



**MEGAMACE**  
FITNESS PRODUCTIONS

## **Fitness Video Production 101**

By Mason Bendewald, CEO and Founder of MEGA MACE Fitness Productions

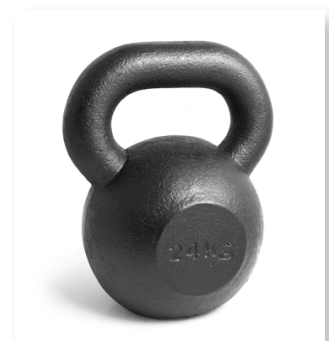


## **Video is the future of the fitness industry.**

Here at MEGA MACE Fitness Productions, we receive calls every week from personal trainers, professional athletes, and Hollywood celebrities who all want to make the next big fitness video series like RevAbs or Insanity. We've worked with major brands like DailyBurn and Beachbody to produce video series that have become the most recognizable fitness brands in the industry. We have directed hundreds of fitness video productions, including P90X®, which has sold millions worldwide. The health and fitness business is a multi-billion-dollar-a-year industry and everyone wants a piece of it.

***We get the same questions over and over, so we've created a Fitness Video Production 101 Guide for anyone who wants to learn more about using video to strengthen their fitness brand.***

Here are MEGA MACE Fitness Productions, we are experts at what we do. We help people get healthy and lead more productive, happier lives. Whether you're a company looking to break into the market, or a personal trainer trying to get more exposure, this guide will give you an overview of what it takes to produce and distribute your first fitness video.





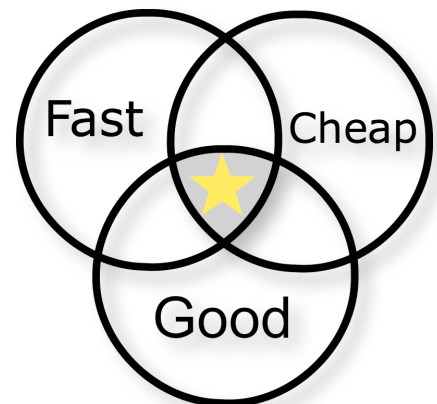


## Before You Start: Set Realistic Goals.

Before you do anything else, you need to set realistic goals for your fitness video production. If you are an individual trainer trying to break into the fitness video industry, you might have to make your first video on your own. You are probably going to start with a small budget. Set your production expectations to match. If you're a larger brand, you'll have more money to work with, but a lot more people to pay. *"It takes a lot of money to make a lot of money"* – is a statement that is true in this business. Great careers and brands take time to build.

***Do you need a fitness video that is good, cheap, and fast? You cannot have all three, but you can have two at a time.***

- \* You can make it **good and cheap**, but it will take a lot of time. You could miss your window of market opportunity, and that could cost you in the end.
- \* You can have it **good and fast** if you hire the right people, but that's the most expensive option.
- \* You can also get something **cheap and fast**, but you'll sacrifice quality. This is often a waste of both time and money in the end.



The compromise is **somewhere in the middle**. To make something of quality takes time and money, period. Everyone new to the industry wants eye-popping quality with an experienced crew; they want it next week for what amounts to a micro budget. It's just not realistic.

# Budgets

The first thing we do when MEGA MACE Fitness Productions is hired for a fitness video production is to have a kick-off meeting with the client to go over the product and production expectations. We design a budget based on that information.

Below are three general budget ranges based on my experiences producing in Los Angeles and New York. There are many unique factors that go into a final budget, but at least you'll have a place of reference before you start calling companies or raising funds.

If you're shooting a series of workouts, everything takes longer: **development**, **production** and **post production**. Conversely, if you're shooting one workout, your costs will be lower. These general budgets are for production and post-production. They do not include marketing or distribution costs

## ***The Entrepreneur*** **\$3,000 – 90,000**

If you are only looking to make a few videos, your budget is probably safe in this range. You will likely shoot on-location, perhaps outside, or using someone's home gym – if you're on the higher end of this range you may be using an existing studio set and hire a small production company.

### ***Pro Tip: Sound Matters***

Hire people with experience and *do not skimp on sound*. Consumers will forgive you if your set doesn't look like the LA Fitness Center at Rockefeller Center, but they will not forgive you if the audio is unprofessional. There's a sound department on a shoot for a reason – they know the equipment and what to listen for. Good sound separates a professional shoot from an amateur one.

### ***Planning For Low Budget Productions***

Even though you have a low budget, you still have to take time to develop your workout and plan your production. What might go wrong usually does: if you're shooting outside, what's your backup plan for rain, construction noise or the police showing up? You're in jeopardy of losing time, money, the location and/or your crew, so have Plan B in place.

