit-Pro. I once thought of going through the process. You fill out a form that describes the breadth of your course and you pay Can-Fit-Pro a fee.

xvii For example, trainers are often ranked and thought of as more or less successful depending on the type of gym they work at. New trainers work at box gyms like GoodLife. More successful trainers work at Boutique studios. The difference is that at boutique studio trainers have to be responsible for getting their own clients. They accept money directly from the client and pay the studio a rental fee. At gyms like GoodLife, the client pays the gym and the gym gives the trainer a small cut. Boutique studios allow trainers to make more money. Those trainers who are even more successful own their own boutique studios, or own small gyms such as Dynamic Conditioning Centre and Absolute Endurance, two small gyms that I frequent.

xviii I put true in quotation marks because obviously Dan has no idea what my genetic potential is, but stating something like “unlocking true potential” to a potential client is one way that the trainer invests the client.

xix There is a long history of this phrase within cultural studies. The phrase can be traced back originally to Raymond Williams.

xx Lupton’s book *Risk and Sociocultural Theory* (1999) deals with the various ways that theorists have posited calculating risk. Lupton demonstrates that although risk management is often connected to rationality and mathematics, in modern day risk societies the calculation of risk is more complicated and should not be “assigned to the calculable-incalculable dichotomy” (p. 138).

xxi If you look up “Michelle Obama arms” on Google, an entire section of images will appear, as well as a plethora of articles.
As seen in Appendix A, examples of “risk vocabulary” can be found with the Foundations of Professional Personal Training textbook on the following pages: iii, vii, viii, 1, 3, 5-7, 9-10, (“health risk” evaluation), 12 (scope of practice), 30 (beginner vs. advanced), 81 (risk of improper technique), 85-95 (injury recognition concepts), 99-108 (pre-exercise screening), 109-120 (fitness assessment), 113 (how to predict health risk), 142-143 (“what should I do when...” questions), 143 (changing program to resist against not achieving goals), 147 (things to avoid), 197-264 (avoiding risk through proper exercise technique), and 265-270 (risk assessment through normative charts). Examples of “risk vocabularies” can be found within my auto-ethnographic journal on the following pages: 54-55, 70, 84, 89, 90, 113, 123, 126, 136, 141-142, 145-148, and 152.

Although this thesis focuses on Can-Fit-Pro’s Personal Training Specialist certification, Can-Fit-Pro also offers other certifications such as Group Exercise Specialist, Nutrition and Wellness Specialist, and Mind-Body Specialist.

There is a new Journal titled The Journal of Mundane Behaviour (http://www.mundanebehavior.org/issues/v1n1/jmbv1n1.pdf).

In Chapter Five I offer an analysis of my seemingly mundane racing rituals.

I wrote a blog for The Huffington Post about how to form new health and fitness habits (Trotter, 2013a).

The concept of capital as used above, has neo-Marxist underpinnings. Bourdieu extended an analysis of capital to other forms of capital such as cultural, symbolic, and educational capital (Bourdieu, 1983).

I started in the industry by volunteering at the YMCA. The YMCA has a program where they will teach you to be a fitness instructor if you then volunteer your services. I volunteered at the YMCA for 10 or more hours per week all the way through high school. Once in university I became certified as a personal trainer and group exercise instructor through Can-Fit-Pro. I worked at Trainers Fitness Centre at Bathurst and Bloor for almost five years before I moved on and started working at small boutique studios. I have worked at three different boutique studios. My next move will be to open my own boutique studio.

For additional examples see pages 8, 9-10, 19-20, 30-32, 47, 56, 83-84, 79-81, 86-88, 91-92, 94-95, 108, 139, 142-143, 148-159, 154-159, 171, 174-175, and 194-195 (Anderson et al., 2008).

To view how I have displayed these credentials, view my “About Me” page on my website: www.kathleentrotter.com/about-me/.

My inductive codes are categorized as such because my decision to use them emerged throughout the process of writing and analyzing my journal. That said, I am aware that many of them are also inspired by the scholarly work I read while preparing to write my thesis. I realize that they are thus an amalgam of deductive and inductive coding. I decided to include them as inductive codes because it only occurred to me to use them after analyzing the content of my journal.

I am not exactly sure why I bring in the most business. I think in large part it is because I have a strong (although I am sure problematic) desire to be busy. Many trainers don’t want to work the kind of hours I work. In addition, the fact that I write for The Globe and Mail gives me a certain amount of legitimacy and prestige. Clients often tell me that they like to tell their friends they train with a columnist from The Globe and Mail. Last, I am busy because my mom has wealthy friends and many of them train with me.
Bourdieu defines capital as “the set of actually useable resources and powers” (1983, p. 114). He lists a number of different forms of capital: “economic capital, cultural capital and also social capital” (1983, p. 114).

Information on the origins of heart rate zone testing can be found at http://m.utoledo.edu/hshs/kinesiology/pdfs/Legge_Banister1.pdf. Note, there is no reference to the original scientific testing, or the resulting literature, in the Foundations of Professional Personal Training text.

Information about this race can be found at www.runbarbados.org.

