



ACSM Career Guide

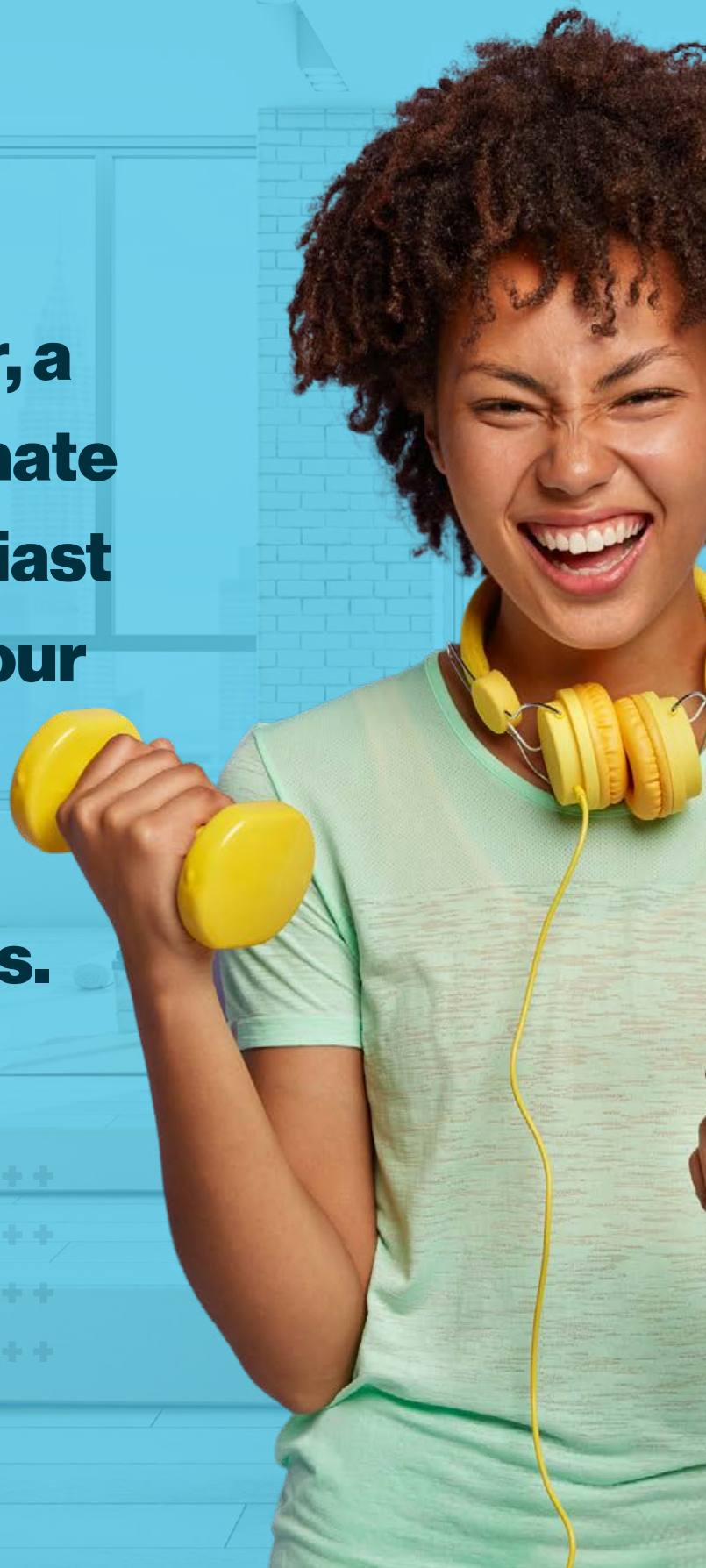
Launch. Build. Grow.



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



You're a helper, a doer, a passionate fitness enthusiast ready to use your skills to lead people in their health journeys.





You might be a recent **high school grad** looking to step into a career in fitness.

Or perhaps you're a **college student** contemplating the ways you could build a thriving career in fitness.

You could be a **fitness enthusiast** looking to turn your passion into a part-time opportunity.

Or maybe you're already working as a **fitness professional** and you're thinking about pursuing specialty certifications to boost your career.

Whoever you are, we want to help you launch your career, build community, and keep growing as a fitness professional.

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Our mission is simple: We want to make movement accessible to everyone.

That's why we've provided certification and professional growth opportunities for health and fitness professionals since 1954. Whether you're a personal trainer, clinical exercise physiologist or anything in between, you're a changemaker through exercise.

