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ACSM'S

Resources for the Personal Trainer

Sixth Edition





**AMERICAN COLLEGE
of SPORTS MEDICINE®**
LEADING THE WAY®

ACSM'S

Resources for the Personal Trainer

Sixth Edition

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Sixth edition

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Preface

Overview

This sixth edition of *ACSM's Resources for the Personal Trainer* is based on *ACSM's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription*, eleventh edition. In this sixth edition, the editors and contributors have continued to respond to the needs of practicing Personal Trainers. This edition has expanded on the previous edition in that content was updated with the latest scientific evidence, the functional movement assessments were integrated into the chapter on client fitness assessments, and the chapter on special populations was expanded into two chapters to individually cover apparently healthy populations across the lifespan and populations with metabolic/cardiovascular disease risk factors.

ACSM's Resources for the Personal Trainer, sixth edition, continues to recognize the Personal Trainer as a professional in the continuum of creating healthy lifestyles. This text provides the Personal Trainer with both the tools and scientific evidence to help build safe and effective exercise programs for a variety of clients. The book is divided into six distinctly different parts, ranging from an introduction to the profession of Personal Training to considerations of how to run your own business. In between are chapters dedicated to the foundations of exercise science which include anatomy, exercise physiology, biomechanics, behavior modification, and nutrition. The science- and evidence-informed approach provides a way for the transfer of knowledge from the Personal Trainer to the client, allowing for the opportunity for success from a business standpoint, as well as for the individual clients. The middle chapters include establishing goals and objectives for clients and a “how-to” manual for preparticipation screening guidelines as well as assessing body composition, cardiovascular fitness, muscular fitness, and flexibility. The last sections of chapters are dedicated to developing various training programs, addressing special populations and advanced training program options, and providing the basics on business and legal concerns facing Personal Trainers.

Organization

The chapters are divided into six parts designed for ease of navigation throughout the text. Using this approach, usefulness will be maximized for every Personal Trainer.

Part I: Introduction to the Field and Profession of Personal Training. Two introductory chapters are designed to introduce the new and aspiring Personal Trainer to the profession. Chapter 1 provides insight into why the health and fitness professions are some of the fastest growing industries in the world and how the Personal Trainer can capitalize on this growth. Chapter 2 provides a career track for the Personal Trainer, helping prospective Personal Trainers to examine their own interest in Personal Training and how to make Personal Training a viable career.

Part II: The Science of Personal Training. In Part II, Chapters 3–6 provide the scientific foundations for Personal Training. Every Personal Trainer, regardless of experience, will find these chapters helpful. For the Personal Trainer just starting out, these chapters introduce the scientific basis for physical activity. For the advanced Personal Trainer, these chapters serve as a foundational resource for specific lifestyle modification programs. These four chapters include anatomy and kinesiology, applied biomechanics, exercise physiology, and nutrition.

Part III: Behavior Modification. The next section of this book is dedicated to learning how and why people are either willing or unwilling to change their behavior. One of the most challenging aspects of Personal Training is when a client struggles to change a deleterious habit or even is unable to follow recommendations between training sessions. Chapters 7–9 include discussions of the concept of “coaching” — a new way of looking at and creating your relationship with a client. These chapters will forever change your approach to Personal Training.

Part IV: Initial Client Screening. Part IV comprises Chapters 10–12 and walks the Personal Trainer through the first client meeting to a comprehensive health-related physical fitness assessment. Capitalizing on the learning objectives of Part III, this section establishes a framework for developing client-centered goals and objectives. Although certainly not an exhaustive list of physical fitness assessments, Chapter 12 provides critical techniques to evaluate a client both in the field and in the laboratory. This section includes many tables, figures, and case studies that will assist with placing clients into various fitness categories.

Part V: Developing the Exercise Program. Chapter 13 introduces the concept of developing a comprehensive exercise program. On the basis of the goals established by the client and the Personal Trainer, Chapters 14–16 (resistance training, cardiorespiratory, and flexibility programs, respectively) are specific “how-to” manuals. Chapter 17 is dedicated to the proper sequencing of exercises within a given Personal Training session, whereas Chapter 18 has been written for the Personal Trainer who works with individuals who desire more advanced training options. Finally, Chapters 19 and 20 provide expanded coverage about working with clients throughout the lifespan and with clients who have medical conditions. As more people decide that being active is beneficial, Personal Trainers will encounter these populations. These chapters discuss the scope of a Personal Trainer’s knowledge, skills, and abilities when it comes to working with these “special populations.”

Part VI: The Business of Personal Training. Although seeing clients improve is rewarding, one goal of a successful business is to be profitable financially. Chapters 21 and 22 introduce the professional Personal Trainer to common business practices and provide information about how to avoid some of the common mistakes beginners typically make in the development of their practices. Chapter 22 deals specifically with legal issues. This chapter encourages each Personal Trainer to take their responsibility seriously by getting the necessary training and experience.

Features

Specific elements within the chapters will appeal to the Personal Trainer. A list of objectives precedes each chapter. **Key points** highlight important concepts addressed in the text and boxes expand on material presented. **Case Studies** present common scenarios that allow for application of concepts covered within the chapters. **Icons** are provided in selected chapters directing the reader to updated videos found at the book’s companion Web site. Numerous four-color tables, figures, and photographs will help the Personal Trainer understand the written material. A **chapter summary** concisely wraps up the content, and **references** are provided at the conclusion of each chapter for easy access to the evidence.

Additional Resources

ACSM's Resources for the Personal Trainer, sixth edition, includes additional resources for students and instructors that are available on the book's companion Web site at <http://thepoint.lww.com>. See the inside front cover of this text for more details, including the passcode you will need to gain access to the Web site. Any updates made in this edition of the book prior to the publication of the next edition can be accessed at <https://www.acsm.org/get-stay-certified/get-certified/prepare-for-exams/acsm-book-updates>.

Students

- Video clips

Instructors

Approved adopting instructors will be given access to the following additional resources:

- Test bank
- PowerPoint presentations
- Image bank
- Lesson plans

Acknowledgments

The sixth edition of *ACSM's Resources for the Personal Trainer* continues to build on previous editions to make it a go-to resource for Personal Trainers. As with the previous editions of this text, this edition would not be the quality resource that it is without the many volunteer contributors who wrote the chapters. Additionally, the editors would like to thank the many dedicated reviewers who also volunteered their time to carefully review each chapter to ensure the content was current and established guidelines were accurately presented. This text is a team effort of volunteer editors, contributors, and reviewers.

Thank you to the staff at the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), specifically the Editorial Services, Publications, and Marketing departments for their support and assistance. The staff at ACSM work tirelessly to make projects like this happen and ensure consistency among all ACSM-related publications.

Personally, I would like to thank Angie Chastain for the constant support, encouragement, and confidence that you have shown in me for the past 3 years. Your constant help and wisdom has been invaluable. I also want to thank the associate editors, Elizabeth, Anthony, and Katrina. This text would not be what it is without their tireless work that they have put into this edition. I would also like to express my gratitude to my family who have supported me throughout this process. Your love and encouragement mean the world to me.

And last, but certainly not least, thank you to the many dedicated Personal Trainers that make this work so rewarding. We hope that this text helps you in your endeavors, and we wish you continued success in a career that influences so many people to improve their health and fitness.

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PART

Introduction to the Field and Profession of Personal Training



Importance of the Field and Profession of Personal Training

OBJECTIVES

Personal Trainers should be able to:

- Recognize the need for a Personal Trainer.
- Describe the scope of practice of a Personal Trainer, including the background and experience needed to become a Personal Trainer.
- Discuss professional career environments and other educational opportunities for Personal Trainers.
- Identify future trends that will affect the fitness industry and Personal Training.



INTRODUCTION

Personal Training (practiced by one referred to in this book as the “Personal Trainer” but often described as a “fitness trainer,” “personal fitness trainer,” “fitness professional,” or “weight trainer”) continues to be a fast-growing profession in the United States. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the job outlook for this profession is projected to grow “much faster than the average” for all occupations between 2018 and 2028, which is further defined as an increase of 13% during this decade (1). The increased emphasis on health and fitness, diverse clientele interested in and in need of health and fitness programming, and recent links between sedentary activities and risk for chronic disease development and all-cause mortality (2) provide multiple opportunities for Personal Trainers.

Consider some groups for whom Personal Training may be of increased interest. Baby boomers (approximately 78 million Americans born from 1946 to 1964) are the first generation in the United States that grew up exercising, but obesity, hypertension, hypercholesterolemia and diabetes are higher among their generation than the previous generation (3). Baby boomers have now reached retirement or are approaching retirement age, and although they are less active than the previous generation, they have the time and desire to begin or continue exercising in their 70s and beyond and the potential to achieve more optimal health outcomes (3). Life expectancy has also increased to an average age of 80 years (4). In addition, an increasing number of businesses are recognizing the many cost-related benefits that health and fitness programs provide for their employees (5). The recent emphasis and reliance on technology in the office and home has led to an increased time spent in sedentary-type activities (*e.g.*, sitting and working at a computer) (6,7). This increased sedentary time is associated with obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease (2).

Older adults and working adults are not the only potential clients for Personal Trainers. A growing concern about childhood obesity (8) and the reduction in number of physical education days in schools (9) will also contribute to the increased demand for fitness professionals. Personal Trainers are increasingly being hired to work with children in nonschool settings, such as health/fitness facilities. Because of the increased concern for fitness, the number of weight-training centers for children and health/fitness center membership among young adults is expected to continue to grow steadily (10,11).

The Fitness Industry: An Overview of the Landscape

Interestingly, although the population is highly physically inactive (12), the health/fitness center industry has never been in better “shape.” Consider the following information reported by the United States from the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA), a trade association serving the health/fitness facilities industry (11) and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (1):

38,477	Number of U.S. health clubs
62.4 million	Number of U.S. health club members
\$32.3 billion	Total U.S. fitness industry revenues for 2018
	California, New York, Texas, Illinois, and Florida have the highest employment rates for fitness trainers/aerobics instructors
37.1%	Increase in total health club members since 2008
308,470	Number of U.S. fitness trainers/aerobics instructors

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the job outlook for this profession is projected to grow “15% from 2019 to 2029, much faster than the average” for all occupations between 2018 and 2028, which is further defined as an increase of 13% during this decade.

Although these numbers may seem impressive, consider how many people actually live in the United States compared to the number that are health club members. It is likely that only 16% of the population has a membership to a fitness center. Although there are certainly a variety of avenues to engage in physical activity, data suggest adults are not meeting the recommendations for physical activity. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), only 20.3% of adults achieve both the recommended aerobic and

muscle strengthening guidelines (Fig. 1.1) (13). Additionally, only 24.2% of adults perform no leisure-time activity, and the southeastern part of the United States not only has low leisure-time activity but also reports the highest rates of obesity (Figs. 1.2 and 1.3).

A large proportion of the population could benefit from involvement in some type of regular physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle, whether as a member of a health/fitness facility or on their own. Personal Trainers are well positioned to influence the greater scope of public health in this regard. As the health/fitness facility industry continues to grow, so too will the demand for highly qualified and certified fitness professionals to serve the needs of their members (1).

Despite the growth of the fitness industry and emerging opportunities for physical fitness, high inactivity rates among Americans remain, with only 1 in 5 adults meeting the recommended amounts of physical activity and fewer than 3 in 10 high school students achieve at least 60 minutes

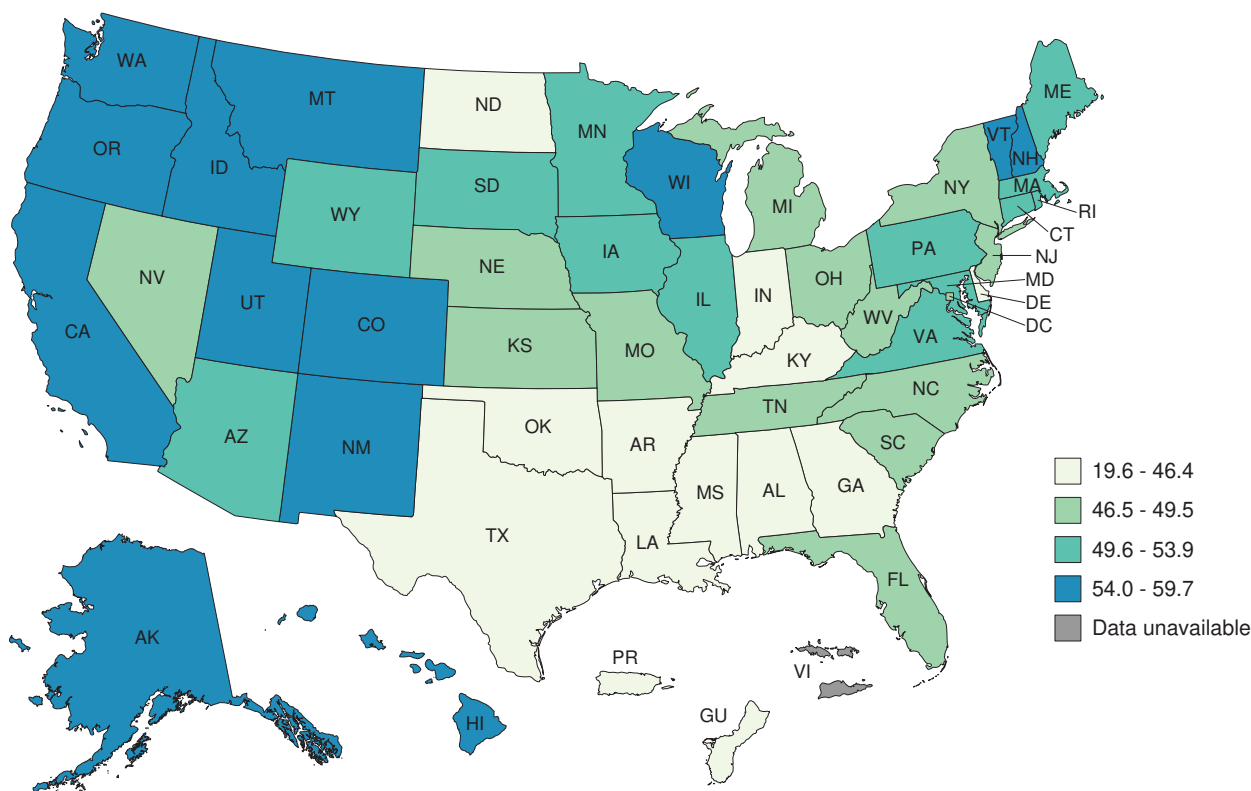


FIGURE 1.1. Percentage of adults who achieve at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity or 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity and engage in muscle-strengthening activities on 2 or more days a week. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Data, trend and maps [Internet]. Atlanta [GA]: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/data-trends-maps/index.html>.)

