

#PROFILE

How Ruslan Hossain revolutionized fitness in Bangladesh



An ordinary teenager with a desire to get fit, Ruslan was just 17 when he joined the local gym. From there to owning one of the biggest fitness centres in the country, Ruslan Hossain's journey is a story of hard work, discipline, and a never-say-die attitude that awes and inspires in turn.

A motivated, young Ruslan realised that he was out of shape and needed to become fitter and healthier. He entered a gym with some trepidation and a whole lot of inexperience. While he did find himself a fairly capable gym trainer, his slow progress soon showed him that exercise alone was not going to award him the six-pack abs and chiselled physique that he so coveted; proper diet and nutrition would have to be part of the deal too. This realisation encouraged him to learn more about dietary habits, ultimately allowing him to reconstruct his own body within six months.

From the Basics

As Ruslan's physique changed, he began attracting positive interest from his friends and acquaintances. They approached him with questions about his routine and dietary practices, seeking counsel on how to achieve similar results. Enthusiastically, Ruslan began sharing what he had learned. His simple advice was effective, and many around him began to achieve their fitness goals too. By 2009, Ruslan knew he was onto something. As positive reviews poured in, he realised something profound; while Bangladesh had gyms, there was a screaming absence of personalised workout plans and holistic fitness approaches in the country. Recognising a gap in the fitness landscape of Bangladesh, he decided to make a career out of bodybuilding.

"I started small," he shares. "It was an 800 square feet room inside my own house where I started to train clients one-on-one."

Combining personal attention with a safe and welcoming environment, he attracted clients, including women who had, until then, been hesitant to engage in weight training due to societal norms and did not have the right environment to do so in public gyms which primarily received male clients.

As Ruslan attracted more and more fame, his client base continued to grow. His success soon outgrew the small home set up, and he realised

that he would need a bigger space to reach more people. "It was a leap of faith — taking the risk of moving to a commercial space. It meant more overheads, more expenses."

With no prior experience in managing a large-scale facility, he stepped into uncertainty — but with conviction. His first major step up was a 3,500 square feet gym in Banani, which quickly gained massive traction. Within a year, overwhelming demand led to an expansion into a 6,500 square feet facility in the same area. Momentum didn't slow down there. Eventually, a second branch was launched at Dhanmondi Shimanto Shambhar, spanning 8,500 square feet.

Today, the brand operates successfully across two prime locations, scaling not just in size — but in impact.

More Than Just a Fitness Coach

Ruslan's training continues to be a



healthy mix of resistance training, cardiovascular exercises, and a balanced diet. "I am a great believer of traditional methods," shares the fitness guru. "I like to keep my trainings pretty simple, even if the premium equipment at my gym tells you otherwise!"

According to Ruslan, if one truly wishes to fulfil their fitness goals, their commitment needs to transcend physical fitness; therefore, understanding the emotional and mental states of his clients is crucial for him to yield results from them. "I try to understand their work schedules — what time they eat, sleep, how many hours they rest." He emphasises lifestyle adjustments that promote better overall health and sets goals and expects results accordingly.

Ruslan serves a clientele with diverse goals. For aspiring bodybuilding competitors, his trainings are more strenuous and time sensitive. For celebrities, he goes along with their pace and demanding schedules, training them to achieve role-specific looks, and for athletes such as cricketers, he chalks out training regimes that build their stamina and strength, allowing for better gameplay.

A Challenging World for Fitness Coaches

Keeping up a high morale for clients and sustaining training commitments has always been an uphill battle for gyms, but when it comes to this coach, this is not so. "Establishing personal connection is key to maintaining client motivation," he feels. "It is difficult to meet and encourage everyone in the gym, but I am confident that the clients who meet me and speak to me regularly continue to work out religiously, even those that are not as genetically gifted."

Delivering extra value to customers has long been a guiding mantra for Ruslan. "I always try to deliver more to my clients than what I get from them," says the expert. "This retains their interest for longer periods of time."

In today's fast-paced world, the allure of instant gratification often weakens the appeal of long-term consistent training. Ruslan knows this all too well,

and therefore aims to demonstrate early improvements to his clients.

"You have to give them something," he insists. "If I can show them that they are getting better at lifting or running, or getting the desired results on the weighing scale, they feel instantly stimulated." However, setting realistic expectations is equally important, and he informs his clients of the same and prepares them accordingly.

"My advice to current and aspiring trainees is the same; training requires discipline, a proper nutritious diet, sufficient hydration, adequate sleep, and rest. If one maintains this, training becomes much easier and yields lasting results."

As Ruslan continues to evolve as a coach and businessman, his unwavering commitment to improving the lives of his clients remains at the forefront of his mission. Having all but pioneered the industry almost 15 years ago, he now looks to continue shaping and moulding the fitness landscape of the country through his resilience and dedication, inspiring individuals to reach their full potential — one rep at a time.

By Munira Fidai
Photo: Sourav Kabir