ACSM celebrates your unique role in helping people move by providing a professional, science-driven, innovative, accessible and ethical space for you to grow. We've been there since day one (Yes, we were the first to provide certification for industry pros!) for our changemakers and will continue to work alongside them as the fitness industry and technology evolve.

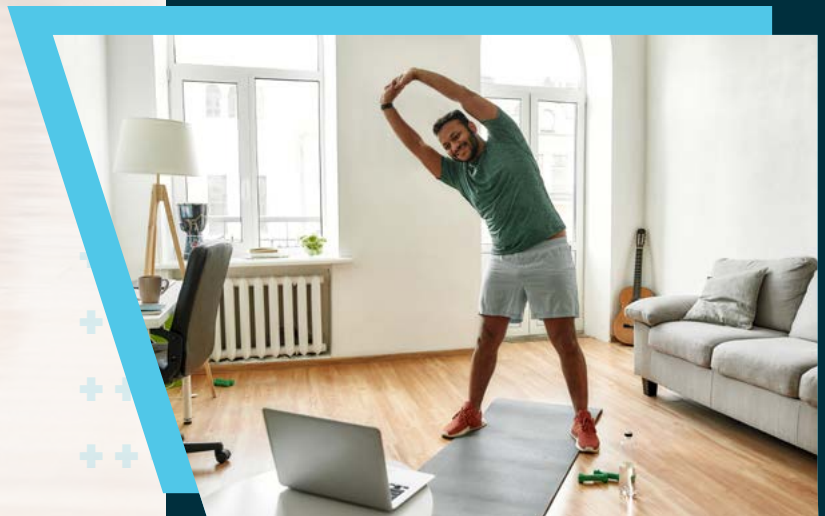
No matter where you are in your career, the ACSM community will be there to support you in the challenges and celebrate your wins.

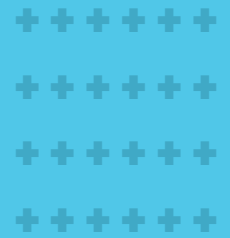
The changing field of health and fitness

The times are changing and so is the health and fitness industry. ACSM will help you stay ahead of the game so you can keep growing when new technologies and trends emerge in the field. We've helped our professionals pivot from teaching in-person classes to virtual and other hybrid models.

Over the years, we've continued to provide updated resources on how to best support clients and communicate with them amidst a changing fitness and exercise science landscape. As we look to the future,

ACSM will continue to stay ahead of the curve when it comes to adopting new technology and educating our professionals on how they can best incorporate it into their work as changemakers through exercise.





ACSM provides certifications to meet the unique needs of clients and patients wherever they are in their health journey and ability level. Figure out which one is right for you with this handy guide.



CERTIFICATIONS



WHO'S IT FOR?



WHAT AM I CERTIFIED TO DO?



WHERE CAN I WORK?

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®)
<p>People interested in leading and instructing generally healthy clients in group settings.</p>	<p>People who want to develop individualized fitness plans and work one-on-one with generally healthy clients.</p>	<p>Rising fitness professionals who have a Bachelor's degree in Exercise Science, Kinesiology or similar who wish to conduct and interpret physical fitness assessments and create exercise prescriptions for healthy people and those who have medically controlled diseases.</p>	<p>Rising health care professionals who have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in Exercise Science and 1,200 hours of practical experience OR a master's degree in Clinical Exercise Physiology and 600 hours of practical experience. The ACSM-CEP certification enables these professionals to use evidence-based practice to design, implement and supervise exercise programming for those with chronic diseases, conditions or physical limitations.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate effective group exercise methods by applying basic principles of exercise science. • Instruct and motivate individuals to exercise safely and appropriately. • Communicate healthy lifestyle behaviors. • Lead and demonstrate safe and effective individual exercise by applying the fundamental principles of exercise science. • Create a safe space for clients to meet their goals. • Build relationships and trust with clients. • Motivate individuals to begin and continue practicing healthy behaviors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead and demonstrate safe and effective individual exercise methods by applying the fundamental principles of exercise science. • Work one-on-one with clients in generally healthy populations and those who are medically cleared to exercise. • Write appropriate exercise recommendations. • Create a safe space for clients to meet their goals. • Build relationships and trust with clients. • Motivate individuals to begin and continue practicing healthy behaviors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct risk stratification. • Conduct and interpret results of physical fitness assessments. • Develop appropriate exercise prescriptions for healthy adults and individuals with health challenges who are able to exercise independently. • Motivate healthy individuals and those with medically controlled diseases to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyle behaviors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct exercise assessments (including cardiac stress testing) and training. • Identify risk factors. • Use behavioral health strategies to help patients make lifestyle changes to improve their physical well-being. • Perform clinical assessments. • Perform tasks related to education and behavior change. • Administer exercise programming.
<p>Health club, gym, university, corporate or community/ public health settings.</p>	<p>Health club, gym, university, corporate or community/ public health settings.</p>	<p>Health club, gym, university, corporate or community/ public health settings or hospital/clinical setting.</p>	<p>Hospital/clinic, rehabilitation facilities, physician's offices, research-based clinic, universities or corporate settings.</p>



