

34TH ANNUAL

ISLAND FITNESS CONFERENCE

FEATURING Sam Spinelli, Chad Benson, Helen Vanderburg and more!

SATURDAY November 1st 2025 | Esquimalt Gorge Park Pavilion



islandfitnessconference.com

PRESENTERS and SESSIONS

SAM SPINELLI

Sam is a Doctor of Physical Therapy and strength & conditioning coach with experience coaching individuals from the sick & frail to high-performing Olympic athletes. He cofounded Thrive Kelowna in 2021 to help provide Kelowna with high quality coaching. Sam is a husband & father and can usually be found out doing active things with his two young daughters.



KEYNOTE PRESENTATION:

The Resilient Revolution: Building Bodies That Last 8:30am – 10am | UPPER PAVILION

A/L

We're long overdue for a shift in how we think about fitness, rehab, and health. In this keynote, Dr. Sam Spinelli will lay out a new framework, one that sees pain, injury, and performance not as separate domains, but as points along an adaptive continuum. You'll learn how to apply smarter training principles, track more meaningful metrics, and use strength as the most powerful form of medicine we have. This talk weaves together science, storytelling, and strategy to help you and your clients build bodies that truly last.

NATHAN OBRIGEWITSCH

After years of being a multi-sport athlete and competitive basketball player, Nathan eventually realized his true passion for fitness and performance training. With years of experience and passion for learning, Nathan strives to provide the most effective coaching and programming possible for his athletes and clients.



SAM SPINELLI & NATHAN OBRIGEWITSCH

Athletic Essentials: Plyos, Sprints, and Power That Transfers

10:30am – 12pm | UPPER PAVILION

A/L

Want to coach speed, power, and athletic movement ... even with clients who aren't "athletes"? This session breaks down the fundamentals of jumping, landing, acceleration, and high-velocity running. You'll learn how to build plyometric progressions, cue sprint technique, and bridge the gap between the gym and the field (or every day life). Walk away with practical drills, coaching cues, and scalable programming options.

Broken to Built: Unlock Your Back

1pm – 2:30pm | UPPER PAVILION

A/L

Still telling clients to avoid bending, twisting, or lifting heavy? Time to break the fear cycle. This session rewrites the narrative around the spine, showing you how to build a strong, mobile, and resilient back through real-world movement. We'll cover mobility, flexion, rotation, capacity, tolerance, and how to return to the activities people love, with less pain and more confidence. Your spine isn't fragile, let's prove it.

Knee Resilience: Rebuild Confidence in Squats, Stairs, and Life

3pm – 4:30pm | UPPER PAVILION

A/L

From "stairs wreck me" to "I can't squat because of my knees," this session will help you flip the narrative for your clients (and maybe yourself). We'll teach you how to rebuild tolerance, strength, and mobility in the knee through progressive, scalable exercises. Whether your clients want to get back to gardening, or hit a new squat PR, you'll live with strategies to make it happen.

KATIE THACKER & BRANDON SHERBROOK

Katie Thacker & Brandon Sherbrook are Owners of Third Space Movement,

a local, multidisciplinary fitness studio and recovery clinic. They have been mentoring and training Coaches,

Trainers, and Yoga Teachers for over a decade and specialize in Kettlebells,

Mobility, Functional Movement, Yoga and Coach Development. Together they

have taught thousands of group fitness classes, as well as leading instructor

training for kettlebells, functional mobility and yoga, providing corporate

wellness programs, supporting the local Kinesiology Programs and more. They

are passionate about uplifting the overall wellness of the greater community through movement, play and connection.

Move, Play, Connect - Morning Workout

7am – 8am | LOWER A

A

Get your body moving and energized for the day ahead through a curated session focused on playful programming and partner exercises for all levels. Through bodyweight exercises, games, mobility and more, you will learn how we can use movement and connection to regulate the nervous system, boost motivation, and create meaningful bonds. Expect to move, laugh, and leave with fun ways to help your clients feel more connected, to themselves and each other.



SHELLY MCCAFFREY

STOTT PILATES® Cadillac,
Chair & Barrels, ISP,
Mat & Reformer; Total Barre®

With an extensive background in
dance, the transition into teaching
Pilates came naturally to Shelly.

She has been a fully certified STOTT
PILATES® Instructor since 2000 and in 2002 became an
Instructor Trainer for Merrithew® specializing in STOTT
PILATES. She continued to add to her credentials in 2013
by becoming a Total Barre® IT. Shelly brings with her an
understanding and appreciation of what the body is capable
of as well as the desire to share her knowledge with others.
In her free time Shelly enjoys running, dancing and chasing
after her daughter.



STOTT PILATES® Sliding Mobility Disks for Dynamic Stabilization, Matwork -Shelly McCaffrey

1pm-2:30pm | LOWER A

A

Mobilizing the joints, from the spine to the appendages,
is necessary to maintain a supple resilient body. However,
flexibility and range of motion alone are not enough. In order
to have a fully functional physique, creating stability in all
movements is equally as important. Created by the programming
team at Merrithew®, this workout incorporates the simple
Sliding Mobility Disks™ in Matwork-based sequences that
move and challenge the musculature of the whole body.
The three-dimensional patterns include floor work for the arms,
legs and core, and progress to a standing series that targets
upright balance and control. Find exercise options for all levels
of clients with this all-in-one workout.