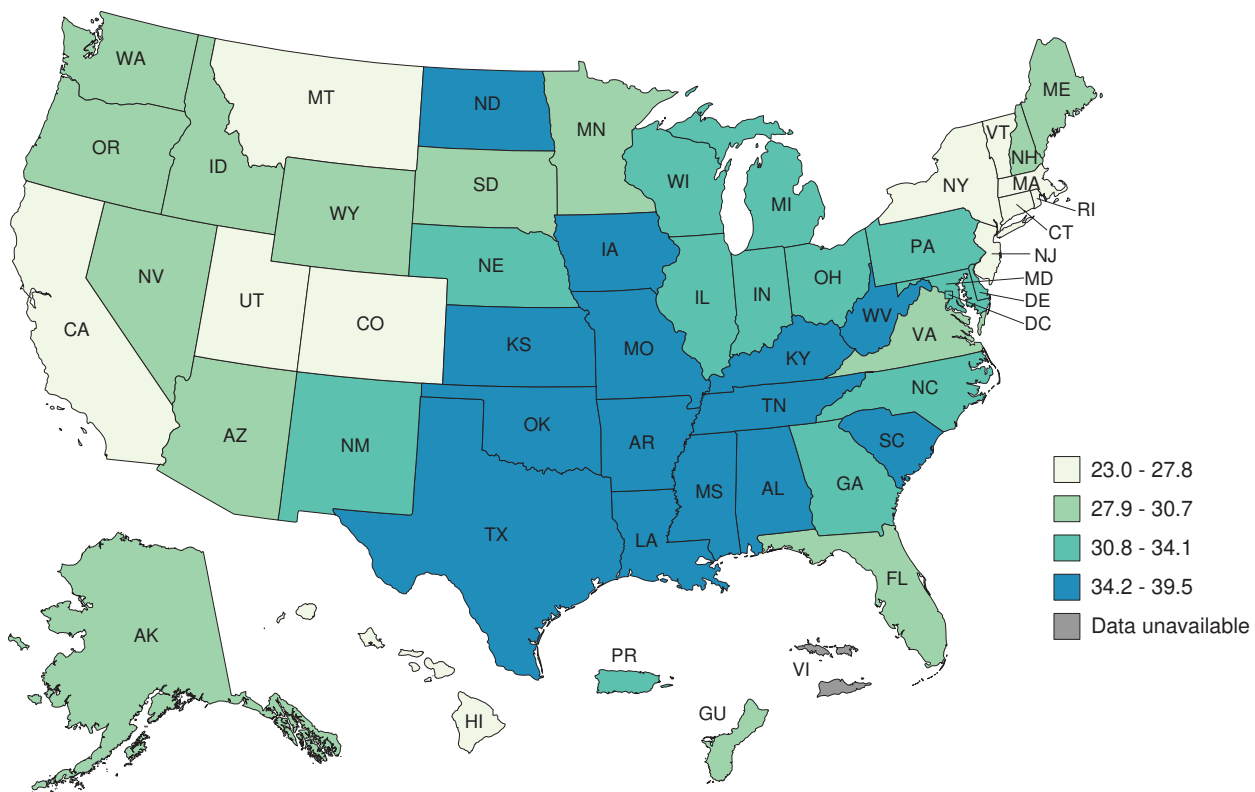


FIGURE 1.2. Prevalence of obesity in percentage (body mass index ≥ 30) in U.S. adults in 2018. The data shown in these maps were collected through the CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). Each year, state health departments use standard procedures to collect data through a series of monthly telephone interviews with the U.S. adults. Prevalence estimates generated for the maps may vary slightly from those generated for the states by the BRFSS as slightly different analytic methods are used. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Data, trend and maps [Internet]. Atlanta [GA]: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/data-trends-maps/index.html>.)

of physical activity every day (13). Currently, there are only six states that require physical education in every grade (14). At the elementary school level, six states require schools to follow the nationally recommended 150 minutes per week of physical education and only 16% of states require elementary schools to provide daily recess (14). For middle schools and high school, only three states require the recommended 225 minutes per week of physical education (14).

Health care costs are rising exponentially as the medical field continues to focus more on treatment than on prevention. Food portion sizes are increasing (15). According to the CDC, obesity has become a problem in every state. No state reported that less than 20% of adults were obese in 2018, and only 3 states report obesity levels lower than 25% (13). The data also show that at least 30% of adults in 31 states and Puerto Rico were classified as obese in 2018 (see Fig. 1.2) (13). This is quite a change from 2000 when no states reached that level of obesity and in 2010 and 2015 when 12 and 21 states, respectively, were at that level. The data also indicate how obesity impacts some regions more than others. For example, states in the South have the highest obesity rate at 33.6%, the Midwest had an obesity rate of 33.1%, the Northeast had a rate of 28%, and the West had a rate of 26.9% (16).

Despite the growth of the fitness industry and emerging opportunities for physical fitness and the recommendations provided in the *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*, 2nd edition (17), the rates of adults meeting the physical activity recommendations and rates of adults who engage into leisure-time physical activity has not changed substantially over the last several years (18).

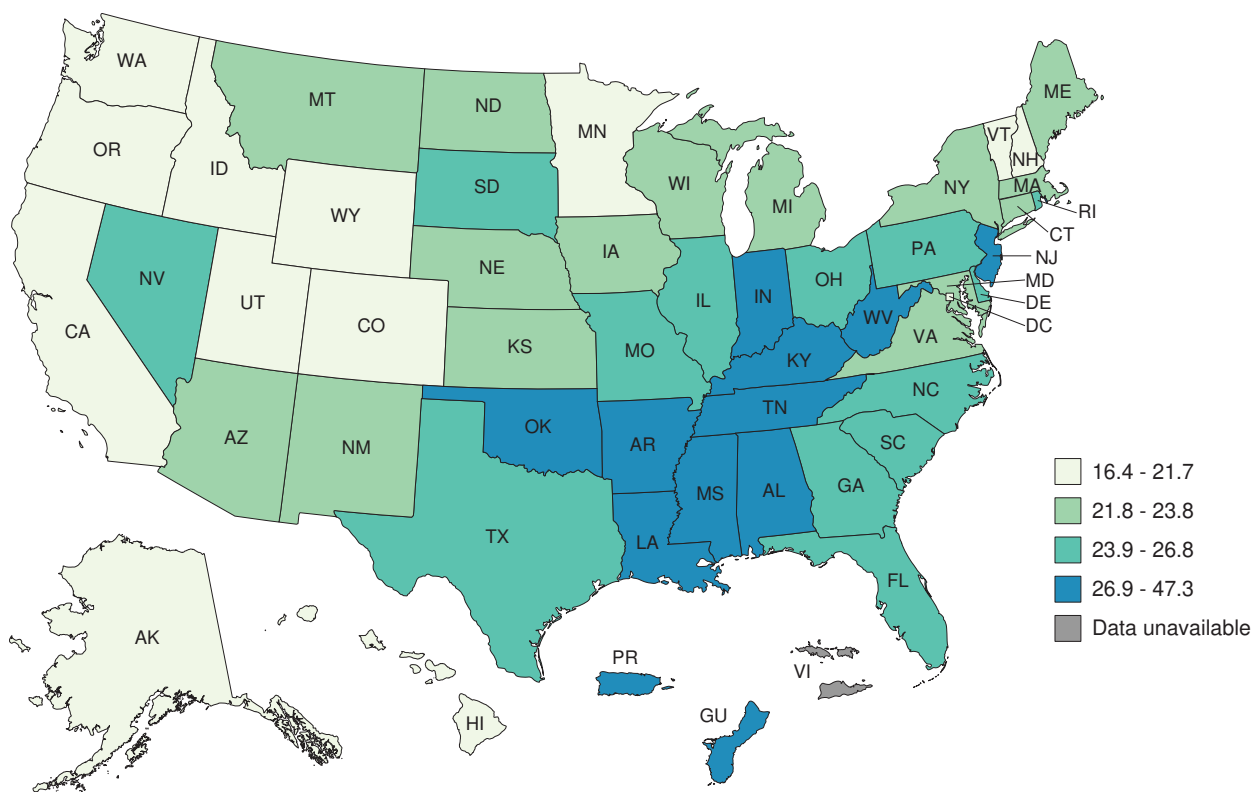


FIGURE 1.3. Percentage of adults who engage in no leisure-time physical activity, 2017. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Data, trend and maps [Internet]. Atlanta [GA]: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/data-trends-maps/index.html>.)

According to the most recent National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, in 2015–2016, 39.8% of adults and 18.5% of children aged 2–19 years in the United States are classified as obese (19). A recent Mott Poll Report examining the top 10 health concerns for children found that issues related to childhood obesity, not enough exercise and unhealthy eating, were concerns numbers 2 and 3, respectively (20). With so much to be done to improve the current health status of Americans, the time is right for highly qualified Personal Trainers (with the help of health care providers) to lead the charge toward a healthier nation. Participation in physical activity can lead to higher quality of life by decreasing risk factors associated with morbidity and mortality (21). Therefore, one role of the Personal Trainer is to encourage and motivate others to be more active.

Definition of a Personal Trainer

American College of Sports Medicine's (ACSM) job definition/scope of practice for ACSM Certified Personal Trainer® (ACSM-CPT®) is:

The ACSM Certified Personal Trainer (ACSM-CPT®), possessing a high school diploma or GED at minimum, works primarily with apparently healthy individuals to enhance fitness. The ACSM-CPT® also works with individuals who have stable health challenges and are cleared to exercise independently. The ACSM-CPT® conducts basic preparticipation health screenings, lifestyle inventories, and fitness assessments for health and skill-related components of fitness.

Box 1.1 ACSM Certification Names and Acronyms

Certification Name	Certification Acronym
ACSM Certified Group Exercise Instructor®	ACSM-GEI®
ACSM Certified Personal Trainer®	ACSM-CPT®
ACSM Certified Exercise Physiologist®	ACSM-EP®
ACSM Certified Clinical Exercise Physiologist®	ACSM-CEP®
ACSM/NCHPAD Certified Inclusive Fitness Trainer	ACSM/NCHPAD-CIFT
ACSM/ACS Certified Cancer Exercise Trainer	ACSM/ACS-CET
ACSM/National Physical Activity Society (NPAS) Physical Activity in Public Health Specialist	ACSM/NPAS-PAPHS

The ACSM-CPT® assesses behavior adaptation readiness and offers guidance in the development of realistic, client-centered goals related to health, fitness and wellness. The ACSM-CPT® develops and administers programs designed to promote optimal cardiorespiratory fitness, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, and body composition, as well as agility, balance, coordination, power, speed, and reaction time. The ACSM-CPT® facilitates client motivation and adherence and honors client confidentiality. The ACSM-CPT® adheres to all agreed-upon terms with each client and stays within the scope of practice of the ACSM-CPT® credential. The prudent ACSM-CPT® makes referrals to appropriate allied health professionals when clients' needs exceed the ACSM-CPT's scope of practice (22).

It is crucially important to understand that a certified Personal Trainer's (CPT) scope of practice does not include meal planning or diagnosing injuries or other medical conditions, or can Personal Trainers work with individuals who cannot currently exercise independently.

As mentioned previously, the health/fitness industry is unique in that there are a wide variety of certifications available to the potential fitness professional. In addition to the ACSM-CPT certification, ACSM also offers several other health fitness certifications and a clinical certification (Box 1.1).

Organizations that offer certifications are commercial (for-profit) as well as nonprofit. Some have services and benefits that facilitate professional development, such as publications and conferences. Before committing to a specific certification, Personal Trainers should review each one for its relevance to their individual situation (see Tables 1.1 and 1.2 for more information).

Some certification organizations recognize other certifications for the purposes of continuing education. Most legitimate certifications will require their respective certified professionals to pursue educational opportunities, commonly referred to as *continuing education units* (CEUs) or *continuing education credits* (CECs). These CEUs/CECs are required in an ongoing fashion for a certified professional to maintain his or her certification status and as one way to maintain professional competence. Some certifications are complementary to others, and again, multiple certifications could make you more valuable to a potential employer.

Currently, ACSM-CPTs need to obtain 45 CEUs every 3 years. There is a nominal administrative fee associated with recertification. You can find more information on recertification at <http://www.acsm.org/get-stay-certified/stay-certified>.

ACSM-CPTs need to obtain 45 CEUs every 3 years. There is a nominal administrative fee associated with recertification.

