



Professional Standards and Learning Outcomes for Personal Trainers

| Core Knowledge (What someone is taught) | Range of Knowledge (What someone learns) | Learning Outcomes (What knowledge has been assessed) | Skills of Practical Competency (What practical skills have been assessed) |
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| A. Principles of Fitness, Health and Wellness Concepts | Candidates should know and understand: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The difference between the primary and secondary components of fitness. The concepts of health and wellness. Factors that affect physical fitness. The relationship between physical fitness, health related exercise, sports specific exercise and health. Canada's Food Guide, how to identify the food groups, how to describe the main principles of the guide, and the recommended servings per day for adults for each food group. Their limitations when discussing nutritional information with participants. The principles of training. The role of hydration in exercise and long-term health. canfitpro's and Health Canada's recommended guidelines for physical activity. | Candidates have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The primary and secondary components of fitness and how physical activity can increase both. The concepts of health and wellness and can list the non-physical benefits. Explaining the basic principles of planning a healthy, balanced diet. The principles of training and how the principles of training apply to each component of fitness. The role of hydration in exercise and in long-term health. How recommended guidelines for physical activity relate to not only personal training sessions but also increasing physical activity in everyday activities. | Candidates have demonstrated practical skills by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and delivering a personal training session using appropriate exercise activities for health and fitness benefits, while using the principles of training throughout. Providing a program/training card which neatly and correctly displays a balanced program showing warm up and cardio activities and intensity, with tempo, rest, sets, and reps being applied to the resistance training component and a list of stretches for flexibility. |
| B. Bioenergetics Concepts | Candidates should know and understand: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The need for energy for muscular contractions. Immediate energy – the ATP-CP system; short-term energy – the glycolytic system; long term energy – the aerobic glycolysis and fatty acid oxidation systems. The role of Adenosine Diphosphate, Adenosine Tri Phosphate (ATP) and Creatine Phosphate in energy production for muscular contraction. The waste products of various forms of physical activity. The operation of the energy system in physical activity. The Oxygen debt, steady state, VO2 Max. Food fuels used to provide different types of energy. The role of intensity and time and individual fitness levels in determining which energy system is used predominantly during exercise, The ability of the body to burn fat throughout a range of intensities, The muscle fibre types used in relation to aerobic and anaerobic work. | Candidates have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Describing the source of energy for exercise. Defining homeostasis and metabolism. Describing the structure of ATP. Explaining the differences between aerobic and anaerobic production of energy. Explaining how the energy systems produce ATP. The characteristics of aerobic and anaerobic activities for example running, walking, sprinting, and jumping. How to design a personal training session that uses all energy systems and that takes into account the byproducts of anaerobic and aerobic work. The body's ability to burn fat throughout a range of intensities. | Candidates have demonstrated practical skills by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering and demonstrating a warm-up. Explaining the benefits of performing a warm up. Delivering and demonstrating a cardio component. Explaining the benefits of working cardiorespiratory fitness. Discussing correct intensity and monitoring using RPE and % of HR reserve. |