Education on heart rate zones can be found within Foundations of Professional Personal Training on pages 41-45.


Examples of the positive aspects of exercise can be found on the following pages of my auto-ethnographic journal: 6, 12, 15, 24-25, 33, 41, 43, 47-50, 66, 68, 71, 79, 82, 85, 93, 95-98, 101, 104-105, 111, 118, 122-123, 126, 130, 135-137, 146, 148, and 152.

For more information on this topic as it pertains to men see White and Gillett (1994).

The fitness industry statistics for Canada state that the total revenue from fitness clubs in 2010 was $2,190,688,500 CAD. The total number of fitness club members was 5,370,000 (15.74% of the population). Available from: www.english.ficdn.ca/canadian-fitness-industry-statistics.

Statistics Canada states that “between 1981 and 2009, fitness levels of Canadian children and youth, as well as those of adults, declined significantly, according to the first findings from the Canadian Health Measures Survey (CHMS). This is the most comprehensive national survey ever conducted in Canada to determine fitness levels.” Available from: www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/100113/dq100113a-eng.htm.

In Appendix A, I have indexed ways in which the Foundations of Professional Personal Training text pre-scripts client-trainer interactions. These interactions are indexed under Deductive Concept 16, which specifically references verbal interactions between the trainer and client such as case studies, questions and answers, sample scenarios, and sample verbal exercise demonstrations. Examples of these biopedagogical interactions can be found on pages 8-10, 19-20, 30, 32, 47, 56, 83-84, 79-81, 86-88, 91-92, 94-95, 108, 139, 142-143, 148-159, 154-159, 171, 174-175, 194-195, and 197-264 (Anderson et al., 2008).

Examples of how I ‘frame’ my clients’ experiences can be found on the following pages of my auto-ethnographic journal: 7, 20, 24-25, 47, 53, 68, 69, 76, 79-81, 84, 97, 113, 115-116, 122, 144, 164, and 170.

The text teaches trainers to be biopedagogical tools by teaching trainers exactly how to talk with their clients. Examples can be found on the following pages: 8-10, 19-20, 30, 32, 47, 56, 83-84, 79-81, 86-88, 94-95, 108, 139, 142-143, 154-159, 171, 174-175, 194-195, and 174-264 (Anderson et al., 2008).

Fitness norms listed in Appendix C include the following: cardiovascular norms (resting and maximal heart rates), anthropometry and body composition norms (waist-to-hip norms), muscular strength norms (hand-grip strength), norms of muscular endurance (push-ups, partial curl-ups, and sit-ups), and flexibility norms (sit-and-reach test).
Other examples of the discourse of risk management are indexed in Appendix A under L. Risk management discourses can be found on the following pages of the text: iii, vii-viii, 1, 3, 5-7, 9-10, 12, 30, 81, 85-95, 99-108, 109-120, 142-143, 145, 147, 197-264, and 265-270 (Anderson et al., 2008).

Information on the insurance offered through Can-Fit-Pro can be found at the following website: http://www.canfitpro.com/en/liability-insurance.

See Vertinsky’s article on “Physique as destiny” for information on how somatotyping has been used as a method of categorizing bodies.

This is extrapolated from Elliot who states that “the classifying power of taste is expressed in the consumption of Culture. Bourdieu found that the possession of specific forms of cultural capital—of intellectuals and artists, for example—is used to maintain social dominance over those who do not possess such competences” (2009, p. 147).

As seen in Appendix A, Foundations of Professional Personal Training teaches trainers expert language and scientific jargon in part through their inclusion of charts, graphs, and tables. See the following pages for examples: 6, 15-16, 18, 23, 25, 27-29, 31, 34-36, 38-40, 42, 44-46, 50-53, 58-80, 82, 87, 89, 107, 114, 118, 124-131, 133, 135-139, 144-147, 149-152, and 167-168.

Section two of the Foundations of Professional Personal Training is titled “Screening and Assessment.” This section teaches trainers how to pre-screen and assess their clients (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 99-122). As seen in Appendix A, assessment forms can be found on the following pages in the text: 102-106, 112, 119, 166, 172-173, and 184.

Clear examples of how surveyors (such as personal trainers) are surveyed, or what I coded as “the watcher being watched,” can be found on the following pages: 1-3, 5, 8, 9, 11-12, 21, 23-24, 26-28, 32-33, 35-39, 44, 55-57, 63, 66-68, 74, 82, 87, 93, 98-100, 105, 107, 113-114, 122-123, 128-129, 132-136, 138, 143, 145, 148, 155, and 158 (Auto-ethnographic journal).

These questions were inspired by Carol Lee Bacchi who states that when deconstructing a text, one should look at what the text states as the “key problem.” She states that what is important is how that problem is represented. Bacchi calls this method of textual analysis “problem representation” (Bacchi, 1999, p. 1). She states that the assumptions and values that shape the problem in the first place will affect the antidote to the problem. Labeling something as a “problem” gives it a “separate existence.” This separate existence frames the problem as something that needs to be fixed, and opens up a need for expert knowledge to fix the problem (Bacchi, 1999, p. 5).