Table 1.1 Specialty Certifications

Scope of Practice	Minimum Requirements
<p>Exercise is Medicine® (EIM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Has three levels that range from those with low or moderate risk and cleared for independent activity to those at high risk and need to be monitored ■ Level 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Patient population: individuals at low or moderate risk who have been cleared for independent exercise ■ Level 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Patient population: individuals at low, moderate, or high risk who have been cleared for independent exercise ■ Level 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Patient population: individuals at low, moderate, or high risk including those requiring clinical monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The EIM Credential contains three levels, designed to serve clients and patients depending on their health status. The eligibility requirements for the three credential levels vary, based on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Your current fitness professional certification must be an NCCA- or ANSI/ISO 17024–accredited certification. ■ The level of your current NCCA- or ANSI/ISO 17024–accredited certification and your education level determine the EIM Credential level you can obtain. Those with bachelor's or master's degrees in exercise science or master's degrees in exercise science qualify for higher level credentials. ■ Level 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Credential requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NCCA- or ANSI/ISO 17024–accredited fitness professional certification ■ Successful completion of the EIM Credential online course and examination ■ Level 1 exemption <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To be exempt from the online course and exam, you must answer YES to both of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ I have a bachelor's degree or higher in exercise science, exercise physiology, or kinesiology. ■ I have a current NCCA- or ANSI/ISO 17024–accredited fitness certification. ■ Level 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Credential requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Approved bachelor's degree in exercise science, exercise physiology, or kinesiology ■ NCCA- or ANSI/ISO 17024–accredited fitness professional certification ■ Successful completion of the EIM Credential online course and examination

Continued

Table 1.1**Specialty Certifications (Continued)**

Scope of Practice	Minimum Requirements
<p>ACSM/NCHPAD Certified Inclusive Fitness Trainer (ACSM/NCHPAD-CIFT)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Level 2 exemption <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To be exempt from the online course and exam, you must answer YES to both of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ I have a bachelor's degree or higher in exercise science, exercise physiology, or kinesiology. ■ I have a current NCCA- or ANSI/ISO 17024–accredited certification with an emphasis on special populations (ACSM-EP, ACSM-CEP, ACE Certified Medical Exercise Specialist). ■ Level 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Credential requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Approved master's degree in Exercise Science, Exercise Physiology or Kinesiology OR approved bachelor's degree in Exercise Science, Exercise Physiology or Kinesiology with 4,000 hours of experience in a clinical exercise setting ■ NCCA- or ANSI/ISO 17024–accredited clinical exercise certification (ACSM-CEP) ■ To obtain your Level 3 EIM Credential, you must fill out the EIM exemption application form.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Works with people with a disability who are healthy or have medical clearance to exercise and were referred or currently under the care of a physician or health care professional ■ Leads and demonstrates safe, effective, and adapted methods of exercise ■ Writes adapted exercise recommendations, understands precautions and contraindications to exercise for people with disabilities, and is aware of current ADA policy for recreation facilities and standards for accessible facility design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Current ACSM certification or current NCCA-accredited, health/fitness-related certifications (<i>e.g.</i> ACE, NCSF, NASM, NFPT, NSCA, Cooper Institute) OR ■ Bachelor's degree in exercise science, recreation therapy, or adapted physical education ■ Adult CPR/AED certified (with hands-on practical skills component)

Continued

Table 1.1 Specialty Certifications (Continued)

	Scope of Practice	Minimum Requirements
ACSM/ACS Certified Cancer Exercise Trainer (ACSM/ACS-CET)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Trains individuals who were recently diagnosed with cancer and have not yet begun treatment, are receiving treatment or have completed treatment, and are apparently healthy or have the presence of known stable cardiovascular disease with low risk for complications with vigorous exercise and do not have any relative or absolute contraindications for exercise testing ■ Performs appropriate fitness assessments and makes exercise recommendations while demonstrating a basic understanding of cancer diagnoses, surgeries, treatments, symptoms, and side effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ An ACSM- or NCCA-accredited exercise/fitness certification ■ Adult CPR/AED certified (with hands-on practical skills component), bachelor's degree (in any field), 500 h of experience training older adults or individuals with chronic conditions OR ■ 10,000 h of experience training older adults or individuals with chronic conditions^a
ACSM/NPAS Physical Activity in Public Health Specialist (ACSM/NPAS-PAPHS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Conducts needs assessments; plans, develops, and coordinates physical activity interventions provided at local, state, and federal levels ■ Provides leadership; develops partnerships; and advises local, state, and federal health departments on all physical activity-related initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A bachelor's degree in a health-related field^b from a regionally accredited college or university OR ■ A bachelor's degree in any subject and 1,200 h of experience in settings promoting physical activity, healthy lifestyle management, or other health promotion^c

ACE, American Council on Exercise; NCSF, National Council on Strength & Fitness; NASM, National Academy of Sports Medicine; NFPT, National Federation of Professional Trainers; NPAS, NSCA, National Strength and Conditioning Association; CPR, cardiopulmonary resuscitation; AED, automated external defibrillator; ANSI, American National Standards Institute; ISO, International Organization for Standardization.

^aHours of experience with older adults or individuals with chronic conditions include exercise testing, exercise prescription, group or individual training, group or individual client education, academic coursework and/or continuing education (relating to older adults or individuals with chronic conditions), internships or observational hours in an oncology setting, and/or cancer rehabilitation program.

^bExamples: exercise science, exercise physiology, kinesiology, physical education, sports management, athletic training, recreation, nutrition, health education, health promotion, public health, community health, and health care administration.

^cExamples: education; community/public health setting; YMCA, parks and recreation, after-school programs; worksite health promotion; community health; health education or health promotion; federal, state, or local government; health care or health plan; academia or university; nonprofit organization; commercial health clubs; and corporate fitness centers.

Table 1.2 ACSM Certification Requirements

	Education	Age	Additional Requirements
Health/Fitness Certifications			
ACSM Certified Personal Trainer® (ACSM-CPT®)	High school diploma or equivalent	18 y of age or older	Adult CPR/AED certification (with practical hands-on skills component)
ACSM Certified Group Exercise Instructor® (ACSM-GEI®)	High school diploma or equivalent	18 y of age or older	Adult CPR/AED certification (with practical hands-on skills component)
ACSM Certified Exercise Physiologist® (ACSM-EP®)	Minimum of a bachelor's degree in exercise science, exercise physiology, or kinesiology		Adult CPR/AED certification (with hands-on practical skills component)
Clinical Certification			
ACSM Certified Clinical Exercise Physiologist® (ACSM-CEP®)	Master's degree in clinical exercise physiology or equivalent and 600 h of hands-on clinical experience OR Bachelor's degree in exercise science, exercise physiology, or equivalent and 1,200 h of hands-on clinical experience Examples: exercise science, kinesiology, kinesiotherapy, physiology, and exercise physiology		Basic life support provider or CPR for the professional rescuer certification (with hands-on practical skills component)
AED, automated external defibrillator; CPR, cardiopulmonary resuscitation.			

Personal Trainers' Scope of Practice

As mentioned previously, the profession of Personal Training is rapidly evolving, and employment opportunities are wide-ranging and will continue to increase. But what does a Personal Trainer do? Depending on the work setting, Personal Trainers have a wide range of potential activities, including, but not limited to, the following tasks:

- Screen and interview potential clients to determine their readiness for exercise and physical activity. This may involve communicating with the clients' health care team (especially for clients with special needs): physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, registered dietitian nutritionists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and others.

- Perform fitness tests or assessments (as appropriate) with clients to determine their current level of fitness.
- Help clients set specific, measurable, and realistic goals; modify goals as needed; and provide motivation for adherence to the program.
- Develop exercise regimens and programs (often referred to as an “exercise prescription”) for clients to follow and modify programs as necessary based on progression and goals.
- Demonstrate and instruct specific techniques to clients for the safe and effective performance of various exercise movements.
- Provide clients with safe and effective exercise techniques or training programs as well as educate them about exercises that may be contraindicated.
- Supervise or “spot” clients when they are performing exercise movements.
- Maintain records of clients’ progress or lack thereof with respect to the exercise prescription.
- Be a knowledgeable resource to accurately answer clients’ health and fitness questions.
- Educate clients about health and fitness and encourage them to become independent exercisers (provided they have medical approval to do so).
- Provide referrals to other professionals when appropriate, including but not limited to registered dietitian nutritionists, physical therapists, and others.

Other responsibilities not directly involving a client may be assigned or performed as needed. These usually include administrative paperwork, maintenance of equipment, and cleaning of equipment and facilities as required.

Many Personal Trainers also obtain additional education or specialty certifications in areas such as group exercise instruction, kickboxing, yoga, aquatic exercise, wellness coaching, studio cycling, cancer exercise training, and inclusive fitness.

Many Personal Trainers also obtain additional education or specialty certifications in areas such as group exercise instruction, kickboxing, yoga, aquatic exercise, wellness coaching, indoor cycling, cancer exercise training, and inclusive fitness (Fig. 1.4). These specialties should not be confused with “core” or primary certifications, such as ACSM-CPT. Additional specialty certifications are valuable and allow Personal Trainers to have a wider variety of responsibilities, such as teaching group exercise classes.

Becoming a Personal Trainer

Because of the large number of certification organizations, the prerequisites and eligibility requirements for becoming a Personal Trainer vary widely. Some are stand-alone certifications, whereas others, such as those offered by ACSM, are part of a progressive professional development pathway in which the scope of practice increases in both depth and scope as the prerequisites and eligibility requirements increase.

FIGURE 1.4. A trainer working with a client who has a physical disability.



There are two tracks of ACSM certification (health/fitness and clinical) with four main certifications (not counting specialty certifications). The health/fitness certifications include (a) Group Exercise Instructor® (ACSM-GEI®), (b) ACSM-CPT, and (c) Certified Exercise Physiologist® (ACSM-EP®), whereas the clinical track certifications includes Certified Clinical Exercise Physiologist® (ACSM-CEP®). Each certification level has minimum requirements (see Table 1.2).

Personal Trainers should consider current career plans as well as future professional goals when determining what educational preparation and certification(s) are needed. Background and interests will combine in determining how fast and by what process a Personal Trainer can develop a career. One should ensure that the certifying agency is accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). The NCCA is the accreditation body of the National Organization for Competency Assurance. The NCCA is a widely recognized, independent, nongovernmental agency that accredits professional certifications in a variety of professions. The NCCA comprehensively reviews the certification organization's procedures, protocols, and operations and determines if the certification properly discriminates between those who are qualified and those who are not qualified to be awarded the respective credential.

The Backgrounds of Personal Trainers

The Committee on Accreditation for the Exercise Sciences (CoAES) was established in April 2004 under the auspices of the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP). The primary role of the CoAES is to establish standards and guidelines for academic programs that facilitate the preparation of students seeking employment in the health, fitness, and exercise industry. The secondary role of the CoAES is to establish and implement a process of self-study, review, and recommendation for all programs seeking CAAHEP accreditation.

Programmatic accreditation through the CAAHEP is specifically intended for exercise science or related departments (physical education, kinesiology, etc.), with a professional preparation tract designed for students seeking employment opportunities in the health, fitness, and exercise industry.

The Committee on Accreditation for the Exercise Sciences (CoAES) was established in April 2004 under the auspices of the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP).

The CAAHEP is the largest programmatic accrediting body in the health sciences field; it reviews and accredits more than 2,100 educational programs in 32 health science occupations such as personal fitness trainer. See <http://www.coaes.org> and <https://www.caahep.org> for more information or to find a CAAHEP-accredited academic institution in your state.

It is important to possess a certification from an NCCA-accredited certifying agency; because of the many different types of certifications that exist, the background of today's Personal Trainer varies significantly with respect to educational preparation and work-related experience. Some individuals commit to the profession early and pursue a related course of study in college. Many of these individuals actually begin working part-time at a local health club or at the university student recreation center, gaining valuable "hands-on" practical experience to complement their academic studies. Other Personal Trainers enter the profession later in life as a new career or as a second career on a part-time basis while maintaining their primary career pursuit (Fig. 1.5). Ideally, the Personal Trainer will have a good combination of education, work-related experience, and even first-person perspective experiences as either an athlete or a former client.

Educational Background

As the profession of Personal Training continues to evolve and grow, more and more educational opportunities become available. Many certification organizations offer workshops and online examination preparation opportunities. From a formal academic training perspective, there are

FIGURE 1.5. A trainer and a client have reached a goal.

certificate, associate's, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs available for fitness professionals. Typically, certificate programs (both in-person and online) range from 12 to 18 months in duration. Associate degree programs range in length from 18 months to 2 years. Bachelor's degree programs are usually 4 years in duration. Master's degree programs are typically 18 months to 2 years beyond a bachelor's degree. Finally, a doctoral degree program is usually 3–4 years beyond a master's degree and involves a research project. Also, internships, practicums, or student cooperative work experiences (typically unpaid opportunities to work under the direct supervision of an experienced fitness professional) may or may not be part of these different types of programs. Common names for these academic programs include, but are not limited to, exercise science, exercise physiology, kinesiology, sport science, and physical education. Currently, the CAAHEP accredits academic programs for personal fitness trainer (certificate and associate degrees), exercise science (bachelor's degree), and clinical exercise physiology and applied exercise physiology graduate programs.

The CAAHEP accredits academic programs for personal fitness trainer (certificate and associate degrees), exercise science (bachelor's degree), and clinical exercise physiology and applied exercise physiology graduate programs.

Increasingly, more fitness programs require Personal Trainers to have college degrees. Long-term employment and management advancement often require a degree. Most fitness directors, those individuals who have management/supervisory responsibilities over the floor staff (Personal Trainers), often have master's degrees and/or extensive experience in training staff.

Work-Related Background

It is possible for Personal Trainers to obtain employment without a related degree, especially if they have one or more certifications and prior industry-related work experience. For many individuals who want a career change, pursuing a second degree or even a first degree later in life may not be possible. Some health/fitness facilities have formal training paths and processes for their employees that may include assigning a more experienced Personal Trainer as a mentor or scheduling periodic staff training sessions, sometimes referred to as “in-services.” Some health/fitness

centers may even pay for continuing education opportunities for their staff as one benefit of employment. If not, look for an experienced Personal Trainer with an exemplary reputation who would consider taking on an apprentice. Many certification organizations have educational opportunities, such as workshops and webinars, which can also provide a good review of the various areas of content, especially as they relate to preparing for a certification examination. It is always advisable for all professionals working in this environment to seek a college degree whenever possible.