Launch your career.

Picture yourself in a career in the health and fitness industry! Here are just a few of the many careers you can pursue with an ACSM certification.



I'm passionate about exploring opportunities in fitness that fit my schedule...



Group Exercise Instructors work with groups of people to motivate and instruct them in physical activity in a class setting. Opportunities as a Group Exercise Instructor are available both full and part-time. Hourly compensation ranges between \$12-\$29 per hour with a median hourly rate of \$26.



Personal Trainers partner with individual clients to create and implement personalized fitness plans. Compensation, including base salary and commission, is an average of \$40,510 in the United States, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The job outlook for trainers between 2020-2030 is 39 percent growth, which is much faster than average. Opportunities in this role are available both full and part-time. Depending on location, experience and education, top trainers have an earning potential of over \$150,000 per year (Equinox).



“What I love about my job is that I have been able to blend a science-based approach and my leadership experience to help optimize outcomes for my clients and colleagues ...

I firmly believe ACSM empowers (its professionals) by providing high quality (educational) resources and networking opportunities.”

-Stanton Ward, ACSM-EP, StrongFirst Elite, Pn2 Personal Training Manager at Equinox



“It is so rewarding to build connections with patients and see the progress they can make with our help and guidance.”

-Malloree Rice, M.S., ACSM-CEP, RCEP Senior Clinical Exercise Physiologist at Cincinnati Children's Hospital

I'm interested in building my career in fitness...



On-Site Fitness Managers make an average of \$50,000-\$55,000 annually and hire, train and provide on-site supervision to fitness professionals in a gym setting. These opportunities are typically full-time.



Regional Fitness Managers can earn an average of \$75,000 a year. These professionals are focused on the big picture, often supervising, budgeting and providing strategic planning for multiple gyms at a time. This role is usually done in a full-time capacity.



Exercise Physiologists create fitness programs for healthy populations as well as to help people recover from injuries or illnesses. In 2020, Exercise Physiologists made an average of \$50,280 annually according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Job outlook is currently at 13 percent growth for 2020-2030, which is faster than average. Most people in this profession work a full-time schedule.



**- Lauren H. Korzan, MA, ACSM-EP, ACSM-GEI
Regional Program Manager, Aquila**

“As a manager, I use the knowledge gained from my certifications to train my team to help them become stronger fitness professionals. I feel confident in my abilities to do this in large part because of my ACSM certifications.”



“Working on a multidisciplinary team in bariatric surgery and medical weight loss (including surgeons, nurses, dietitians, psychiatrists, and

social workers) to design and implement personal exercise prescriptions in the hospital and ambulatory care settings have been highly rewarding. Personally, I love to exercise and it's very satisfying to help other people discover the joy of movement – in whichever way works best for them and their situation.”

-Dr. Matthew Stults, Ph.D., FACSM, ACSM-EP, Exercise Physiologist at Yale-New Haven Hospital



“I chose to become an exercise physiologist because of the widened opportunity to help my community to live a more proactive life.

I am ecstatic to work with people of different populations with distinct goals. Thus, requiring me to put myself in their shoes and use my knowledge and skills to help them achieve my community members' goals.”

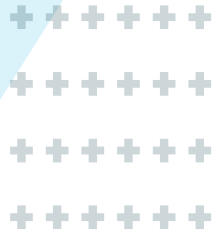
**-Isaiah D. Clark, ACSM-EP
Owner/Operator, The Rock Institute of Human Movement and Exercise**



“Being an ACSM-CEP has provided me with the essential knowledge-base and tools to be able to work with a wide range of individuals and varying health statuses throughout my career. As Senior Director, I love igniting a culture of fun in the sports club

space. This role combines my passions of serving others in hospitality while also impacting the fitness and well-being of others. To me, there is no better way to live out my passion of prescribing exercise as medicine than empowering a team of fitness and wellness experts within hospitality. The experience that we are able to create for our members, I feel, makes the pursuit of lifelong fitness more enjoyable and successful.”