## ***Well-Established Businesses*** **\$100,000 – 250,000**

Companies with a medium-sized budget can afford to do a small series with multiple workouts. This budget range allows you to work with a fitness video production company like MEGA MACE and a team of experts with a multi-camera set-up.

The professional crew and your director will focus on your brand's objectives to make sure that your product's strengths are highlighted during the shoot.

### ***Pro Tip: – Hire A Fitness Video Production Company***

There are unique challenges and many tricks to producing a great fitness video. Hire a production company that specializes in this field. You don't want a team learning on your dime. Your investment should get you a crew with the right experience and a track record of successful fitness videos under their belt.

### ***Planning For Medium Budget Productions***

Research your production company and talk to the director/producer to make sure it's a "fit". Find out what they will be bringing to the table. Look at examples of their work and make sure it matches your expectations for what you're willing to pay.



## **Large Budgets**

### ***P90X® and beyond \$ 250,000 – 600,000 +***

At this level, companies make a choice about on-camera talent. Companies can choose to work with bankable names like Jane Fonda or **The Biggest Loser trainers** and make a good return on their investment, or they decide to work with an unknown trainer who has a workout product that the company is looking to develop and market.

If a brand decides to use a trainer who has developed their own program, the trainer signs a contract giving a company exclusive rights to develop workouts with the trainer for a set amount of time. Companies like Gaiam, Beachbody, LionsGate, Anchor Bay, and Acorn Media will invest more to get the kind of quality fitness videos that you expect to see streaming online or on retail shelves. These companies employ hundreds of people in marketing and web development departments. They will fly to exotic locations like Hawaii or build large original sets like we did for P90X®.

#### ***Professional Tip: Program Development Takes Time.***

MEGA MACE Fitness Productions put nearly a year of development time into Beachbody's P90X® before we ever called "action" on the set. We planned a two-week production schedule with time built in for Tony Horton to recuperate when we were ready to shoot. We shot thirteen workouts with a cast and crew of nearly 100 and we took our time. When you're spending this much money, it makes sense to spend more time planning to insure a smooth ride. Even though you are taking the time to plan, make sure the keep the spark of creative energy alive. When working on a project this large and complex, it's easy to get bogged down in red tape if you're not careful.

#### ***Planning For The Large Budget Production:***

Recently, MEGA MACE Fitness Productions worked with a new company that had deep pockets looking to break into the fitness video market. They nickel and dined their way through the entire process. We strongly encouraged the client to spending money on the star's wardrobe. It made no sense to save \$300 when they were spending hundreds of thousands to get the product to market. Trust your director. If he or she says you need it, you do. We felt strongly enough that cashed in a favor with Lululemon to dress the star because we knew it was worth it. We didn't want our star suffering because of the client's short-sightedness. **At this level of production, you don't try to save money.** You have to spend whatever it takes to make the best product possible. After the production was finished, the client made second-rate packaging decisions. You wouldn't pick up the product if you found it in a 1/2 price bin – which is where it ended up.



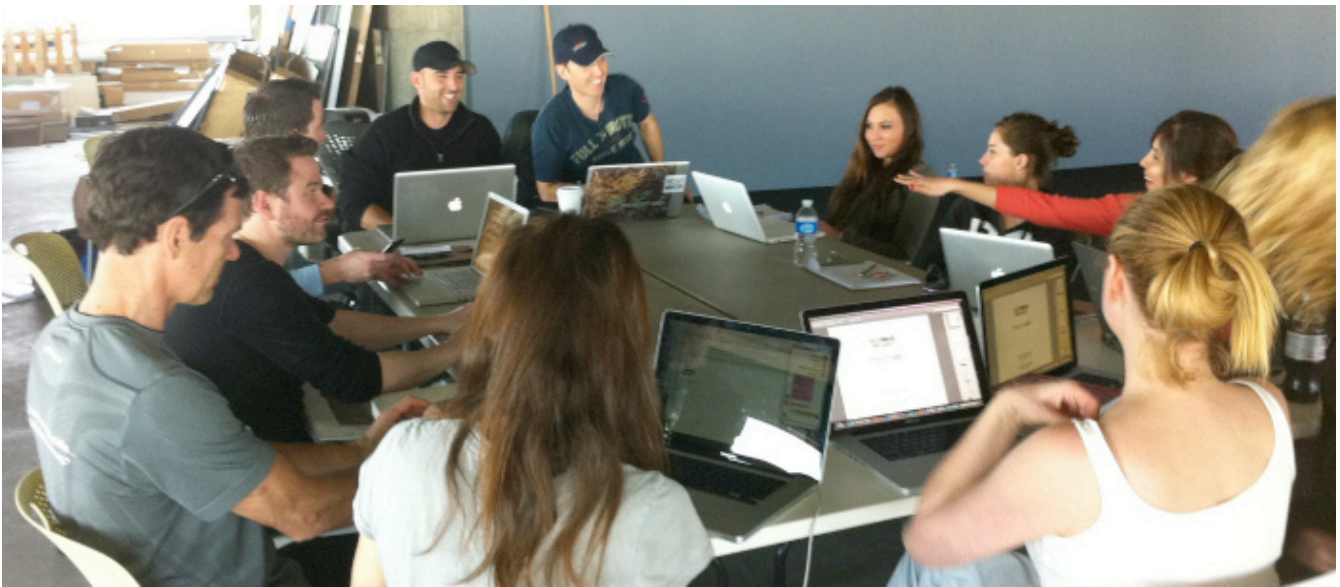
## The Four Stages Of Fitness Video Development