Experiential Background

Some Personal Trainers pursue this field as a result of previous positive experiences. Examples would include those who were once high school, college, professional, elite athletes, or former Personal Training clients who had a significant positive or transformational experience. Like those who are changing careers, some may not have a related academic degree, and some may have no college degree at all. However, their passion for a particular activity or a love of exercise in general usually motivates them sufficiently to fill in knowledge gaps they may have as they begin their Personal Training career. Commitment to the profession is shown by obtaining one or more certifications from reputable organizations, such as ACSM, as well as obtaining relevant, work-related experience under the mentorship of a proven, experienced (preferably degreed) CPT. By being proactive from a self-study perspective, obtaining one or more certifications and combining these with work-related experience, individuals can become competent professional Personal Trainers over time. If the opportunity arises to enhance your knowledge in the area of exercise science by a reputable organization or institution, take advantage of this opportunity.

Regardless of one's background, starting down the career path as a Personal Trainer does not have to be complicated. Consider current status and then professional goals for 1, 2, and 5 years in the future. Reflect on the following questions:

- Do I have an exercise science–based college degree, and is it from a CAAHEP-accredited academic institution?
- If not, is it feasible for me to go back to obtain a certificate or degree on either a part-time or full-time basis?
- Was I ever a client of a Personal Trainer, and did I have a positive experience in achieving my goals?
- Do I have experience as a high school, college, professional, or elite athlete that provides me with some first-person experiences?
- Which certifications and certifying agency are appropriate for me to pursue now and in the future? The certifying agency (such as ACSM) should be well respected, provide peer-reviewed materials, and be NCCA accredited.
- Which certifications have study materials and/or workshops to help me accumulate a core body of knowledge?
- Where can I begin obtaining the necessary skills, either by observing a more experienced CPT or by volunteering at a local health/fitness facility?
- Which certifying organizations and, specifically, which level of certification do potential employers in my city expect to see when hiring Personal Trainers for their facilities?

Certifications

ACSM currently offers four specialty credentials (see Table 1.1 for details; <https://www.acsm.org/get-stay-certified/get-certified>). These additional credentials can assist the Personal Trainers in their continued education as well as provide them with opportunities to add skills and increase potential client base by offering diversity.

ACSM Exercise is Medicine®

Exercise is Medicine® (EIM) offers a credential program that recognizes exercise professionals who possess the education and skills to work closely with the health care community and referred patients, including those with common chronic diseases and health conditions. Certified exercise professionals or individuals with a qualifying university degree can earn the EIM credential. The credential signifies that an exercise professional is part of the EIM initiative and can safely and effectively guide patients who need specialized fitness programming to change their health behaviors and improve health outcomes. The EIM credential currently features three levels (<https://www.acsm.org/get-stay-certified/get-certified/specialization/eim-credential>).

ACSM/NCHPAD Certified Inclusive Fitness Trainer

Created in collaboration with the National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD), ACSM/NCHPAD Certified Inclusive Fitness Trainers (ACSM/NCHPAD-CIFT) are uniquely qualified to work with people who have health risks and/or physical limitations. With an understanding of current Americans with Disabilities (ADA) policy, ACSM/NCHPAD-CIFTs create adapted programming that promotes safe and effective training while also providing motivational support for a healthy lifestyle (<https://www.acsm.org/get-stay-certified/get-certified/specialization/cift>).

ACSM/ACS Certified Cancer Exercise TrainerSM

Created in collaboration with the American Cancer Society (ACS), ACSM/ACS Certified Cancer Exercise Trainers (ACSM/ACS-CETs) design and administer fitness assessments and exercise programs specific to a person's cancer diagnosis, treatment, and current recovery status (<https://www.acsm.org/get-stay-certified/get-certified/specialization/cet>). The ACSM/ACS-CET performs appropriate fitness assessments and makes exercise recommendations while demonstrating a basic understanding of cancer diagnoses, surgeries, treatments, symptoms, and side effects.

ACSM/NPAS Physical Activity in Public Health SpecialistSM

ACSM/National Physical Activity Society Physical Activity in Public Health Specialist (ACSM/NPAS-PAPHS) is a professional who promotes physical activity in public health at the national, state, and/or local level. The ACSM/NPAS-PAPHS engages and educates key decision makers about the impact of, and need for, legislation, policies, and programs that promote physical activity. Additionally, the ACSM/NPAS-PAPHS provides leadership and develops partnerships with private and public associations to catalyze the promotion of population-based physical activity (<https://www.acsm.org/get-stay-certified/get-certified/specialization/paphs>).

These additional specialty credentials can assist the Personal Trainer in continued education as well as to provide opportunities to add skills and increase potential client base by offering diversity. The kinds of fitness facilities are diverse, with the most numerous being multipurpose, commercial, for-profit clubs, followed by community, corporate, and medical fitness centers (MFCs). Although there are many core similarities between facilities, there is also great variety in size, structure, target markets, program offerings, amenities, membership fees, contracts, staffing, and equipment. This variety is necessary to attract and serve many different populations with many different interests (Fig. 1.6). With the member retention rates varying greatly across the industry, most clubs and centers must continually recruit new members. According to the IHRSA, in competitive suburban markets, in which the automobile is the primary means of commuting to a club, the majority of a club's membership base will come from within a 10- to 12-minute drive time from home to the club; thus, clubs that are located close to one another are typically competing for the same members (11).



FIGURE 1.6. A trainer spotting a squat exercise of a client who is on a BOSU ball (with light dumbbells in each hand).

This means that Personal Trainers are vying for the same clients as well. However, Personal Trainers, just like clubs, can differentiate themselves from the competition in a number of ways, such as focusing on a specific clientele (e.g., women, children, seniors, and athletes), developing expertise in a given area, offering small-group training in addition to individual sessions, offering a more competitive price, and using multiple locations. Many trainers make themselves more marketable by obtaining more than one primary and/or specialty certification.

Establishing a Solid Knowledge Base

Everyone has strengths and weaknesses with respect to how much he or she knows or does not know about any given topic, including Personal Trainers. Part of the commitment to the profession is for Personal Trainers to continuously evaluate their educational foundation and expand their knowledge base. One way to focus on an action plan for specific continuing education needs is to use the job tasks outlines by the ACSM as a knowledge map.

Begin by performing a thorough review of the job tasks and corresponding knowledge, skills, and abilities for each, rating familiarity and competence against each specific job task (specific information on the job tasks for Personal Trainers can be found on ACSM Web site under Certifications; <https://www.acsm.org/get-stay-certified/get-certified>). Next, use this checklist to prioritize the job task knowledge and skill areas from weakest to strongest. Over the course of a year, seek out and participate in continuing educational opportunities that focus on weak content areas. Personal Trainers should do this on a yearly basis, at a minimum, as content areas that were once weak may become stronger over time, especially for those who devote additional study to these areas and, more importantly, develop a client base in which some content areas are relied on more than others. By doing this consistently 1 year to the next, recertifying becomes a pleasure as opposed to a chore. Some Personal Trainers procrastinate, waiting until the last minute to accumulate the required number of CEUs/CECs. Not only does this create a great deal of stress but also it is not a very effective way to expand one's knowledge base as a Personal Trainer.

The Exercise Sciences

The competent Personal Trainer should have a strong knowledge foundation in the exercise sciences combined with leadership and coaching training. *Exercise science* is a broad term that includes multiple disciplines. These disciplines often include but are not limited to anatomy and physiology; exercise physiology; motor learning/motor control; nutrition (dietetics); biomechanics/applied kinesiology; exercise prescription; fitness testing; wellness coaching; and sport, exercise, and health psychology. Good-quality educational programs (workshops or online opportunities offered by certification organizations or curriculums offered by academic institutions) may offer a course of study that includes content or courses dedicated to helping the Personal Trainer develop an understanding of these more specific disciplines.

ACSM has a number of resources available to help individuals prepare for the ACSM-CPT certification examination. These include in-person workshops, online webinars, online practice questions, online study groups, book bundles for purchase, and an exam content outline to help guide your preparation. Details about each of these preparation approaches can be found at <https://www.acsm.org/get-stay-certified/get-certified/health-fitness-certifications/personal-trainer>.

The competent Personal Trainer should have a strong knowledge foundation in the exercise sciences.

Developing Your Tool Kit

In addition to a strong knowledge foundation in the exercise sciences, effective Personal Trainers are constantly developing and adding skills to their “tool kit.” Essential tools include the following:

- Effective communication skills (in-person, phone, and written such as e-mail)
- Ability to motivate appropriately
- Ability to influence behavior change
- Effective interviewing and screening
- Effective use of goals and objectives
- Effective and safe exercise program design
- Ability to demonstrate, instruct, spot, and supervise appropriate exercise movements
- Effective use of up-to-date technology in order to obtain continuing educational opportunities via webinars and other online resources
- Obtaining new primary or specialty certification skills
- Effective use of social networking sites, Web sites, blogs, e-mail blasts, and so on, for marketing and monitoring purposes
- Using a sound business model

These are, at the minimum, the tools Personal Trainers should include in their tool kit and also master using effectively, either individually or in combination with others. Nonetheless, effective Personal Trainers continuously add tools and improve their skills throughout their professional career.

Communication Skills (Motivating and Influencing Behavioral Change)

Perhaps, the most overlooked yet important skill for the Personal Trainer tool kit is that of communication. Communication is more than just verbal because it includes nonverbal elements such as visual (what is observed) and kinesthetic (what is felt). Additionally, effective communication involves much more than information exchange. Communication also relies on the emotional state of both individuals. For example, is the client “ready” to accept information, or is there temporary resistance to the new information being provided? Likewise, Personal Trainers can be effective motivators when they create an optimal emotional environment for clients, so they not only are

ready to take in the information provided but also are able to put it to good use. As a complex and important skill, communication is discussed throughout this book, particularly in Chapter 9.

Screening, Assessment, and Referrals

Another set of tools required for the Personal Trainer includes interviewing, screening, and recognizing when to refer a client to a medical health care provider such as a physician, physical therapist, sport psychologist, or registered dietitian. When health screening forms are used appropriately, these tools help establish a foundation of trust that facilitates the development of the trainer–client relationship. Combined with effective communication skills, these tools further improve the possibility of achieving the client’s goals.

Typically, a Personal Trainer conducts an initial interview with a potential client in which basic demographic information is obtained, along with the client’s health history. Two types of forms are used at a minimum: the health history form and the Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PAR-Q) form. The ACSM also recently developed a preparticipation screening form for exercise professionals for use with ACSM’s preparticipation screening algorithm, which can be found in *ACSM’s Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription*, 11th edition (23). Examples of these and other forms are available in Chapter 11. In addition, it is appropriate during this initial interview to ask clients about their specific expectations for working with a Personal Trainer and what initial goals they may have as well as any other lifestyle information they can share. Examples include the following:

- Recent and past history of physical activity (if any)
- History of previous injuries (if any)
- Level of social support from family and friends
- Potential stressors/obstacles that may impose challenges on their exercise regimen, such as excessive work hours, physically demanding work, and multiple recurring commitments within the community or with family
- Types of physical activity the participant feels that they may enjoy engaging in

Finally, this initial consultation should be used to synchronize the Personal Trainer–client expectations, obtain or request any medical clearance forms (if required) as well as obtain signatures on required waivers, informed consent forms, and/or other contractual forms and agreements as required by your employer.

Assessing risk of your new client is the next step. It is important to note that Personal Trainers should not diagnose or treat disease, disorders, injuries, or other medical conditions under any circumstance. The presence of specific and/or multiple risk factors requires that the Personal Trainer refer the client to the appropriate health care professional for additional guidance and/or a medical release before designing and implementing an exercise program. Also, even if the client fails to initially disclose information that becomes known at a later time, the Personal Trainer still has a legal obligation to refer the client to a health care provider before additional training guidance can be provided. Personal Trainers who provide services outside their scope of practice place both themselves and their clients at risk. If in doubt whether or not a client should be referred to another health care professional before working with the client, be cautious and refer the client first. The old saying still holds true, “If in doubt, refer out.”

Assessments are tests and measurements that Personal Trainers use with their clients to evaluate their current physical and functional status. Assessments may include the following:

- Resting and exercise heart rate
- Resting and exercise blood pressure
- Body weight and height
- Body composition estimates

- Circumference measurements of limbs, hips, and waist
- Calculation of body mass index
- Calculation of waist-to-hip ratio
- Measurements of flexibility
- Tests for muscular strength/muscular endurance
- Tests for cardiorespiratory fitness

Assessments provide a current snapshot of the functional ability of a client. When combined with the data from the PAR-Q and other health-related questionnaires, the Personal Trainer can begin developing a draft of a customized exercise program for the client.

Professional Work Environments

Employment opportunities for Personal Trainers are available in more diverse settings than ever before and include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Commercial (for-profit) fitness centers
- Community (not-for-profit) fitness centers
- Corporate fitness/wellness centers
- University wellness/fitness centers
- Owner/operator (self-employed) studios, fitness centers, and in-home businesses
- MFC
- Municipal/city recreation/public parks/family centers
- Governmental/military fitness centers
- Activity centers/retirement centers/assisted living communities for older adults
- Worksite health promotion (WHP) programs
- Cruise ships, resorts, and spa fitness centers

For-Profit

Commercial (for-profit) fitness centers dominate the fitness landscape and include independently owned businesses, chains, studios, licensed gyms, and franchises. Opportunities for gainful employment exist within the commercial club industry. Most commercial fitness centers advertise employment opportunities locally or regionally, whereas some also post them on their corporate Web sites, blogs, or social networking sites. It is wise to thoroughly investigate a company's policies concerning compensation, benefits, policies, and opportunities for advancement before accepting a position.