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| <p>C. Cardiorespiratory Concepts</p> | <p>Candidates should know and understand:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The passage of oxygen through the nose, mouth, windpipe, and air sacs, 2. How oxygen and carbon dioxide change places and how oxygen travels to the muscles via the blood at rest and in response to exercise, 3. The anatomy of the heart and how blood is pumped and collected. 4. The link between the heart, the lungs, and the muscles. 5. The structure and function of arteries, veins, capillaries, mitochondria, and the flow of blood around the body. 6. Blood pressure and the effects of exercise. 7. The major benefits of cardiorespiratory training and the short and long term effects of exercise on the heart, lungs, and circulatory system, 8. The major issues that affect the design of cardiorespiratory training based on the FITT formula. 9. How to determine appropriate exercises for cardiovascular recovery. 10. canfitpro's and Health Canada's recommended guidelines for cardiorespiratory activity. 11. How the heart rate training zones relate to rate of perceived exertion and heart rate monitoring. 12. The physiological and health related changes that occur as a result of cardiorespiratory conditioning. | <p>Candidates have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describing the anatomy of the heart. 2. Explaining the flow of blood from the heart to the body and back again and the mechanics of the cardiovascular system and its response to exercise. 3. Identifying the major benefits of cardiorespiratory training. 4. Identifying basic differences in developing cardiorespiratory training programs for beginner, intermediate, and advanced clients. 5. Explaining the major issues that affect the design of cardiorespiratory training based on the FITT formula. 6. Discuss the concepts of cardiorespiratory recovery. 7. The short and long term effects of exercise on the heart, lungs, circulatory system, and of arteries, veins, capillaries, and mitochondria. 8. Identifying the effect exercise has on blood pressure. 9. Explaining the function and anatomy of the respiratory system its mechanics and response to exercise. 10. Gaseous exchange and how oxygen travels to the muscles via the blood. 11. Addressing oxygen debt, oxygen deficit, steady state and VO2 max. | <p>Candidates have demonstrated practical skills by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planning and delivering the cardio component of a personal training session by applying the knowledge of the cardiorespiratory system and energy systems to the program design. 2. Discussing FITT for cardiorespiratory training with the client. 3. Monitoring the clients HR and providing feedback on technique and adjusting intensity as required. |
| <p>D. Skeletal Anatomy.</p> | <p>Candidates should know and understand:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The primary functions of bones. 2. The structure and function of the skeleton. 3. How to identify the classifications of bones, joints, and types of synovial joints. 4. How to locate and name the major bones in the body. 5. How to define anatomical position. 6. How to locate important structures in the body using correct anatomical terms. 7. How to identify movements that occur in the major joints. 8. Basic structure of synovial joints and the short term effects of exercise on them. 9. The effects of exercise on bones & joints. | <p>Candidates have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listing the primary functions of bones. 2. Describing the structure and function of the skeleton. 3. Identification and classification of bones, joints, and synovial joints and the short term effect of exercise on them. 4. Locating and naming major bones in the body. 5. Demonstrating anatomical position. 6. Locating important structures in the body and using correct anatomical terms. 7. Describing joint movement using correct terminology. 8. Identifying movements that occur at the major joints. | <p>Candidates have demonstrated practical skills by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planning and delivering a personal training session by applying the knowledge of skeletal anatomy and by using appropriate exercises that ensure the client is moving and working through a safe range. 2. Ensuring that the client is executing safe, effective movements and range of motion. |

