A qualified personal trainer can help you safely start and maintain an effective exercise program. A personal trainer will understand your fitness goals and help you achieve them. Personal trainers can be a great source of motivation and accountability, as well as a resource for the latest objective health and fitness information. A personal trainer can also help you with strategies to seamlessly incorporate exercise into your schedule and teach you how to make the most out of your time in the gym. Making the right choice in a fitness professional is an important investment to your health, wellness and life.

A Complete Physical Activity Program
A well-rounded physical activity program includes aerobic exercise and strength training exercise, but not necessarily in the same session. This blend helps maintain or improve cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness and overall health and function. The perfect exercise program is individualized and promotes enjoyment and retention.

To stay healthy, adults need 150-300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity weekly, or 75-150 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity (or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity). Additionally, women and men are encouraged to do muscle-strengthening exercises that involve all the major muscle groups at a moderate or greater intensity on two or more days a week. Some examples of aerobic exercises are:

- Walking
- Running
- Stair climbing
- Cycling
- Rowing
- Cross country skiing
- Swimming

Locating a Personal Trainer
Please note that the title “personal trainer” does not guarantee that a person is qualified. Currently, there is no national standard or minimum requirement for an individual to use the title “personal trainer.” Working with an under qualified trainer could compromise your safety. It is important to have knowledge of what to look for when seeking a personal trainer who is educated, qualified and the right fit for you!

Begin by asking about personal trainers at your local health club or fitness facility. Many have in-house personal trainers you can hire. Inquire whether your current health club provides a free fitness assessment with a personal trainer, trial training session or both to evaluate all of the following questions.

Certification and Education Questions
- Does the personal trainer hold a degree from an accredited college or university in exercise science, kinesiology, exercise physiology, physical education or a related health-and-fitness field? The trainer should have a foundational understanding in anatomy/physiology, program design and risk assessment to educate clients to an informed decision.
- Does the personal trainer have a certification from a nationally recognized organization? Check to make sure the certification is from a credible and reputable organization. USREPS is a great resource.
- What continuing education is required to maintain the certification?
- Does the personal trainer have any advanced training or credentials?
- Is the personal trainer certified in first aid and CPR?
- Does the personal trainer have liability insurance?

Finding the Right Personal Trainer for You: Questions to Consider
- Would you prefer a male or female trainer?
- Do you like the trainer’s demeanor? Will they be a good fit for your personality and your fitness goals?
- Is the personal trainer open to answering your questions? Do they ask insightful questions about your exercise preferences, background, etc.?
- Does the personal trainer communicate effectively and explain information in a way that is easy to understand?
- Will the personal trainer motivate you to exercise and make you want to continue your program?
- Is the personal trainer sensitive to your needs?
- Do you feel comfortable with the personal trainer?
Experience Questions to Ask

- How much experience does the personal trainer have?
- What types of clients do they regularly work with?
- Can they provide you with any references?
- If you have any special physical needs (such as with special equipment, injury, illness or medication), does the personal trainer have the skills and experience to accommodate?

Fees Questions to Ask

- What does the personal trainer charge?
- What services are included in the price?
- Is there an additional gym membership fee?
- Are there short-term package or long-term package prices?
- How long is each session?
- Does the trainer require you to sign a contract for long-term training?

Tips: The fees personal trainers charge may vary according to qualifications, experience, location, length of session and specialization of the workout. Typically, a personal trainer will charge $20 to $100 an hour. Some personal trainers will offer reduced hourly rates for long-term packages or prepaid sessions. Avoid signing any type of long-term contract with a personal trainer.

Scheduling, Cancellation Policies & Business Practices

- Is the trainer available to meet your schedule?
- What is the personal trainer's cancellation policy?
- Will you be charged if you do not cancel within a certain time frame?
- Ask the personal trainer to provide you with a written copy of all policies on billing, scheduling and cancellations.

Not all exercise programs are suitable for everyone. Activities should be carried out at an effort level that is comfortable for you. You should stop participation in any exercise activity that causes pain. In such event, you should consult with your health care professional immediately.

ACSM recommends you accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity (working hard enough to break a sweat, but still able to carry on a conversation) most days per week, or 20 minutes of more vigorous activity three days per week. Combinations of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity can be performed to meet this recommendation.

Examples of typical aerobic exercises are: walking, running, stair climbing, cycling, rowing, cross country skiing and swimming. Examples of common strength training exercises are: weight machines, free weights and resistance bands. Flexibility exercises can include: stretches of muscles around different joints and yoga.

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