Commercial (for-profit) fitness centers dominate the fitness landscape and include independently owned businesses, chains, studios, licensed gyms, and franchises.

Licensed gyms and franchises are popular choices when establishing new commercial fitness centers (Fig. 1.7). The benefits of choosing a franchise include brand recognition, access to proven operational systems, logo usage, marketing templates, in-depth training, and ongoing support. Franchisers then retain the right to dictate most aspects of the facility, including colors, layout, décor, equipment, programs, and product sales. Initial fees for fitness franchises can range widely from \$10,000 to more than \$100,000, and equipment may or may not be included in the cost. There is also a monthly franchising fee, which is either a set amount or a percentage of gross revenue (typically about 5%). Licensed gyms operate on a much simpler model. A fee is paid to use (license) the name and logo. Licensees typically have much more flexibility in how they operate the facility than do franchisees, but they also do not receive as much operational support.



FIGURE 1.7. A trainer demonstrating a fly motion with an inclined bench press.

Not-for-Profit

Not-for-profit (or nonprofit) organizations with fitness centers make up a large proportion of the total market. Some examples of the larger nonprofit organizations in which fitness professionals can find relevant employment include the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), Jewish community centers, hospital-based clubs, municipal and military fitness facilities, and college/university recreation centers.

Personal Trainers may find that some nonprofit organizations may not have rates of pay comparable with those of their for-profit counterparts but, at the same time, may provide better benefits. Nonprofit work (regardless of the industry) creates a strong sense of mission throughout the organization and carries a significant commitment to service with respect to their specific members or constituents. Nonprofit fitness centers fill a significant role in the fitness professional job market, and it is ultimately up to the individuals to determine the most appropriate place of employment for their personal and professional goals.

Medical Fitness Centers

The growing relationship between the fitness industry and the health care field is evidenced by the steady growth of MFCs and the establishment of the Medical Fitness Association (MFA; <http://www.medicalfitness.org/>). The MFA is a nonprofit organization that was established to assist with medically integrated health and wellness. These types of fitness facilities tend to see older adults and focus on clients with chronic diseases and multiple risk factors. Although these centers do provide access to hospital employees, over half of the membership is typically composed from community members.

The growing relationship between the fitness industry and the health care field is evidenced by the steady growth of MFCs and the establishment of the Medical Fitness Association (MFA; <http://www.medicalfitness.org/>).

A central mission of many MFCs is integration of services for both the “sick” and the “healthy.” It is not uncommon for patients in cardiovascular rehabilitation or physical therapy programs to exercise next to healthy community members.

Using the same space and equipment saves on overhead, space, and staffing needs. Although there currently are not any specific guidelines for hiring Personal Trainers with specific degrees or certifications in these facilities, the focus on transitional programs (*i.e.*, working with former hospital patients) may require that a Personal Trainer has higher qualifications than usual.

Corporate

The largest purchaser of health care in the United States is employers, and providing health care coverage for employees and their dependents can be a large portion of their budget. As a result, businesses and industries are naturally concerned about today's rising medical costs and what they can do to decrease this liability (24). Therefore, one possible cost-containment strategy is to implement WHP programs. WHP can be defined as "a combination of educational, organizational, and environmental activities and programs designed to motivate and support healthy lifestyles among a company's employees and their families" (24). The goals of WHP programs are to

- Reduce modifiable risk factors
- Improve a person's overall health status
- Reduce demand for health care costs to the worksite

A recent survey assessing workplace health in the United States found that on average, 46% of U.S. worksites with 10 or more employees offered some type of WHP program. The percentage of worksites with a WHP program was lower among worksites with a smaller number of employees (39% of worksites with 10–24 employees, to 60% of worksites with 50–99 employees, to 92% of worksites with 500 or more employees) (25). It is encouraging to see that the number of worksites with a comprehensive WHP program has grown to 17% from 7% in 2004 (25).

WHP can be defined as "a combination of educational, organizational, and environmental activities and programs designed to motivate and support healthy lifestyles among a company's employees and their families."

The kinds of fitness-specific offerings vary greatly in WHP programs, ranging from steps-based walking programs to group exercise classes to fully equipped health/fitness facilities. One of the primary determinants of facility and program size is the number of employees. Companies with more than 1,000 employees working in a central location (building or campus) are much more likely to offer traditional fitness facilities because they have the financial means to do so, and it makes economic

sense. Smaller companies with a smaller employee base are much less likely to offer a WHP, especially one that includes fitness facilities.

Many corporate fitness programs are outsourced to companies that specialize in facility and program management. This makes it somewhat easier for the corporation because it can rely on someone else's expertise instead of having to develop it from within. Some choose to avoid development and management altogether by setting up a corporate account with an existing local fitness facility. A reduced membership fee is negotiated, and the company reimburses employees a portion or all of the fees. It is common, though, for the company to dictate that an employee must visit the facility a certain number of times per month to qualify for reimbursement.

Corporate fitness opportunities exist for Personal Trainers within both large and smaller companies. For larger companies, the typical route is to work as a traditional employee or independent contractor in the fitness center. For smaller companies, a more entrepreneurial approach is usually taken. Personal Trainers will typically need to approach the management about offering on-site services to the employees, with the employer absorbing some of the cost. Because employers are often very cost conscious and are typically unsure about investing in preventive programs, Personal Trainers will need to educate them about the benefits of their services to the health and well-being of their employees. Reporting an overall view of client results, such as weight loss, reductions in blood pressure, and other health factors, also has a positive impact on their thinking and

decision making. Because individual sessions are the most expensive option, small-group training sessions may be potentially more appealing to the employer.

Ethics and Professional Conduct

Ethics can be described as standards of conduct that guide decisions and actions based on duties derived from core values. Specifically, core values are principles used to define what is right, good, and/or just. When a professional demonstrates behavior that is consistent, or aligned, with widely accepted standards in their respective industry, that professional is said to behave “ethically.” On the other hand, “unethical” behavior is behavior that is not consistent with industry-accepted standards. As a fitness professional, Personal Trainers have obligation to stay within the bounds of the defined scope of practice for a Personal Trainer as well as to abide by all industry-accepted standards of behavior at all times. Furthermore, individuals certified or registered through ACSM must be familiar with all aspects of ACSM’s Code of Ethics for certified and registered professionals (<https://www.acsm.org/get-stay-certified/policies-procedures>).

Code of Ethics for ACSM Certified and Registered Professionals

Purpose

This code of ethics is intended to aid all certified and registered ACSM Credentialed Professionals (ACSMCPs) to establish and maintain a high level of ethical conduct, as defined by standards by which ACSMCPs may determine the appropriateness of their conduct. Any existing professional, licensure, or certification affiliations that ACSMCPs have with governmental, local, state, or national agencies or organizations will take precedence relative to any disciplinary matters that pertain to practice or professional conduct.

This code applies to all ACSMCPs, regardless of ACSM membership status (to include members and nonmembers). Any cases in violation of this code will be referred to the ACSM Committee on Certification and Registry Boards (CCRB) Executive Council and the CCRB Ethics Subcommittee and, if appropriate, the ACSM Committee on Ethics and Professional Conduct as well Principles and Standards.

Responsibility to the Public

- ACSMCPs shall be dedicated to providing competent and legally permissible services within the scope of the knowledge and skills of their respective credential/certification. These services shall be provided with integrity, competence, diligence, and compassion.
- ACSMCPs provide exercise information in a manner that is consistent with evidence-based science and medicine.
- ACSMCPs respect the rights of clients, colleagues, and health care professionals and shall safeguard client confidences within the boundaries of the law.
- Information relating to ACSMCP–client relationship is confidential and may not be communicated to a third party not involved in that client’s care without the prior written consent of the client or as required by law.
- ACSMCPs are truthful about their qualifications and the limitations of their expertise and provide services consistent with their competencies.

Responsibility to the Profession

- ACSMCPs maintain high professional standards. As such, an ACSMCP should never represent himself or herself, either directly or indirectly, as anything other than ACSMCP unless he or she holds other license/certification that allows him or her to do so.

- ACSMCPs practice within the scope of their knowledge, skills, and abilities. ACSMCPs will not provide services that are limited by state law to provision by another health care professional only. An ACSMCP must remain in good standing relative to governmental requirements as a condition of continued credentialing.
- ACSMCPs take credit, including authorship, only for work they have actually performed and give credit to the contributions of others as warranted.
- Consistent with the requirements of their certification or registration, ACSMCPs must complete approved, additional educational course work aimed at maintaining and advancing their knowledge and skills.

Principles and Standards for Candidates of ACSM Certification Examinations

Candidates applying for a credentialing/certification examination must comply with candidacy requirements and, to the best of their abilities, accurately complete the application process. Candidates applying for a credentialing examination must comply with all eligibility requirements and, to the best of their abilities, accurately complete the application process. In addition, the candidate must refrain from any and all behavior that could be interpreted as “irregular.”

Discipline

Any ACSMCP may be disciplined or lose his or her certification or registry for conduct that, in the opinion of the executive council of the ACSM CCRB, goes against the principles set forth in this code. Such cases will be reviewed by the ACSM CCRB Ethics Subcommittee, which will include a liaison from the ACSM CCRB Executive Council, as appointed by the CCRB chair. The ACSM CCRB Ethics Subcommittee will make an action recommendation to the executive council of ACSM CCRB for final review and approval.

Using Your ACSM Certification Title

Any ACSMCPs may disclose their affiliation with ACSM certification in any context, oral or documented, provided it is currently accurate. Individuals who are certified by ACSM may not imply ACSM endorsement unless expressly authorized by the college. Disclosure of affiliation in connection with a commercial venture may be made provided the disclosure is made in a professionally dignified manner; is not false, misleading, or deceptive; and does not imply licensure or the attainment of specialty or diploma status. ACSMCPs may disclose their credential status.

ACSMCPs may list their ACSM certification on business cards without prior authorization (see Box 1.1). ACSMCPs and the institutions employing an ACSMCP may inform the public of an affiliation as a matter of public discourse or presentation.

National Campaigns to Promote Physical Activity

Many national organizations associated with physical activity and health are actively involved promoting the benefits of physical activity. In addition, these organizations launch national campaigns, produce recommendations and guidelines, and serve as advocates for legislation related to physical activity. Discussed in the following text are examples of the ways organizations are helping to promote physical activity.

Exercise is Medicine®

In 2007, ACSM in partnership with the American Medical Association launched EIM, a program designed to encourage America's patients to incorporate physical activity and exercise into their daily routine. EIM encourages doctors to assess and review every patient's physical activity program at every visit. For those patients not already exercising, the physician is asked to prescribe exercise to their patients and to record physical activity as a vital sign during patient visits.

ACSM has developed a system to credential exercise professionals for EIM designation. The EIM certificate contains three levels based on the health status of the patient referrals and the educational status and certifications of the candidate. Individuals who are currently certified by an NCCA accrediting organization (this would include individuals with ACSM Personal Trainer certification) and who successfully complete an EIM certification course and exam will meet Level 1 requirements; Level 1 includes working with individuals at low or moderate risk. For more information about the levels and the certification and educational requirements, please see <https://www.acsm.org/get-stay-certified/get-certified/specialization/eim-credential>.

EIM has a user-friendly Web site (<https://www.exerciseismedicine.org>) providing many helpful resources for health care providers, health and fitness professionals, members of the media, as well as the general public (Fig. 1.8). CPTs should become familiar with and regularly use the continually updated tools provided to them on the EIM Web site to educate themselves as well as their clients on the importance and best implementation of regular physical activity according to the most recent evidence-based research.

Research suggests that physical activity counseling provided by primary care physicians can be a powerful motivator for patients to adopt and maintain a more physically active lifestyle (26), and the American Heart Association recently released a scientific statement on routine assessment and promotion of physical activity in health care settings (27). Many physicians are beginning to refer patients directly to certified fitness professionals, thanks in part to the EIM initiative.

EIM has reached far beyond doctor's offices. In 2008, EIM month (May) was launched in order to recognize, emphasize, and celebrate the valuable health benefits of exercise on a national scale. The "Exercise is Medicine on Campus" initiative was launched in 2009 as a call to action for educational institutions around the country to make a commitment supporting EIM and the benefits of physical activity. The Inaugural World Congress on EIM was held in Baltimore, Maryland, in 2010 where the U.S. Surgeon General, Vice Admiral Regina Benjamin spoke to a standing-room-only crowd on the consequences of a sedentary population and the dire need for Americans to incorporate regular physical activity into their lifestyles. Finally, EIM has a global outreach program that includes six regional centers in North America, Latin America, Africa, Australia, Europe, and Asia. The EIM initiative continues to gain momentum, so Personal Trainers will benefit by keeping up on its most recent accomplishments.



FIGURE 1.8. A trainer and a client doing an initial client consultation.

American Fitness Index

Another public health initiative is the ACSM American Fitness Index (AFI) (28). The AFI is a program to help cities understand how the health of their residents and community assets that support active, healthy lifestyles compare to that of other cities nationwide. The overall goal of the AFI program is to improve the health, fitness, and quality of life of the nation through promoting physical activity. The AFI uses three primary means to achieve their task: (a) collection and dissemination of city health data, (b) provision of resources, and (c) community assistance to connect with health promotion partners.