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| <p>E. Muscular and Flexibility Concepts</p> | <p>Candidates should know and understand:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The major muscle groups of the body. The basic structure of muscles including: <i>muscle fibres, actin & myosin, their role in muscle contraction, connective tissue</i> Muscle fibre types (slow, fast, intermediate) How fibres are recruited in muscle contraction. The principles of muscle contraction, for example: <i>Muscles cross joints; Muscles only pull; contraction along the line of fibres; Working in pairs.</i> Basic muscle contraction for example: <i>Concentric/Eccentric/Isometric (Static), Prime Mover, Antagonist and Fixators,</i> The origins and insertions of the major muscles. Joints crossed by muscle groups. The principles of paired muscle actions. Joint actions brought about by specific muscle group contractions and movements for example: <i>Adduction/Abduction, Flexion/Extension, Pronation/Supination.</i> How to differentiate among types of muscle contractions, and name the muscles that produce all possible movements in the major joints. The physiological and health related changes that occur as a result of muscular conditioning. Define flexibility and its relationship to fitness. The physiological and health related changes that occur as a result of stretching. The different types and methods of stretching (dynamic and static) and (active and passive). Desensitization and lengthening of muscle tissue (muscle creep). Factors affecting an individual's potential range of movement. Activities that improve range of movement. canfitpro's and Health Canada's recommended guidelines for Flexibility Training. | <p>Candidates have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying the major muscle pairs and the origins and insertions. Describing the sliding filament theory of muscular contraction. Differentiating among types of muscle contractions. Naming the muscles that produce all possible movements in the major joints. Describing the FITT formula for resistance training. Describing the changes that occur after regular resistance training. Defining flexibility and its relationship to fitness. Describing the FITT formula for flexibility. Identifying joint mechanics and explain how stretching promotes flexibility. Describing the changes that occur after regular stretching. Identifying the purpose of flexibility training. Determining appropriate durations for flexibility training. Performing various techniques that promote flexibility. | <p>Candidates have demonstrated practical skills by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and delivering a personal training session by applying the knowledge of muscular and flexibility concepts and by using appropriate exercises that ensure the client is moving and working through a safe range of motion. Explaining the benefits of performing strength/resistance training and the importance of a balanced program. Discussing tempo, rest, sets, reps (FITT), and correct breathing technique. Highlighting the muscles being trained by using layman and anatomical terms. Correctly demonstrating and coaching each exercise while discussing range of motion, posture, regression, and progression. Providing feedback to reinforce or correct technique. Using correct spotting technique and positioning. Explaining the benefits of performing flexibility training and the importance of a balanced program. |
| <p>F. Pre-Exercise Screening</p> | <p>Candidates should know and understand:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The reason for using health screening with all clients. The necessity for having all clients complete and sign a PAR-Q form. How to develop and implement a health screening questionnaire. As a Personal Trainer when to refer clients to more qualified health care providers. | <p>Candidates have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Explaining the reason for using health screening. Discussing the necessity for having all clients complete and sign a PAR-Q form. Identifying the scope of a personal trainer's capabilities with reference to medical conditions. | <p>Candidates have demonstrated practical skills by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring the client attending the personal training session has completed a PAR-Q and health screening questionnaire. |

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| G. Injury Recognition Concepts | Candidates should know and understand: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How to handle clients with undiagnosed pain and when to refer to more qualified health care providers. How to distinguish the two types of pain a client could experience. How to define and describe the two types of musculoskeletal injuries a client could experience. How to describe and differentiate an acute musculoskeletal injury from an overuse musculoskeletal injury. How to define and differentiate the signs of an injury and the symptoms of an injury. | Candidates have knowledge and understanding in: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How to respond appropriately to a medical emergency. Defining the goals and action steps they should take, as a personal trainer, in the immediate management of an acute or chronic injury. Distinguishing between the two types of pain a client could experience. Defining and describing the two types of musculoskeletal injuries a client could experience. Describing and differentiating an acute musculoskeletal injury from an overuse musculoskeletal injury. Identifying what to do if a client approaches them for their recommendations on undiagnosed pain or treatment for a current injury. Identifying and differentiating the two categories of risk factors for common musculoskeletal injuries. Identifying the steps to be taken in preventing acute and overuse injuries. Ensuring appropriate health and safety checks are in place (environment, clients and equipment). | Candidates have demonstrated practical skills by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Producing a valid CPR certificate to the assessor at their practical exam. Checking that any equipment used is in good working order and is safely selected and put away. Giving clients advice on correct speed/resistance/weight etc for their fitness level. Giving appropriate health and safety checks (environment, participants and equipment), checking the physical environment to ensure there are no hazards present for the client. |
| H. Fitness Assessment | Candidates should know and understand: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The value and purpose of fitness assessments. Normal values for resting HR and resting blood pressure. How cardiorespiratory fitness is tested. How to measure body composition using various methods. How muscular strength and endurance are evaluated. How to assess flexibility for clients. | Candidates have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Selecting appropriate assessments for clients. Identifying which information is to be collected and used in designing clients program. How to supervise a client's assessment in a safe and effective manner. How to record information in an effective manner. | Candidates have demonstrated practical skills by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and ensuring fitness assessments are carried out with clear concise instructions and the results recorded correctly. Explaining the importance of doing regular fitness assessments to the client. Accurately interpreting the results of a fitness assessment and giving clients the results in a manner that the client understands and can apply to their fitness goal. |