STOTT PILATES® Matwork Flow: Conditioning Sequence Workout

3pm – 4:30pm | LOWER A

A

Bring a sense of flow and energy to any Matwork routine with
this enlightening workout, developed by the Merrithew® team.
Using breath to promote focus and the quality of movement,
learn innovative movement transitions and discover sequences
designed to increase overall body conditioning and control.
Exercises are selected to improve strength and stability along
with flexibility and suppleness.

CHRISTINA M. TRUSCOTT

Christina is the founder and CEO of
Body Blueprint Fitness Education.
She started teaching fitness classes
in 1982 and worked as the program
director/manager at a fitness club in
Victoria for 22 years. Her passion for
fitness and her energetic nature led her
to excel in the field; she went on to be
awarded the Woman of Distinction for Health and Fitness and
received a Health and Fitness Award. Christina has received
the distinct honour of being named Fitness Professional of the
year by the BCRPA in 2024. She was the keynote speaker for the
Osteoporosis Association of Canada and was a Guest Trainer of
Fitness Leaders in many countries in the Caribbean.



In 1986 Christina founded Body Blueprint Fitness Education.
Since that time, she has taught thousands of students across five
continents. She is the author of over 80 workshops and 5 course
manuals used for continuing education, certification and to teach
fitness courses. Christina's course materials have been used by
colleges, universities and several Fitness Leader Associations in
Canada as well as by the RCMP.

Aging Gracefully

10:30am – 12pm | BOARDROOM

L

This new workshop covers the following: What is aging, how does
it occur, cellular damage and the importance of telomeres and
chromosomes. Changes to the cardiovascular, respiratory and
muscular system and bones (and how to prevent osteoporosis).
Ageism still exists and you'll learn what it is, how to recognize
it, the effect on an older adult and how to deal with it. There is a
section on the importance of positive thinking, how to stop negative
thinking and having a good attitude - and the affect on aging and
your body. This workshop also covers how stress, hydration, diet,
social support, exercise, strength training and cardiovascular training
all have an effect on aging - along with information on what to do
and how to do it. And finally we cover how to understand what is
happening to your aging body and learning to love yourself.

Fabulous Fat Burning

3pm – 4:30pm | BOARDROOM

L

There are many misconceptions about fat burning and since there
is no such thing as a magic pill yet, we still have to burn fat the old-
fashioned way, with exercise. In this workshop you will learn how
fat is utilized on your body and how to easily teach your clients the
best ways to burn fat. This fun and interesting workshop is a must
for all fitness instructors and Personal Trainers.

CHAD BENSON

Chad Benson, MSc in Kinesiology, BSc, BPE, CSCS, ProTrainer. Benson was recently the recipient of the canfitpro 2024 Canadian Presenter of the Year. Chad serves as the CEO and Lead Instructor at MovBetter Personal Training Inc. and PTAcademy.ca. With 28 years of experience in fitness and sports performance, Chad brings a wealth of knowledge to each speaking opportunity. Previously, he worked as a sports conditioning specialist for various high-performance organizations, including the Vancouver Canucks, Canadian Sports Centre and the National Women's Basketball team. Chad is an author, a multi-discipline Master Trainer, a keynote speaker, and an established presenter. Chad is well recognized as a fitness industry thought leader and has created various functional fitness, assessment, and fitness franchise educational platforms.



Unlock The Power of Fascia: Innovative Strategies for Tendon Health, Injury Prevention & Athletic Performance

10:30am – 12pm | LOWER A

A

Bridge the gap between theory and practice! This seminar provides personal trainers and group exercise instructors with real-time problemsolving strategies for Achilles and patella tendons. Learn to identify injury risks, build resilience in vulnerable movement patterns, and optimize fascial and tendon function through eccentrics, isometrics, and end-range.

Move Better, Teach Better: Unlock Mobility for Group Fitness Programming

1pm – 2:30pm | BOARDROOM

L

Concerned about the movement quality of your group fitness participants? In this seminar, we'll explore how you can integrate the value of mobility training into your in-person, online & group fitness schedule. Discover how to conduct a "movement inventory & assessment" for the purpose of tailoring engaged mobility sessions, reduce injury risk, and enhance overall performance. Add variety and value to your group fitness offerings!

HELEN VANDERBURG

Founder of The ACADEMY Fitness, Fusion Fitness Training™, and HI Fitness consulting. Helen is an international fitness consultant and author of Fusion Workouts. Helen has been awarded the IDEA Fitness Instructor and Program Director of the Year, IDEA Top Industry Contributor, Government of Canada Fitness Leadership, Women of Vision, Canfitpro Presenter of the Year and Lifetime Achievement. Helen brings a wealth of experience to her presentations and is an elite athlete as a past World Champion synchronized swimmer and honored member of the Sports Hall of Fame.