Most people reading this guide will not have a large company with a P90X®-sized budget behind them to start. You can still make a great workout video and get it out there. Continue on to read [The Four Stages Of Fitness Video Production](#), then look back at the smaller budget section to discover a recipe ripe for emerging talent and businesses.

You'll be more successful in accomplishing the goals of your fitness video production if you follow a repeatable process that will deliver the best results. Here is a breakdown of the four basic phases that are necessary to take a product from concept to sale.







## Stage 1: Development

You have a workout and a trainer, and now it's time to build them into something magic on-screen. What's the big difference between Jack LaLanne, Denise Austin, Tony Horton, and Richard Simmons? They all have the same basic philosophy; *Exercise and eat well*, right? Ever hear the quote "*There are no new ideas – only new ways of perceiving them*"? Consider this:

***"There are no new exercises – only new ways of delivering them."***

Delivering a new and inspiring workout concept starts with the talent. Charisma, communication, and a compelling life philosophy all matter. Bringing out the best in a trainer's personality and packaging it into something powerful that people will want to experience day after day is the first place to start when you are developing your concept.



### ***Working With New Trainers***

So what if you are working with a new face? That is a good thing! You have something that no one else has seen before. The first thing that we do at MEGA MACE Fitness Productions when we work with a new trainer is get to know them personally. We need to learn more about their life philosophy and what makes them tick so that we can help bring the trainer's unique qualities through the lens and inspire the audience.



### ***Discover What Makes You Different***

Don't try to recreate a program that is already a success. For example, Bob Harper from *The Biggest Loser* recently shot a program called *Inside Out*. The production company built a set much like the P90X® set, mimicking its style and feel. While imitation is flattering, they overlooked their most valuable asset in my opinion – *Bob* and *his* unique personality and strengths. He's got a completely different delivery than Tony Horton. P90X® is the best-selling fitness video of all time, in part because Beachbody's CEO Carl Daikeler took a big risk on something that no one else had ever offered the public – an Extreme Home Fitness program.



### ***Spend Time On A Strategy***

Don't just assume you can jump in and shoot something. successfully. Carl painstakingly worked on how to sell the public on the differences that Tony and P90X® delivered, not the similarities to all the workouts already available. The strategy obviously paid off. Just like an architect works on drawings of a building before the first brick is laid, you need to take time to plan your concept before you start spending a lot of money. This is true no matter what budget level you are at.





## Stage 2: Production

Production is the glamorous and fun part of the business, and in many ways the easiest – if you’ve done your homework. Whether it’s a low budget fitness production or fitness series with a large budget, it will only be a success if you have developed your workout for camera and done thorough pre-production work before the cameras start rolling. You’ll hear the phrase “we can fix it in post” a lot. But why break it in the first place?

When the director calls “action”, there should be no question about how the talent should perform the workout, or how the look and feel of your fitness brand comes across on camera.

Production will be the most expensive part of your overall budget because there are so many things to pay for at once: stage rentals, cameras, lighting, wardrobe, food, audio, director, producers and the entire crew!

The more you plan ahead, the more fun you will have on the set. When you stay relaxed, your creative juices will flow, and that’s when the magic happens.