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| <p>I. Program Design Concepts/Typical Personal Training Programs</p> | <p>Candidates should know and understand:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How to identify the four elements of good program design. 2. Periodization and its application to program design 3. The common principles of training. 4. The five step process of program design and delivery. 5. A typical personal training program. 6. When to change a program. 7. The difference between changing the exercise or the performance of the exercise. | <p>Candidates have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How to design an exercise session using the four elements of good program design and the results gathered from health screening, the client's goals, and fitness assessment results. 2. How to recognize correct exercise technique to include appropriate positioning, correct settings for machines, and general safety considerations. 3. The application of periodization to program design. 4. Which principles of training to apply throughout the session as well as training variables to include: <i>Choice of exercises, sequence of exercise, resistance ,repetitions, number of sets, rest between sets, speed of movement, type of muscle contraction, duration of session, rest between settings, volume of training, and split routines.</i> 5. Using variables to develop strength, endurance hypertrophy, speed, and power. 6. The advantages and disadvantages of exercising at various intensities for: sedentary, experienced and high performing clients. 7. Calculations of repetition maximum (1RM-10RM) 8. Selecting the modes of exercise to be used during the session. 9. How and when to modify or change an exercise or program. | <p>Candidates have demonstrated practical skills by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planning and delivering a training session having applied the knowledge and principles of training and the components of health related fitness to meet client's abilities, needs, and lifestyle and exercise preferences. 2. Correctly demonstrating and instructing the client on how to safely set up and use equipment while using good form and technique. 3. During the session discussing modes of exercise to be used, how and when the exercise needs to be modified or changed and being able to relate the activities back to the client's fitness goals. |
| <p>J. Psychology of Personal Training.</p> | <p>Candidates should know and understand:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The personal trainer's role as it relates to client psychology. 2. The stages of change and how to work with clients based on the stage they are in. 3. How to identify the major variables that determine exercise adherence. 4. How to set effective goals. 5. How to deal with different personalities. 6. The negative perceptions or challenges that new exercisers have toward exercising. 7. The concept of lifestyle coaching. | <p>Candidates have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The necessary qualities of a successful personal trainer. 2. Identifying the stages of change within clients and then applying basic cognitive-behavior modification, reinforcement, goal setting, social support and peer pressure etc. 3. Setting SMART goals to help ensure exercise adherence. 4. Identifying different personality types and the most appropriate treatment strategy. 5. Coaching clients not only in physical activity, but being able to take a more holistic look at their clients. | <p>Candidates have demonstrated practical skills by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planning and delivering a personal training session based on information collected about the client using, interviews, and observation, health screening forms, and PAR-Q, questionnaire, and fitness assessment. 2. Demonstrating effective communication and interpersonal skills while being enthusiastic and using positive statements to motivate the client. 3. Being confident and demonstrating sincerity to the client. 4. Ending the session with positive reinforcement, providing feedback, and answering any questions before confirming next session. |

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| K. Business of Personal Training | Candidates should know and understand: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How to identify the 4 Ps of marketing.2. How to identify various pricing structures.3. The pros and cons of various types of promotional efforts.4. The benefits of referrals and identify the various types of referrals.5. The steps you can take when selling your service.6. The key aspects of your professional image.7. How to terminate a relationship.8. The key aspects of risk management.9. Your need to have insurance and explain policies and procedures. | Candidates have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How to market their services using information such as: <i>product, price, promotion, and place</i>.2. Pricing and how different factors will determine the cost of sessions for example: location, experience, education, etc,3. The costs and effectiveness of different types of promotions and which ones offer the best return including the benefits of referrals.4. How to market their services directly to prospective clients and how their professional image is a necessary part of this.5. The correct way to terminate a relationship with a client.6. Risk management and how to protect themselves and their clients by acting within their Scope of Practice7. Ensuring clients have completed a PAR-Q and health history questionnaire, signed a waiver, and complete continuing client assessments.8. Maintaining annual CPR training and if necessary purchase own liability insurance. | Candidates have demonstrated practical skills by: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Being a positive role model, smart and well groomed, looks professional throughout the session, interacts well with clients and gym staff.2. Being approachable and friendly. |
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