The AFI reflects a composite of community indicators for preventive health behaviors, levels of chronic disease conditions, access to health care, and community support and policies for physical activity. In addition, demographic and economic diversity and levels of violent crime are shown for each metropolitan area. Cities with the highest scores are considered to have high *community* fitness, a concept akin to an individual having high *personal* fitness. In 2020, the top five cities were Arlington, Virginia; Seattle, Washington; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Madison, Wisconsin; and San Francisco, California. These communities had many strengths that supported healthy living

The AFI is one example of a national initiative to help local officials, community groups, health organizations, and individual citizens to assess factors contributing to their city's fitness, health, and quality of life. For further information, visit www.americanfitnessindex.org.

and few challenges that hindered their choices. The AFI provides ideas and goals for other cities to initiate and become healthier. Understanding and learning about these national initiatives may assist a Personal Trainer in providing support to community members concerning healthy lifestyles. Other organizations that are taking active roles in promoting healthy lifestyles include the IHRSA (<https://www.ihrsa.org>), American Council on Exercise (<https://www.acefitness.org>), and the National Strength and Conditioning Association (<https://www.nscf-lift.org>).

Other Recent Releases of Which Personal Trainers Must Be Aware

- The *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*, 2nd edition, is an update of the first guidelines released by the U.S. government in 2008 (17). The *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* recommend that preschool-age children aged 3–5 years should be physically active throughout the day and caregivers should encourage a variety of activity types when engaging in active play. Children and adolescents aged 6–17 years should do 1 hour or more of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day and vigorous activity should be encouraged on at least 3 days per week. They are also encouraged to do muscle-strengthening activities and bone-strengthening physical activity at least 3 days per week. Adults ages 18–64 years should reduce sedentary time and sit less throughout the day. Adults are recommended to engage in 150 minutes (2 h and 30 min) to 300 minutes (5 h) per week of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes (1 h and 15 min) per week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity or an equivalent combination of both. Additional health benefits are associated with activity levels greater than 5 hours per week of moderate-intensity physical activity. It is also recommended that adults engage in 2 or more days per week of muscle-strengthening activities for all of the major muscle groups at a moderate or great intensity. The recommendations for older adults aged 65 years and older are the same as adults. Additionally, older adults should incorporate multicomponent exercises to maintain or improve balance. If older adults are unable to meet the adult recommendations, they should be as physically active as possible given their fitness level, abilities, and chronic conditions (17).
- The 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans has five overarching themes: (a) Follow a healthy eating pattern across the lifespan; (b) focus on variety, nutrient density, and amount; (c) limit calories from added sugars and saturated fats and reduce sodium intake; (d) shift to healthier food and beverage choices; and (e) support healthy eating patterns for all.

Decreasing consumption of some foods such as those with added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium are recommended (29). More information on dietary choices is found in Chapter 6 and at <https://www.myplate.gov/>.

- Healthy People 2030 was released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 2020 (see <https://www.healthypeople.gov/>). Healthy People includes the nation's 10-year goals and objectives for health promotion and disease prevention. The Healthy People initiative is grounded in the principle that setting national objectives and monitoring progress can motivate action. The Healthy People goals related to physical activity are focused on reducing the number of people who do not engage in any leisure-time activity and to increase the number of children and adults meeting the recommendations for aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities in the *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* (30).

ACSM's Role and the Educational Continuum

ACSM is a professional member association headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana, and composed of a multidisciplinary mix of more than 50,000 exercise science researchers, educators, and medical practitioners in more than 90 countries. More specifically, member categories include exercise physiologists, physicians, nurses, athletic trainers, registered dietitian nutritionists, and physical therapists as well as many other allied health care professionals with an interest in sports medicine and the exercise sciences. ACSM promotes and integrates scientific research, education, and practical applications of sports medicine and exercise science to maintain and enhance physical performance, fitness, health, and quality of life.

ACSM was founded in 1954, was the first professional organization to begin offering health and fitness certifications (in 1975), and continues to deliver the most respected NCCA-accredited certifications within the health and fitness industry. Because of the multidisciplinary nature and diversity of its members, ACSM has evolved into the unique position of an industry leader for creating evidence-based best practices through the original research of its members as well as disseminating this information through its periodicals, meetings and conferences, position stands and consensus statements, and certification workshops and webinars.

ACSM was founded in 1954, was the first professional organization to begin offering health and fitness certifications (in 1975), and continues to deliver the most respected NCCA-accredited certifications within the health and fitness industry.

ACSM's respect has earned them numerous health-initiative partnerships and collaborative efforts with groups such as the American Heart Association, American Medical Association, NSF International, ACS, CDC, IHRSA, National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association, National Academy of Sports Medicine, the CAAHEP, the NCCA, the National Collegiate Athletic Association, the NCHPAD, and many others.

Identification of a Core Body of Knowledge

Shortly after ACSM began offering certifications, the first edition of *ACSM's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription* (23) was published along with its companion publication *ACSM's Resource Manual for Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription* (31). These publications included, for the first time anywhere, the consensus of subject matter experts and so defined the core body of knowledge with respect to standards and guidelines for assessing fitness and prescribing exercise. Generally, all professions, regardless of the industry, have a core body of knowledge that provides guidance and clarity and also helps establish a specific profession's scope of practice. This initial publication proved so effective for practitioners that periodic review and revision of this book now takes place every 4 years. The year 2021 marked the publication of the 11th edition of *ACSM's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription* as well as the 6th edition of the *ACSM's Certification Review*.

Table 1.3 ACSM Certified Personal Trainer Performance Domains		
Domain	Content Areas	Percentage
I	Initial client consultation and assessment	25
II	Exercise programming and implementation	45
III	Exercise leadership and client education	20
IV	Legal and professional responsibilities	10

All certification examination candidates are encouraged to visit the American College of Sports Medicine Certification Web site (<https://www.acsm.org/get-stay-certified>). Follow the links through certification to view the latest certification examination blueprint and job tasks.

Continuous Revision of Knowledge and Skills

In the past, included in the appendices of every edition of *ACSM’s Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription* was a comprehensive list of knowledge, skills, and abilities relative to each ACSM certification. These categories are now called Performance Domains for each ACSM Certification Level and can be found on ACSM Web site (<https://www.acsm.org/get-stay-certified/get-certified>). Each domain has a percentage attached to it that expresses the relative importance or weighting of that particular domain in the workplace and on the certification exam as well (see Table 1.3 for the current domains).

ACSM-CPT certification domains contain several job tasks, each requiring knowledge and skills statements. These job tasks represent the specific attributes necessary for success as a practitioner (practicing Personal Trainer). The general process for the ongoing revision and/or addition to the job tasks follows industry-accepted best practice models for ongoing quality assurance. Box 1.2 describes the development of the knowledge and skills required of the Personal Trainer.

Box 1.2 Description of the Development of the Personal Trainer Skills

1. A group of subject matter experts, including practitioners, academicians, and potential employers, review the current set of job tasks for a particular occupation (i.e., Personal Training).

2. Updated job tasks from the review are evaluated through a “job task analysis,” in which a large sample of randomly selected practitioners and employers further comment on the importance, frequency, and relevance of each specific job task compared with the typical job demands and requirements in the real-world setting.

3. Subject matter experts then revise the job tasks as needed based on the results and comments from the job task analysis.

4. The job tasks are assigned to their appropriate performance domain, the necessary knowledge and skills to accomplish each job task are determined, and each performance domain is weighted, representing the combined work of the content experts and the results of the job task analysis.

5. The weighted domains serve as the certification exam blueprint for the creation of legally defensible exam questions. The exam has multiple-choice questions delivered in a computer-based testing format.

SUMMARY

The rapidly expanding fitness industry offers Personal Trainers many potential work environments in which they gain experience and develop a career, including commercial (for-profit) fitness center, not-for-profit fitness centers, university recreation centers, corporate fitness centers, MFCs, and more. Although compensation varies greatly for trainers, they are overall very satisfied with their career choice and see opportunities for advancement and growth. With a nation on the verge of a health care crisis due primarily to the prevalence of lifestyle-related conditions, highly qualified and motivated Personal Trainers are needed now more than ever to lead individuals down the road to good health and well-being. As the fitness industry grows and the demographics/characteristics of the population continue to change, it is likely that the role of Personal Trainers will change, too. This changing role will likely be an expansion of Personal Trainers' scope of practice so that Personal Trainers may soon be seen as allied health care professionals. Personal Trainers are beginning to be more commonplace in areas where they were seldom seen in the past, such as medical clinics, with a role of helping low-risk individuals capable of independent exercise to become more active, as the medical profession turns to the prevention of disease and not just the treatment of it. As an emerging professional in this rapidly growing field, Personal Trainers can contribute to this expanding sphere of influence by being the utmost professional at all times for clients and in acting in the best interests of the profession.

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CHAPTER 2

Career Track for Personal Trainers

OBJECTIVES

Personal Trainers should be able to:

- Discuss common client expectations of a Personal Trainer.
- Examine potential career starting points and career paths.
- Highlight options for continuing education and career development.
- Understand the expectations of a career as a Personal Trainer.



INTRODUCTION

The iconic Jack LaLanne was undoubtedly one of the first professional Personal Trainers to bring Personal Training to the masses through television. He created the identifiable persona as an expert and motivated millions of people to exercise through the power of television. He then parlayed that success into a 74-year career that spanned from health clubs to jump ropes and juicers.

Although popularized in the late 1970s with the advent of celebrity Personal Trainers for stars of movie screens and tennis courts, Personal Training gained notoriety as a stand-alone business through the work of pioneers in New York City and Hollywood, California. These pioneers founded Personal Training studios that provided strength and endurance workout sessions in 30- or 60-minute bouts. They catered to the elite, including movie stars, tennis pros, television news anchors, business leaders, and ballerinas. The personal approach to fitness was so successful that professional athletic teams employed strength coaches (leading to the formation of the National Strength and Conditioning Association [NSCA] in 1978). Movie stars hired Personal Trainers to work with them on location. Financial firms brought trainers in-house to push their corporate athletes.

At the same time, in health clubs, training facilities, gymnasiums, and sporting arenas around the world, people were seeing and feeling the benefits of having an educated and dedicated fitness professional (1). Personal Training evolved into a career that was waiting to happen. A career that allowed exercise experts, cajoling coaches, tenacious teachers, and master motivators to make a living by guiding their clients to a specific set of goals and objectives that would eventually lead to a better body but more importantly better health.

Client Expectations of a Personal Trainer

Most evaluations of service professionals use the concept of how the individual performs in relation to expectations. If Personal Trainers do not know what clients expect from them, it is virtually impossible to meet, much less exceed, those expectations. The following are categories and examples of reasonable client expectations. The scope and scale of the service-level agreement with the client should clearly describe goals and an acceptable “range of results.” Chapters throughout this book provide background and information on how to assist clients to achieve great results (Fig. 2.1).

Know the Goal

As defined by James Prochaska's transtheoretical model of behavior change (2), Personal Training clients typically arrive in the “action” stage (see Chapter 7 for more information on the stages of

FIGURE 2.1. A Personal Trainer and client meeting for the first time.



change, processes of change, and decisional balance). They have decided that they will take their physical activity behaviors to a new level, and they are employing the Personal Trainer as the expert to guide them to their vision of success. This is an important assignment and a very difficult one. Implementing lasting behavior change is difficult even under the best circumstances.

The first step of the intake process involves goal setting because this serves as the foundation for the development of exercise program objectives. Once identified, these goals should be memorialized in a contractual business agreement, which also details the following:

- Number of sessions
- Cost per session or per multisession package
- Length of each session
- Length of agreement
- Cancellation and no-show policies
- Refund policies
- Session expiration dates
- Unsupervised training requirements outside of each session
- Client lifestyle commitments to support the training program
- Performance guarantees

After protecting the safety and well-being of the client, the attainment of client goals is the next most important priority in a Personal Trainer–client relationship. Identifying the client's goals helps reinforce the client-centered approach to training as well as provides the priorities of the exercise program. As a general best practice, fitness programs should always be “reverse engineered” by the Personal Trainer, backing into any key dates by which a particular goal should be achieved. For example, if the Personal Trainer is training a client to compete in a marathon, a schedule should be created in reverse from the day of the race to the start of the training. In this case, one-to-one sessions may be more frequent in the beginning, at critical mileage differentiators, at low points in the client's motivational cycle, or at whenever both parties agree are appropriate. By comparison, training for a 20-lb weight reduction for an upcoming life event (*e.g.*, wedding, high school reunion) might require a more regimented schedule that includes nutritional check-ups, weekly weigh-ins/measurements, and disciplined combinations of supervised high-intensity training with partially supervised aerobic exercise bouts. In other words, the specifics of each plan will be dictated by the requirements and time lines of the goal.

Many clients have a goal (or set of goals) in mind when they hire a Personal Trainer. Due to unrealistic messages prevalent in the media, clients often hire a Personal Trainer with an unrealistic and unfounded expectation of what they can reasonably achieve in a defined period of time. The Personal Trainer must educate the client on appropriate goals and timelines for the achievement of those goals. Part of this involves education on the unrealistic (and frequently digitally manipulated) images portrayed in the media. The Personal Trainer needs to ensure all communication promotes the attainment of a healthy body image for that client with a focus on health and fitness over aesthetics alone. For a much broader and in-depth description of goal setting and the achievement of goals, please see Chapter 7.

The client's goals must be translated by the Personal Trainer into achievable objectives and outcomes. By breaking the overarching goals into a thought-out plan with quantifiable milestones, the Personal Trainer demonstrates a thorough understanding of a client's aspirations and mastery of the professional skills required to drive success. These milestones are a way to chart a client's progress and measure success over time. It is important to acknowledge that goal setting and behavior change in general are dynamic, individualized processes that vary from client to client and even from day to day.

Although client goals serve as a motivator for adherence, setbacks should be anticipated because they are a natural part of the training process. A key aspect of the Personal Trainers role is to work

with clients to consistently adjust the initial training plan in light of client behavior, commitment, changes in health status, lapses in training, and the like. The Personal Trainer should always keep the client motivated and engaged by reframing any perceived setback as normal and to be expected from time to time. Key to this is coaching the client that improvement is rarely a linear process, and deviations and modifications of the initial program are to be expected as the training plan meets the inevitable realities of a client's day-to-day life.