-Mary Stauder, M.S., ACSM-CEP, RCEP, Senior Director at Elite Sports Club



I’m an experienced health and fitness professional with education or certifications...



Clinical Exercise Physiologists

implement and supervise exercise programming for those with chronic diseases, conditions and/or physical shortcomings. Median annual salaries for clinical exercise physiologists are between \$57,501-\$60,000 and can, based on seniority, be up to \$78,000 annually (Recruiter).



Clinical Exercise Directors

oversee and train clinical exercise physiologist staff, manage the day-to-day operations and ensure department milestones/goals meet approved budgets. Average salaries are \$85,800 as of November 2021, however, the typical salary range is between \$71,900 and \$101,200 (Salary).

How to get certified

With ACSM, you're given the freedom to prepare for your certification in the way that works best for you. Here's how you can get certified in just four easy steps.



Choose

Pick your path. Which certification best suits you and your individual goals and needs?

Study

Learning styles are unique, so our study resources are, too. Whether you prefer textbooks, online quizzes, or in-person training, there are plenty of options available at ACSM. Review your options online at acsm.org/certification/get-certified. We recommend at least three to six months of preparation before taking an exam.

Register/Apply

We partner with Pearson VUE to help you complete your exam. When you're ready, you can register to take your exam at one of their 5,600 locations around the world.

Pass

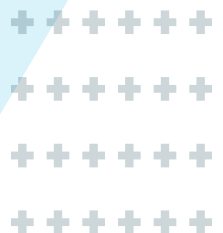
Success! Once you pass, you're ready to use your certification to help others and keep growing as a fitness professional.

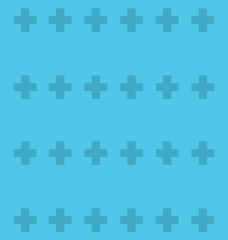


“As an almost 40 year old, single mom of 4 with ADHD and dyslexia, I’m back in school to finish my B.S. in public health at USF. Part-time, I own my own little bitty wellness company. Passing this exam and being ACSM certified meant a ton to me.

I teach my clients and my kiddos there is nothing you can't do.”

**-Yadhira Maldonado, ACSM-CPT
FITLIVIN Corporate Wellness and Personal Training**





Build Community:

Benefits of ACSM membership

Navigating a career in the fitness industry, especially as a newcomer, can sometimes feel overwhelming. That's why we've made it our mission to help our members find community within their fields. The membership program provides you with continuous opportunities to expand your network and build community with like-minded health and wellness professionals.



Pick your ACSM membership

We offer regular event programming, discounts and networking through four different membership categories:

Student

For undergraduate, graduate, or medical students. A rate of only \$30 a year includes digital subscriptions to ACSM publications as well as event and exam discounts, plus benefits listed in the chart on the next page.

Alliance Health and Fitness Membership

For professionals. Provides access to ACSM's *Health & Fitness Journal*®, discounts on continuing education credits as well as other health and fitness benefits found in the chart on the next page.

Professional

For degreed professionals, post-doctoral fellows, medical residents and clinical fellows. This membership includes the most complete set of ACSM publications and event discounts, as well as exclusive content/resources and more. Plus benefits listed in the chart.

Professional-in-Training

For post-doctoral fellows or physicians in a residency program. This membership offers the most complete set of ACSM publications and event discounts, plus access to exclusive content/resources and more. This category offers the same benefits as the Professional category noted in the chart on the next page.

Turn the page to explore the perks of each membership level.



“ACSM-CEP has been an invaluable resource for disseminating new findings and practices to my clinical areas and colleagues.

The networking tools, guidelines, continued education and other resources are a foundational part of my daily work. I love the diversity of my work. Any given day I'm given the opportunity to work directly in patient care and influence larger value-based care directives that stand to impact our profession in meaningful ways.”

-Matthew Thomas, MBA, M.S., ACSM-CEP, Director Cardiopulmonary Rehab at CHI Memorial Hospital

ACSM membership benefits

Professional Development

ACSM members can apply for unique mentoring opportunities, research grant funding, ACSM Annual Meeting travel awards and also receive waived submission fees for ACSM's flagship journal, *Medicine & Science in Sports & Medicine*.

Exclusive Content

Created with the unique needs of ACSM members in mind, access exclusive professional and career resources. You'll also receive *Sports Medicine Bulletin*, ACSM's Member Newsletter in your inbox each week.