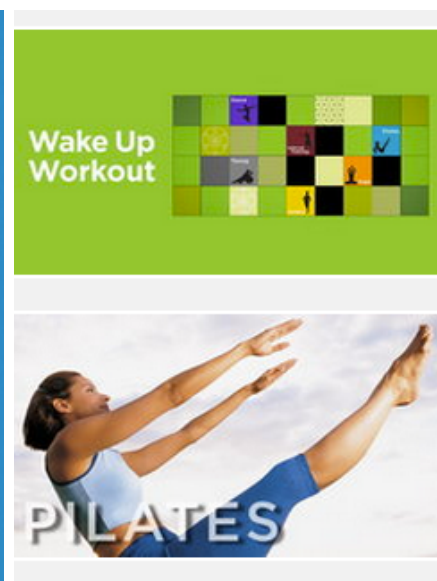
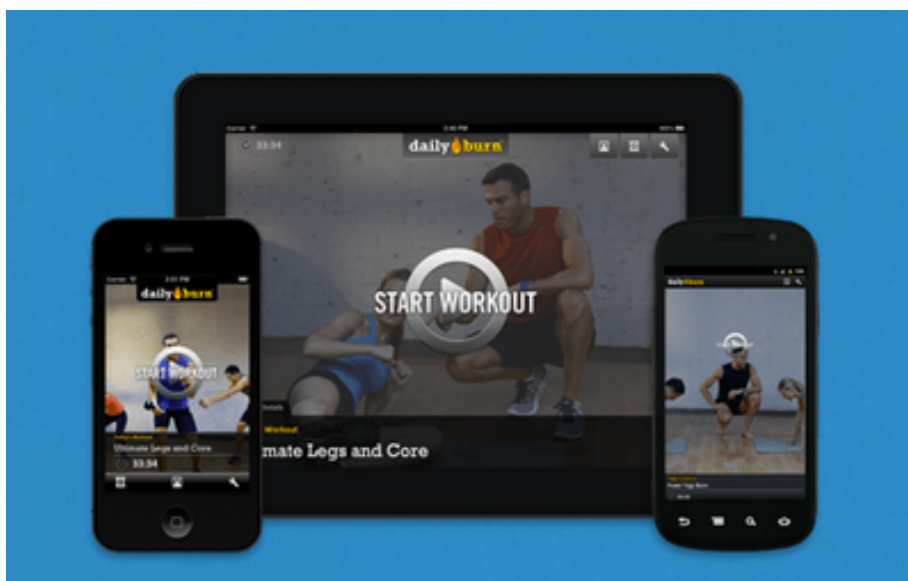
## Stage 3: Post-Production

Post-production includes music, graphics, and editing. These elements are part of your budget that you should have carefully allotted during the planning stages of pre-production. MEGA MACE Fitness Productions does all of this for our clients. In most cases, the client simply approves work at certain steps in the process.

We work with composers, editors and graphic designers to bring everything together into a compelling audio-visual celebration. Excellent post-production work supports a trainer's delivery of a fantastic workout that your brand's customers will enjoy doing again and again.

Streaming workout videos require a new kind of post-production that seamlessly integrates the video content with a variety of media players, including gaming consoles, mobile devices, and internet-enabled televisions. At MEGA MACE Fitness Productions, we work with the software development teams of our clients to collaboratively create innovative multimedia experiences for viewers. Current trends in post-production that utilize the skills of traditional post-production teams and software development teams include interactive fitness challenges, as well as on-screen body composition and fitness data input that viewers can save and try to improve upon as the progress in the fitness video workout program.





## Stage 4: Marketing And Distribution

### *Marketing*

Once you have a great finished product you have to make decisions about marketing and distribution – should you sell directly to consumers, or do you license your content to companies like Netflix or Hulu? In the case of a large company like Gaiam, they go right into the large markets. Beachbody is a direct response company and produces an infomercial, another huge production, to sell products directly to the public.

### *Distribution*

As online distribution opens up, you don't need to have a DVD as your physical product. Streaming fitness video is becoming more popular with the growth of mobile devices and streaming media players. Large companies can create paywalls and host fitness video series and interactive online communities built around their fitness stars.

But what if you don't have a huge company to back your product? Fear not. Today there are many ways to market and distribute your own products. It's easier than ever to create your own website and upload HD clips to YouTube and get worldwide exposure. You have the opportunity to sell your video to anyone around the globe.

TV, DVD's, movies, radio and the Internet are all merging. You probably have at least one friend already adopting a new device like AppleTV, GoogleTV, Boxee or RokuXDS. These are all new ways we'll be viewing and sharing content in the coming years. This is an exciting time if you're looking to get your product out there.





**Now go make your fitness video production dream a reality.**

We hope this information has been helpful, but of course it is just a start. If health and fitness is your calling, we encourage you to forge ahead and create a lifelong pursuit of helping people discover a better way of life through exercise and better nutrition.

***Real wealth is in your health.***

Wishing you great success,

Mason Bendewald and the MEGA MACE Fitness Productions Team