



• **PayPal Open**

Powering a people-first fitness studio with PayPal Open

When Margherita Riello opened her first fitness studio in 2014, she and her husband wanted to help people feel stronger and more confident. They started with a franchise to learn the ropes, but it quickly became clear that a franchise model didn't leave much room for the personal connection she valued. Large classes made it harder for clients to feel like regulars, and promotions focused more on volume than relationships.

In 2019, she struck out on her own to launch Bell Fitness, a studio built around small classes, individualized attention, and a welcoming atmosphere that soon grew into a tight-knit community. "When we changed our model, friendships got stronger and people really felt connected," Margherita says.

As Bell Fitness grew, more clients began paying online for memberships, challenges, and seasonal programs. The studio needed a simple way to manage those payments so the experience felt just as welcoming and trustworthy as it did in person. That search ultimately led the business to PayPal.



"People see PayPal, and they buy. It gives instant trust. A person trusts paying you because they know they're backed up by PayPal."

Margherita Riello
Owner & CEO, Bell Fitness

Finding the right fit

As the studio's community expanded, the team noticed their initial online checkout experience wasn't giving people the same confidence they felt when signing up face-to-face. "Sometimes people would feel unsure about putting their card into a site they didn't know," Margherita recalls. "I could see that hesitation right at the point when they were ready to commit."

There were back end challenges, too. Some tools were difficult to navigate, and monthly fees were unpredictable. "With other systems, I never really knew what the final amount would be," she says. "It wasn't always straightforward."

Bell Fitness needed a new payment system. One that clients already trust and the studio could easily manage as online demand increased.

No heavy lifting required

Bell Fitness adopted two PayPal Open solutions: the PayPal Checkout Button for online payments and Pay Later to offer clients more flexibility.

Getting everything set up was an easy lift. "Adding the PayPal button on our WordPress site was seamless," Margherita says. "It was just a simple widget." The addition created a familiar, trusted way for clients to complete purchases without extra steps.

PayPal also made day-to-day management behind the scenes easier. Fees were clear, reporting stayed consistent, and refunds could be issued in just a couple of clicks. "PayPal keeps everything simple and transparent," she explains. "I know exactly what I'm earning without surprises."

With tools that were easy to use on both the front and back end, PayPal gave the studio a payment setup that blended into its operations and could support the business as it continued to grow.

The studio hits its stride

Once the PayPal Checkout Button was in place, Bell Fitness saw steady improvements in how clients completed their sign-ups. Because PayPal was already familiar, hesitation during checkout became far less common. "People see PayPal, and they buy," Margherita says. "It gives instant trust."

Operationally, the studio benefited from PayPal Open reporting and faster refunds, which reduced time spent on administrative tasks. With fewer bottlenecks in the payment process, Margherita and her team could focus more on coaching, programming, and supporting their community.

Pay Later* also added meaningful flexibility. It helped clients join seasonal promotions and New Year's challenges even when budgets were tight. "People want to start the new year fresh, but they've just spent money on Christmas," Margherita says. "Pay Later gives them room to say yes." And because PayPal pays the business up front, Bell Fitness could offer flexible options without taking financial risk.

Together, these PayPal Open tools help Bell Fitness run more efficiently, maintain steadier revenue, and offer an online experience that reflects the warm, welcoming environment clients expect when they walk through the door.

With payments running smoothly in the background, Bell Fitness can keep doing what it does best: helping its community grow stronger, one step at a time.



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