

PLAYERS IN BUSINESS

TONY MARSH I.AM FITNESS APP

FORMER 21-TEST FRENCH INTERNATIONAL, BLUES AND CRUSADERS PLAYER TONY MARSH is set to change the face of fitness with the launch of his new, free fitness app I.AM. Described as the Uber of fitness, Tony believes the I.AM App will revolutionise the way people do 'fit'. The app will connect Kiwis with specialised trainers, health providers, facilities, like-minded training buddies of all levels and interests, and a variety of fitness classes anywhere, anytime.

The ex-sportsman has had numerous challenges associated with the start-up business over the past 18 months, which has meant that he has constantly been pushed out of his comfort zone. This has led to both learnings and growth. According to Tony, "I have had to learn about business plans, marketing strategies, budgets and tech stuff. Things haven't always run smoothly but that just adds to the experience and the challenge. The saying is true that start-ups cost twice the budget and take double the time to get going."

Tony explained the app in simple terms by saying, "The I.AM App offers users the freedom to have control of their health and fitness journey. I have created a tool to simplify things and make it easier to connect with the right people to stay motivated and engaged in health and well-being through an online community."

A testicular cancer survivor and an ambassador for Blue September and Testicular Cancer NZ, Tony said he found that something was missing in the fitness market so he developed the app to provide a full spectrum of fitness benefits and flexibility for its users. The I.AM app caters for people of all fitness levels from complete novices who have never done any exercise to those competing at the top end of their sport.

Tony is no stranger to the sports industry. The 44-year-old fitness trainer has worked with top trainers all around the world and is also a part of a very small group of players to win back-to-back Super Rugby titles with different teams, the Blues and Crusaders. The Ironman started his rugby at Counties Manukau alongside his identical twin brother



Tony playing in France.

Glen, with both eventually heading in different directions to separate parts of the globe. Tony ended up in France – with two European Challenge Cups and a French National Cup to his credit, as well as playing in a Rugby World Cup – while his insurance broker brother, Glen, represented the Chiefs, NZ Maori and Japan.

Tony talks about fitness, explaining that freedom, flexibility and variation are the name of the game. "These days we all lead busy lives and finding time to exercise is not easy. [The app] simply gives people the ability to work out on their own terms. It allows people to meet new people, try different workouts and providers without the pressure of committing to ongoing sessions."

Users can connect with different trainers, daily training buddies and different exercise disciplines in their local area at the touch of a button and the range of disciplines is impressive.

One of the I.AM App features is 'Finding a Buddy'. Under this options it includes being able to link up with people to bike, play golf, go to the gym, go kayaking, have a personal training session, run, ski or snow board, play squash, stand up paddleboard, go surfing, have a swim, play tennis against, or go walking or hiking together.

Under the 'provider' options for training, people can link up with people or organisations that can provide biking, boot camps, boxing, Crossfit training, group classes, injury management, martial arts, nutrition, personal training, running, swimming, yoga and Pilates.

The app already has a large number of providers who have jumped on board, including Claire Turnbull's business Mission Nutrition, Breakers and Mystics trainer Steve Buckley, Blues nutritionist Dave Shaw, ultra-distance runner Lisa

Tamati, Kiwi league legend Ruben Wiki, Les Mills Newmarket, ex-New Zealand weightlifting champ Andy Rogers, and world champion weightlifter Cliff Harvey.

Designed to help empower people, Tony said the name was really important. "I.AM is a statement. It is about choosing to live in the now and choosing to be who they want to be – I am strong, I am healthy, I am fit, I am the best I can be. It is people owning their journey and personalising it for their own benefits. I want to ensure that everyone has access to such an incredible tool whenever and wherever they feel like it."

TONY ALSO PICKED UP SOME VALUABLE TIPS ALONG THE WAY THAT HE OPENLY ADMITS WOULD HAVE BEEN USEFUL TO KNOW PRIOR TO STARTING HIS BUSINESS VENTURE.

TONY'S BUSINESS TIPS ✓

- 1 You need to have a CLEAR STRATEGY but stay open minded.**
- 2 Take on-board all FEEDBACK – I like to seek out the bad first.**
- 3 LEARN ALL ASPECTS of the business – the more you know the better.**
- 4 Don't expect your employees to be as PASSIONATE as you.**
- 5 DON'T SPEND MONEY on what doesn't matter.**

HOW THE APP WORKS

AS A USER

- Download the I.AM app on your smart phone
- Register for free on the app
- Enter your interests
- Browse profiles of trainers, classes or training buddies near you or anywhere in New Zealand – it's great if you are travelling or on holiday
- Use the online booking system if you want
- Check out the fitness and health deals
- Meet new like-minded people
- Try new activities
- Access a wide range of providers easily
- Provide optional feedback

AS A PROVIDER

- Register for a small sign-on fee through the website: www.iamapp.co.nz
- All I.AM fitness and wellbeing experts are vetted to promote quality service so are required to supply copies of their main qualifications, first aid certificates etc (where applicable)
- Upon approval, fitness experts profiles go live
- To promote deals, programs or classes contact Tony directly via the website

▶ To check out frequently asked questions and tips to get started on the I.AM App, visit the website: www.iamapp.co.nz



WWW.IAMAPP.CO.NZ