Helen is the Commercial Fitness Education Manager for Balanced Body and an international master trainer, faculty, and educational program developer for Schwinn Indoor Cycling, BOSU, Fusion Fitness, and Hedstrom Fitness.

Integrated Bodyweight Training

10:30am – 12pm | LOWER B

A

A common goal among clients is to move with strength, power, and efficiency. Bodyweight training is one of the most functional ways to train clients to gain proficiency in all movement patterns. Bodyweight training develops strength in isolated exercises and the transition from one movement to another. Learn bodyweight movement complexes that move people from the ground to standing with optimal stability, strength, and mobility.

Circuit Training for Active Agers

1pm – 2:30pm | LOWER B

A

In 2022, the world's population of people aged 65 and older was 771 million, which is almost 10% of the world's population. This segment of the population has been growing at an increasing rate and is projected to more than double by 2050, reaching 1.6 billion people. Designing exercise programs to help older adults increase strength, gain better mobility and flexibility, improve cardiovascular health, reduce the risk of falls, improve balance, gain independence, and ward off the negative physical effects of aging, is going to continue to become a super important skill for fitness pros to learn. In this workshop, learn simple ways to create fun and effective circuit workouts that align with your active agers' goals and beyond.

Training the Backside

3pm – 4:30pm | LOWER B

A

Most clients train what they can see in the mirror, often forgetting what is behind them! The backside of the body sustains us in good posture and is the powerhouse in activities of daily living, recreation, and sport. In this workshop, we will discuss the myofascial connection of the back line and how to effectively train the posterior kinetic chain of the body to improve function, movement efficiency, and performance.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, November 1, 2025 at Esquimalt Gorge Park Pavilion

6:30-8:30am	Registration				MAIN RECEPTION
7:00-8:00am	Morning Workout – Move, Play, Connect Katie Thacker				UPPER PAVILION (A)
8:30-10:00am	Keynote Presentation: Sam Spinelli The Resilient Revolution: Building Bodies That Last				UPPER PAVILION (L)
10:00-10:00am	Session Break				
10:30am-12:00pm	Sam Spinelli & Nathan Obrigewitsch Athletic Essentials: Plyos, Sprints, and Power That Transfers UPPER PAVILION (A) (L)	Chad Benson Unlock The Power of Fascia: Innovative Strategies for Tendon Health, Injury Prevention & Athletic Performance LOWER A (A)	Helen Vanderburg Integrated Bodyweight Training LOWER B (A)	Christina Truscutt Ageing Gracefully BOARDROOM (L)	
12:00-1:00pm	Lunch Break (lunch not provided, food truck on site)				
1:00-2:30pm	Sam Spinelli & Nathan Obrigewitsch Broken to Built: Unlock Your Back UPPER PAVILION (A) (L)	STOTT Pilates Sliding Mobility Disks for Dynamic Stabilization Matwork LOWER A (A)	Helen Vanderburg Circuit Training for Active Agers LOWER B (A)	Chad Benson Move Better, Teach Better: Unlock Mobility for Group Fitness Programming BOARDROOM (L)	
2:30-3:00pm	Session Break				
3:00-4:30pm	Sam Spinelli & Nathan Obrigewitsch Knee Resilience: Rebuild Confidence in Squats, Stairs, and Life UPPER PAVILION (A) (L)	STOTT Pilates Matwork Flow: Conditioning Sequence Workout LOWER A (A)	Helen Vanderburg Training the Backside LOWER B (A)	Christina Truscutt Fabulous Fat Burning BOARDROOM (L)	
4:30-5:00pm	Certificate Pick up at Registration Desk				
Session handouts available on line. Please bring your own mat.					

EARLY BIRD PRICE

Aug 1–Sep 15, 2025 | Single Day \$149

REGULAR PRICE

Sep 15 – Oct 31, 2025 | Single Day \$169

Groups of 10 or more receive 10% off. Please contact dan.atagi@saanich.ca to register at group rate.

Register at islandfitnessconference.com starting on August 1

History of the Vancouver Island Fitness Conference

The Island Fitness Conference began in 1989 as “Fit into the 90’s”. The purpose of the Conference was to ensure that Vancouver Island fitness leaders had access to quality educational training on Vancouver Island. In 2000, “Fit into the 90’s” became “The Island Fitness Conference”. What started 30 years ago as a small group of volunteers has grown into a committee of programmers, instructors and fitness enthusiasts representing a good portion of Southern Vancouver Island.



CREDITS AVAILABLE FROM

British Columbia Recreation & Parks Association (BCRPA)
Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP)
British Columbia Association of Kinesiologists (BCAK)
National Strength & Conditioning Association (NSCA)*
American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)
National Federation of Professional Trainers (NFPT)
International Sport Sciences Association (ISSA)
Canadian Fitness Professionals Inc. (canfitpro)
STOTT Pilates

**EXTRA FEES APPLY*

Need a place to stay?

Book a room at the
**Delta Hotels Victoria
Ocean Pointe Resort**
by September 30 to receive a group rate
of \$229 for the night of Oct. 31, 2025

100 Harbour Road, Victoria, BC
+1 250-360-2999

Island Fitness Conference Room Block
Reference# M-VB55012

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BONVOY**