Another long-term objective for the Personal Trainer is to work toward empowering clients to exercise independently. The underlying, unspoken question "When will you be able to maintain your goals without me?" is often not addressed. Good teachers teach their students to succeed without supervision. Good coaches teach players to perform successfully with little or no supervision because the player becomes his or her own coach. A client may remain with a Personal Trainer for a long period of time (from months to years), but that relationship should not be based on dependence. In many ways, Personal Trainers combine the characteristics of a good teacher and a good coach. Personal Trainers can (and should) bolster their clients' self-efficacy by providing them with a high level of mastery of skills regarding their exercise habits. For more information regarding self-efficacy and behavior change, see Chapter 7.

Be Knowledgeable and Experienced

In 2002, commercial health club's largest trade organization, the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) persuaded the industry into rethinking how Personal Trainers would be certified for the safety of their clients and the betterment of their careers. Faced with literally hundreds of certification options, Personal Trainers and their clients were unsure which certification processes were well designed, unbiased, valid, and reliable. IHRSA, in concert with most of the certifying organizations, crafted a position statement in 2004. This statement recommended that by January 2006, member clubs hire only the Personal Trainers who hold certification from an organization that was in the process of obtaining third-party accreditation of its certification procedures and policies from an independent and nationally recognized accrediting body (see "Additional Resources" for more information). The goal was to ensure that the certificate held by Personal Trainers accurately and appropriately measured their competence and provided the industry with a means toward improving the growing business of Personal Training. With the new standard of accredited certification taking hold, certifying agencies felt comfortable establishing the high school diploma (or its equivalent) and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)/automated external defibrillator (AED) training as the prerequisite for their entry-level Personal Training certificate (1) (Box 2.1).

Gaining experience as a Personal Trainer requires time that is well spent. The process of discovering a specialty, obtaining a degree, completing internship hours for certification, performing volunteer work, and actual employment will provide the Personal Trainer with many learning and professional opportunities. Experience is meaningful if the Personal Trainer is successful in documenting the outcomes, acquiring references from employers and clients alike, and building a resume connected to a stated career objective. Sometimes, these experience-based opportunities

Box 2.1 For More Information

For the most up-to-date list of accredited Personal Training certification programs, go to the Institute of Credentialing Excellence (ICE [3]; <https://www.icecredentialingexcellence.org>).

Note that ICE was formerly the National Organization for Competency Assurance.

require the Personal Trainer to work for little or no compensation and seek situations that may be outside of the typical comfort zone. For example, a Personal Trainer may lack experience working with an older population. However, the demographic trends point toward a larger number of clients who are older and who may possess orthopedic and metabolic conditions as a result of their age. Therefore, the Personal Trainer may search out opportunities to work in retirement homes or assisted living facilities as most offer exercise therapy for their residents. Some of these facilities feature well-equipped fitness centers with robust programming, giving the Personal Trainer an opportunity to gain valuable experience and professional connections to begin working with this market segment.

Present a Clear and Concise Plan

Football coach Vince Lombardi once said, “Plan your work and work your plan.” This strategy may sound simple but it conveys one of the most important qualities for success in the art and science of Personal Training. The pretraining assessment, screening, and goal discovery phase with a client provides the foundation for the exercise prescription.

Once the mode, frequency, duration, intensity, and general components (*e.g.*, warm-up, flexibility, balance, agility, power, strength, endurance, energy system development [ESD], specific skills, and cool-down) of the exercise prescription are determined, a written plan is presented to the client. The plan includes the various phases of the training and the goals for each phase, exercise session date(s), primary goal(s) for each individual session, exercise modes, the order of exercises, the name of the exercises, duration (in repetitions, sets, exercise time), and intensities (target heart rate, rating of perceived exertion, amount of resistance).

The last line of each completed exercise prescription plan should be the Personal Trainer’s signature. It is a sign that the Personal Trainer has developed the plan and has incorporated any pertinent observations, notes, adjustments, and comments from the client and the session for future reference. This can also be helpful in case another Personal Trainer works with that client in the future.

The Personal Trainer should meet privately with the new client prior to the initial session to share the overall strategy, confirm client alignment, and answer questions or concerns. In addition to the exercise prescription, the Personal Trainer should discuss the logistics of how the Personal Trainer and client will work together. This should include information on policies for late, no-showed, cancelled, or abbreviated sessions. The Personal Trainer should also underscore the importance of keeping him or her informed of any changes in the client’s health status that could impact training. Some changes in health status may require modifications in the training plan or and/or referrals to other health professionals. Information on referring when needed is covered in Chapter 22.

Ongoing communication with the client is another essential part of the Personal Trainer–client relationship. Prior to each session, the Personal Trainer should inquire about the client’s general level of readiness for the day’s exercises. Factors to discuss include overall energy level, sleep quality, nutrition and hydration status, stress levels, soreness as well as any minor aches, or pains that may impact the plan. This information can help the Personal Trainer make any necessary last-minute adjustments to the day’s plan and sets the stage for a safe and effective workout.

Lastly, the Personal Trainer should educate the client on the importance of healthy lifestyle behaviors that will support the overall training plan. These should include smoking cessation (if necessary), proper nutrition, proper hydration, adequate sleep, stress management, and intra-session recovery techniques (*e.g.*, self-myofascial release [SMR], massage, and stretching). It is beneficial for a Personal Trainer to develop a network of other health care professionals that may serve as resource for these latter behaviors.

Box 2.2 Manual Resistance

One technique that seems to demonstrate creativity is when a Personal Trainer substitutes his or her strength to provide resistance to the client's exercise movement. This technique is called "manual resistance." The client can push against a trainer, but a trainer should avoid pushing against a client. Another innovation is to manipulate speed of movement. Speed of

contraction is as relevant a variable as reps, sets, and weight in the completion of a strength training exercise, so manipulating the speed of the pushing or pulling (or both) phase of a movement is an effective way to change the stimulus for the muscle complex and surprise the client in regard to his or her expectations of what action is coming next at the same time.

Be Innovative, Creative, and Resourceful

Effective Personal Trainers demonstrate both innovation and creativity (1). An innovator is defined as one who continually introduces new methods and techniques. The Personal Training experience provides many opportunities for such innovation in ways that are simple to execute. That said, it is imperative the Personal Trainers acquire competence with any new method or technique prior to using it with their clients. As always, client safety should be the first (and most important) consideration for any modality used or exercise prescribed.

Creativity is another behavioral trait of effective Personal Trainers. The opportunity for the Personal Trainer to be creative frequently comes when a piece of equipment is out of order or when a particular area of the facility is in use. A creative Personal Trainer will always ensure session efficiency by having a backup exercise ready to substitute to accomplish the same exercise objective. An example of this would be substituting a free-weight or body-weight movement for a machine-based exercise (Box 2.2). It is also important to use creativity to incorporate variety into the training program. Variety can keep the client engaged and reduce the boredom that can be associated with a repetitive routine.

A competent Personal Trainer is also resourceful. The addition of new or cutting-edge equipment can help the Personal Trainer tailor the session to the client's needs while also providing an interesting, novel component to the training session. Examples of Personal Trainer resourcefulness include using an AIREX pad or BOSU to improve balance and reduce fall risk in older individuals or using upper body ESD devices (such as a MARPO rope trainer or battle ropes) to provide a safe ESD option to an individual recovering from a lower body injury. Such modifications indicate the Personal Trainer is considering the unique needs of each individual well in advance of the session (Fig. 2.2). Program enhancements such as these will convey to clients that the Personal Trainer is current with the profession and leveraging the latest industry developments to help the clients achieve their specific goals.

FIGURE 2.2. A Personal Trainer demonstrates the use of resistance bands.



Educate

Good health is a lifelong journey. An important goal for any Personal Trainer is to teach clients the basic tenets of safe and effective physical activity, so they can apply these principles for themselves. These concepts include understanding the components of a well-balanced workout; these include proper warm-up and cool-down, flexibility/stretching, balance, agility, power, strength, endurance, and ESD. For example, when learning the progression of a properly designed program for developing muscular fitness, the client should learn progression from large muscle groups to small muscle groups. They should be familiar with the need to balance movement patterns (such as pushing and pulling), proper breathing, effective stretching techniques, how to determine appropriate exercise intensity (e.g., training heart rate, rating of perceived exertion, or amount of resistance), various modes of exercise, and proper program progression (intensity, duration, and frequency of workouts) in accordance with established exercise goals. Choice of an appropriate and safe exercise mode is of importance to maximize the effectiveness of a training session while minimizing any risk of injury.

A working knowledge of human anatomy, kinesiology, and physiology is essential for a Personal Trainer to describe what is happening inside the body through the bout of exercise and during the overall course of a training program.

A working knowledge of human anatomy, kinesiology, and physiology is essential for a Personal Trainer to describe what is happening inside the body through the bout of exercise and during the overall course of a training program. The Personal Trainer also needs the ability to translate the science of exercise into simple lay terminology that the clients will understand and can apply in the service of their own goals.

Effective Personal Trainers are patient, professional, and prepared. They understand the specific goals and knowledge level of each client and continue to educate them by providing appropriate handouts, reference materials, and credible online sources. They check for understanding by encouraging questions and ongoing communication. The topics of interest can range from motor learning, to hydration, to the symptoms of overtraining. The Personal Trainer should choose material that meets the client at his or her current level of understanding and based on the client's specific interest and the relevance to the client's individual goals.

Inspire

For many laypeople, exercising regularly, making optimal programming choices, and working out at an intensity sufficient to yield visible results can be difficult. A Personal Trainer's value is largely in providing his or her clients with both accountability; expert guidance; and real-time coaching, motivation, and feedback.

Clients often assume that Personal Trainers have always embodied a healthy lifestyle. A Personal Trainer's willingness to share the story of his or her own fitness journey, especially any struggles and learnings gleaned along the way, can make the training process more relatable and less intimidating. If Personal Trainers have overcome a physical challenge themselves, the empathy they can convey to clients who are in similar situations can be a powerful source of inspiration for prospective clients and clients in training especially when the compassion is delivered at just the right moment of need (Box 2.3). This oftentimes happens when a client is stuck at a certain training level or cannot easily attain the goals he or she seeks.

Every training client is motivated to succeed for very different reasons. Personal Trainers should take the time needed to discover what motivates each individual client and then leverage those drivers to customize the approach and accelerate the client's success. For example, some clients like the competitive challenge and respond to the desire to excel over and above others. In this case, the Personal Trainer might assemble a group of clients, categorized by gender, weight, and training experience and provide each member of the team with unique identifiers to protect each client's privacy (often referred to in experimental settings as blind coding). The Personal Trainer

Box 2.3 Further Reading

Simon Sinek (4) describes in his video “Start with Why — How Great Leaders Inspire Action” that although most people can deftly describe what they do and how they do it, what compels people to work with others the most is the conviction, passion, and dreams of *why* a person chooses a particular profession.

Most Personal Trainers enter the profession because they have had a transformational experience in their own health and fitness journey and want to share that gift with others. Sharing the truth of this internal motivation with potential clients sends a powerful message that you are a caring and committed professional.

could then rank the clients by a select category of performance, for example, a personal record (PR) on a bench press one repetition maximum. At periodic intervals or when the client needs a “competitive” push, the Personal Trainer posts the team rankings and, thus, uses the client’s internal competitive spirit as a motivator to work harder to achieve a new PR (Fig. 2.3). Knowing that a client is motivated by competition and using a competitive game to leverage that knowledge to help that client succeed is an example of how Personal Trainers can tailor their approach to engage and motivate each individual.

Individual activity preferences are another important consideration. This is especially true for training programs that are long in term and duration. Clients are more likely to be consistent when engaging in experiences that they enjoy. Mixing in specialty classes, sports, and/or leisure-time activities matched to the preferences of the individual can complement the overall program while also providing welcome relief, novelty, and motivation to endure (and eventually succeed) in the long-term training objectives. This is especially important in activities that involve considerable time commitment and repetitive (and therefore potentially drudgerous) activities over a sustained period of time, such as training for endurance events such as triathlons, half marathons, or marathons. More about motivation and adherence is discussed later in Chapter 8.

Focus

One of that hallmarks of professional excellence in Personal Training is a commitment to unwavering, individualized attention. This requires undivided, undistracted, unencumbered, and sustained focus on a client’s form, speed, posture, grip, stance, breathing, and even facial expressions. Consistent attention to a client’s nonverbal cues can help differentiate whether a particular exercise is too hard or too easy. Undistracted monitoring of form and technique ensures client safety and exercise efficacy.

FIGURE 2.3. A Personal Trainer using a team ranking chart to show the client her latest position after the last posting of her PR.



Box 2.4 Service and Hospitality

As a Personal Trainer, you are asking people to invest a significant amount of their time and money with you. That said, the experience should always be positive and client focused from start to finish. This requires an understanding of best practices in service and hospitality. The Personal Trainer should study service organizations that are known for consistently delivering a high-level end-to-end customer experience. Hotels, restaurants, and Internet retailers are some

examples of organizations that thrive as a result of the highest standards when it comes to servicing their customers. Successful examples of organizations that have achieved legendary levels of customer service and best practices are well documented in *The New Gold Standard: 5 Leadership Principles for Creating a Legendary Customer Experience Courtesy of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company* (5) and *Delivering Happiness: A Path to Profits, Passion, and Purpose* (6).

Presession preparation is the first step in creating a client-focused experience. The Personal Trainer should plan the session well in advance, thinking through the individual elements and sequence of activities, so there is no time spent deciding “what’s next.” This allows the Personal Trainer to concentrate solely on the client’s performance. “Now and how” (*i.e.*, “*now* we are doing this and this is *how* you do it”) is a great mantra to replay because preparations are made mentally to introduce each new set of exercises for the client.