Networking

All members have access to and inclusion in ACSM's Online Membership Directory. Meet others and build connections at various ACSM National and Regional Chapter meetings and events.

Leadership Opportunities

Leadership opportunities for members include serving on committees, being a mentor, editing ACSM publications, fellowship and running for the ACSM Board of Trustees.

Discounts

Discounts on ACSM Certification exams, ACSM continuing education credits, ACSM Annual Meeting and ACSM's international Health & Fitness Summit and insurance & consumer products from partners!

Journal Access

Receive *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, *Exercise and Sport Sciences Reviews* and the *Translational Journal*. Medical professionals also receive *Current Sports Medicine Reports*.

ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal®

Receive ACSM's *Health and Fitness Journal®*, a bi-monthly publication with the latest industry news and research, along with CEC opportunities.

	STUDENT	ALLIANCE	PROFESSIONAL- IN-TRAINING	PROFESSIONAL
Professional Development	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exclusive Content	✓	✓	✓	✓
Networking	✓	✓	✓	✓
Leadership Opportunities	✓	✓	✓	✓
Discounts	✓	✓	✓	✓
Journal Access	✓	✓	✓	✓
ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal®	✓	✓	✓	✓

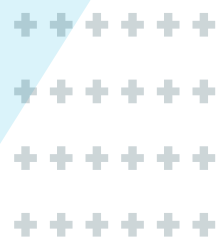
Learn more about how to become a member by visiting acsm.org/membership/join.



“Throughout the years, ACSM has provided me with a wealth of educational opportunities to hone my skills as a Clinical Exercise Physiologist working in chronic disease management. I found the regional and annual conferences invaluable for gaining knowledge and networking with others on best practices. Over the years ACSM has provided me the opportunity to see the unique ways in which others are using their education and training to help different populations.”



-Diane Perry, M.S., ACSM-CEP, CHWC
Clinical Exercise Physiologist at Michigan Medicine, University of Michigan Health System



Keep growing: Career development

ACSM is a home for your growth. Developing your skills as a fitness professional doesn't end once you've taken your exam. It's a continuous process if you want to be the most informed and successful pro you can be.

Getting certified is the first step in the journey, but not the last as we're a partner in your growth. We'll help you keep growing through regular career development webinars, networking events and the most up-to-date, cutting-edge information through our publications.



“**My love of fitness education and my repaired relationships with food and exercise led me to become a personal trainer.**”

In an industry often swamped with Photoshopped pictures, starvation diets, and messages that you should always be working to change your body, I want to be a personal trainer who proudly promotes body acceptance and positivity, and prioritize mindful, intentional, healthy behaviors rather than encouraging my clients to feel deprived and negative about themselves and their appearance.

... I plan to open my own business where I can combine the worlds of mental health treatment and exercise, and continue to help others treat themselves with respect, kindness, and build their self-love and confidence.”

-Larissa Beecher, ACSM-CPT



How to stay certified

Professionals must recertify every three years. To keep your certification current, you are required to earn Continuing Education Credits (CECs), which helps promote ongoing competency for fitness professionals. You can earn CECs in various ways including conferences, workshops, courses and publications. There are two primary ways to keep your certification current.

Option 1

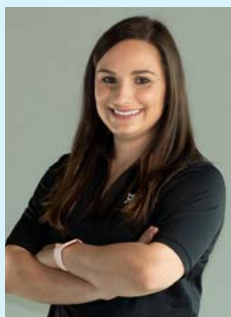
1. Earn the required number of Continuing Education Credits (CECs); and
2. Maintain a current CPR/AED certification; and
3. Pay the required three-year recertification fee.



Option 2

1. Retake the certification exam.

Credential	Number of CECs	Recertification Fee
ACSM Certified Personal Trainer® (ACSM-CPT®)	45	\$55
ACSM Certified Group Exercise Instructor® (ACSM-GEI®)	45	\$55
ACSM Certified Exercise Physiologist® (ACSM-EP®)	60	\$65
ACSM Certified Clinical Exercise Physiologist® (ACSM-CEP®)	60	\$65



“The lifelong learning model of ACSM ensures that certified professionals stay updated on the scientific consensus of both trendy and foundational topics. The scientific toolbox provided by ACSM fosters both confidence and competence, helping me communicate exercise science principles effectively to millions of fitness industry consumers!”



**- Rachelle Reed, Ph.D., ACSM-EP
Chief Health and Science Officer at SweatHouz**

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