The Personal Trainer should also set the ground rules for clients on distractions during the session. Alert clients that the Personal Trainer will not answer their questions while training another client. Personal Trainers should give clients their contact information (*e.g.*, e-mail, phone number), so clients can easily contact them if they have questions. The client being trained should also be restricted from taking phone calls, texting, checking e-mail, or excessive socializing, especially during key sets/reps in the training session. Unnecessary distractions can result in injuries at worst and minimally can reduce the efficiency of the session.

The Personal Trainer should have all equipment necessary set up in advance as part of the overall session preparation. This includes items such as client charts, stopwatches, small exercise equipment (*e.g.*, bands, tubing), towels, and water. Going to gather items during a training session is an unnecessary waste of a client’s valuable session time.

Personal Trainers should work to cultivate proactive awareness and be able to anticipate a client’s needs. Hospitality will become a part of the unique selling proposition, the feature that makes individuals different from the competition and that provides added value (Box 2.4). Additionally, Personal Trainers can make their services distinctive from their peers by specializing in one (or several) niche markets. Examples of this could include specializing in training female triathletes or people looking to improve their golf game or older adults new to fitness. Focusing on a unique market within an overall business model can establish a Personal Trainer as an expert in a particular area, distinguishing him or her from other professionals and generating referral from clients and other professionals alike.

Track and Recognize Progress

A Personal Trainer determines all the appropriate metrics of success for each and every individual client in the intake process. As described in the Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound (SMART) goal concept (see Chapter 7 for more details), while establishing key success metrics, the Personal Trainer sets critical benchmarks used to evaluate whether or not the training programs are effective. These metrics are also used to motivate the client to forge ahead toward these very important goals. Clients are often after “big-impact” results (*e.g.*, lose 20 lb [9 kg], reduce body fat by 7%, serve a tennis ball at 75 mph [121 kph], or hit a golf drive 300 yd [274 m]).

Box 2.5 Client Appreciation

It is important to have a small budget for appreciation gifts for your clients. These rewards could be given for achieving certain milestones (e.g., completing their first 10K) or for referring a new client. Additionally, it is important to remember and celebrate important client's life events such as birthdays, life events (e.g., engagements, marriages, births), and holidays

with small tokens of appreciation. This could be anything from a book, a training diary, gift cards to a free training session, or even a thoughtful card. It needn't be expensive to be meaningful. The important thing is to let the clients know you were thinking about them and want to acknowledge and celebrate their special day or achievement.

The Personal Trainer's challenge is to lead clients toward their long-term goals through attainment of several smaller ones. The Personal Trainer's job is to make clients aware of the small advances they are achieving and how they all contribute toward their desired endpoint.

Simple charts and graphs are very effective in demonstrating client progress toward a desired goal. The simplest example of how this works is usually seen when working with clients who have a weight loss goal. Most clients set weight loss goals that are too large and too fast. Safe and effective weight loss strategies typically recommend 1–2 lb (0.5–1 kg) of weight loss per week, although this can vary depending on the initial body weight of the client. If a client wants to lose 20 lb (9 kg), this may take up to 20 weeks and that does not account for any muscle weight gain that may occur as a result of the training regimen. Twenty weeks equals 5 months. Because clients read advertisements on the Internet and listen to late night television that claims weight loss of 20 lb (9 kg) in 1 month without exercise, getting clients to acknowledge a 5-month wait for a weight loss goal is a challenge. Moreover, most clients are often focused solely on scale weight, not understanding the concept of body composition. It is important to educate clients on the safety of slow fat loss and the concept of sparing and increasing lean body mass. Scale weight may or may not indicate fat loss and could potentially increase as a concomitant increase in lean body mass occurs. For this reason, it is important to focus on other measures such as body girth measurements or body fat percentage. Presenting metrics that track numerous “small wins” on a regular basis can reinforce clients' adherence by showing them that they are making consistent progress, albeit perhaps at a slower pace than they might have initially expected. It is also important to show changes performance metrics such as an increase in weight lifted, intensity maintained, or repetitions completed, so they understand their weight loss in the context of overall improvements in their fitness. Seeing holistic proof points that they are moving ever closer to long-range goals in a variety of ways can help keep the clients focused and motivated.

It is easy for clients to get frustrated with a perceived lack of progress or setbacks in compliance. By celebrating improvements not only in metrics but also in effort, consistency, and engagement, Personal Trainers can reframe the client's frustrations and keep the client focused on identifying the incremental improvements that may be overlooked. Awareness of these small successes is critical to building a client's confidence and increasing his or her belief in his or her own self-efficacy, both of which are essential to keeping the client committed to his or her program (Box 2.5).

Where Do I Start My Career?

Background

The prerequisites for employment will depend on the employer, job description, and types of clients serviced while performing the scope of work. Many employers in commercial health clubs expect a Personal Training certificate that was accredited from a third-party accrediting organization.

Facilities should hire trainers with demonstrable competence as evidenced by, among others, holding certification from a recognized organization. Facilities (*e.g.*, medical wellness centers and rehabilitation clinics) that serve clients with multiple risk factors and orthopedic limitations typically require both a degree (graduate or undergraduate) in a health- or fitness-related field *and* a certificate that is related to their scope of responsibilities.

Find Your “Why”

Most trainers start their careers as a result of personal experience, direct or related. Trainers with direct experience include the athlete who has been positively affected by a coach, Personal Trainer, teacher, or even a highly regimented and effective self-imposed routine. They can be sport athletes on any level, cosmetic athletes who are performing a total body makeover, or corporate athletes who are sold on the concept that their bodies are as important as their minds for success in their business pursuits. The success (and even the disappointing failure) of those experiences often serve as the impetus for wanting to pursue a career as a Personal Trainer. Someone who works in the health, fitness, or medical field as an allied professional (*e.g.*, registered dietitian, physical therapist, clinical exercise physiologist, athletic trainer, licensed massage therapist, occupational therapist, and physical therapy aide) or a support person (*e.g.*, receptionist; maintenance person; membership sales person; or administrator, such as operations manager, office assistant, bookkeeper, accountant, or human resources administrator) can also use his or her proximity to (and familiarity with) the Personal Training profession as a springboard to his or her entrance as a career Personal Trainer.

The Personal Trainer is in a gratifying yet challenging profession. Workdays typically stretch over significantly more hours than a conventional job. Training must be done when clients are available, with sessions typically starting early in the morning before clients go to work and extending into the evening after a client's workday is over. The Personal Trainer must balance the demands of maintaining focused attention on each individual client, managing the needs of an average of 8–10 clients per day all while continuing to grow as a professional. This ongoing professional development should include reading, researching, listening to podcasts, watching webinars, and attending conferences. Additionally, the Personal Trainer should embody a healthy physical condition that meets the physical demands of the profession and serves as an inspiration for clients and prospective clients alike.

Given the rigors of the job, having clarity on the “why” of this career is an important first step for the Personal Trainer. A compelling reason for entering the profession provides a foundation that enables the Personal Trainer to persevere during the more challenging aspects of the job. Once an aspiring Personal Trainer is clear on the “why” is time to acquire some initial experiences in the field training clients while simultaneously working toward an accredited certification. The most effective strategy is multidimensional, with both experience gathering and certification studying occurring at the same time. That said, the degree of emphasis will depend on the individual's life stage, budget, and time constraints. This is also the time to try to identify and secure a mentor.

Certification

In choosing a certification, start by identifying two to three accredited certification programs and do some background research on each. Some things to consider include the following:

1. Do you meet their eligibility requirements?
2. Are their fees within your budget?
3. Are the logistics required to obtain their certification reasonable for you to achieve (*e.g.*, travel, Internet access, time, internship requirements)?
4. Does the certification match with your prospective field of training specialty (*e.g.*, kettle bells, performance training, special populations), or is it a general Personal Trainer certificate?

Whether working for a national health and fitness chain, a specialty franchise, a small privately held studio, or opening up a private practice, attaining certification is the most important first step to be accomplished.

Whether working for a national health and fitness chain, a specialty franchise, a small privately held studio, or opening up a private practice, attaining certification is the most important first step to be accomplished.

When applying for a Personal Training position, it is important to ask if the employer requires a particular certification. The requirements may have been established based on the certifications held by the employer or those recommended to him or her by others in the industry.

What if you are already certified? Maintaining one's certification is as important as getting the certification initially. Most certification bodies require some level of documented continuing education within a certain period of time to keep the certification current. This ongoing professional development ensures that the Personal Trainer is constantly evolving and upgrading his or her skill set and maintaining a high standard of professionalism. Additionally, keeping one's CPR/AED certification current is typically a prerequisite to renewing a certification as well as a standard operating policy for most facilities.

Many certifying agencies offer multiple levels of certification as well as the ability to get certified in subspecialties such as weight management, wellness coaching, health coaching, and behavior change. Great Personal Trainers are lifelong learners. They adapt to the need of the clients in the markets they serve, and they make sure to be current with the techniques required to serve those clients safely and effectively.

Find a Mentor

A mentor is someone who invests time, energy, and personal experience into another's career development. It is a volunteer role typically entered into from a desire to give back to the field and help others enter the profession. Look to find a mentor who most closely matches the background and experiences needed. A mentor can be invaluable in providing a Personal Trainer with the guidance necessary to avoid both training and business mistakes alike. If possible, try to find a mentor who is working with the types of clients in your preferred Personal Trainer practice specialty. Understand that if the mentor's business is within your catchment area, a signed nonsolicitation or noncompete agreement with the mentor may be required. In today's digitally connected world, mentorships needn't happen face to face. They can be accomplished remotely via phone text, e-mail, and videoconferencing. This capability greatly expands the universe of prospective mentors.

When approaching a mentor, be as clear as possible about the type of help you are looking for from him or her. The mentor's role is to help you navigate your career choices, not to create a path for you. At the start of the relationship, make sure that you are both aligned on your expectations. This can include (but is not limited to) the frequency of meetings, specific area of focus, and the structure of the time spent. Always be respectful of a mentor's time. Be sure to maximize the effectiveness of the session by preparing thoughtful questions well in advance of the session. Mentoring sessions should be used to ask specific questions and problem solve on identified areas of concern or interest. Come prepared and ready to maximize the available time. Mentor-mentee sessions are typically anywhere from 20 to 60 minutes and can occur on a monthly or bimonthly basis.



What Are Some Examples of Rewarding Career Paths?

There are so many types of clients, working venues, schedules, and unique opportunities in the Personal Training field today that a Personal Trainer can extend a career over many years and even more markets. The next logical step in a career path, especially if working in an environment that employs many other Personal Training professionals, is Personal Training management. This path

generally can consist of two distinct elements: administration/personnel management and professional development. Administration/personnel management requires a Personal Trainer to hire and supervise staff, evaluate performance, set schedules and policies, interface with clients, and oversee the sales and financial performance of a Personal Training department. On the professional development path, Personal Trainers with specialty expertise (e.g., yoga, Pilates, sports-specific training) are often responsible for the education, certification, upskilling, and programming in specific areas. In these situations, a Personal Trainer may be required to evaluate staff's professional skills, create personal development plans, and deliver (or at a minimum coordinate) the continuing education curriculum for the team.

There so are many types of clients, working venues, schedules, and unique opportunities in the Personal Training field today that a Personal Trainer can extend a career over many years and even more markets.

Although Personal Trainers work as commissioned employees in some commercial health and fitness centers, they may also serve as independent contractors. As a result, Personal Trainers may seek the career path of an entrepreneur. Being your own boss is rewarding and has many advantages, but it also has challenges and responsibilities. Of course, the easiest way to this path is to train clients privately in public facilities, in their own homes, or even your own home gym.

To minimize some of the risks of entrepreneurship, Personal Trainers can explore the option to become franchisees. Entering into a contract with a franchise has many branding, marketing, and operating advantages, but they come with a cost and commitment to the franchise. Good legal advice is always recommended when considering this career path.

The boldest entrepreneur opens his or her own Personal Training business. Finding, renting, and renovating or, alternatively, buying the land and then building the physical location are obviously the most expensive journeys on this career path. Searching the newspaper or on the Internet for an existing business to buy and place under management is also an option worth exploring and may even come with a built-in client base. In every case, the Personal Trainer who is going to create a new business needs a very capable team of real estate agents, lawyers, construction professionals, accountants, information technology professionals, and sales and marketing consultants and a high tolerance for risk. Risk decreases and reward increases in proportion to every celebrity or professional athlete that a Personal Trainer has on a client list. It also helps to have approximately 30% more start-up cash on hand than the most conservative estimate (1).

One way that a Personal Trainers can decrease risk and minimize start-up costs is to seek to set up a business inside an existing service facility. Businesses such as a commercial health/fitness center, spa, salon, or nutritional consultation practice often have clients in need of a Personal Trainer's services. These facilities typically already have amenities such as fitness equipment, locker rooms, and showers. This enables the Personal Trainer to focus on building a business rather than investing in the creation (and ongoing investment) of a stand-alone operation.

Personal Trainers who are interested in working in health care settings may wish to obtain American College of Sports Medicine's (ACSM) Exercise is Medicine® (EIM) Credential. This designation is a component of ACSM's broader *Exercise is Medicine Global Health Initiative* and is designed to teach fitness professionals to work effectively as part of an extended health care team. The EIM Credential includes information on how to train individuals with common chronic conditions and how to provide behavioral support strategies to help clients successfully integrate regular physical activity into their daily lives. The EIM certification can open up opportunities for the Personal Trainer to work in environments, including medical offices, hospital wellness centers, and physical therapy practices.

Career paths for Personal Trainers can also take very successful detours down the related professional paths requiring higher levels of education and training. Personal Trainers who have an interest in clinical work and who are academically inclined can enter the allied health professions. The careers most closely aligned with Personal Training are physical therapy assistants, health