ACSM Certified Personal Trainer®
Exam Content Outline
This exam content outline is based on a Job Task Analysis (JTA) for the ACSM Certified Personal Trainer® (CPT). The JTA describes what an ACSM CPT does on a day-to-day basis and is divided into four domains and associated tasks performed on the job. As you prepare for your exam, it is important to remember that all exam questions are based on these domains—making it a perfect addition to your preparation materials! In fact, when you receive your test scores, your performance in each domain is scored individually so you can see exactly where you excelled and/or where you may need additional preparation. Using this in combination with other optional study materials will ensure you are ready for exam day.

Performance Domains & Associated Job Tasks for ACSM CPTs

The percentages listed below indicate the number of questions representing each domain on the 150-question CPT exam.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Domain Title</th>
<th>Percentage of Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domain I</td>
<td>Initial Client Consultation and Assessment</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain II</td>
<td>Exercise Programming and Implementation</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain III</td>
<td>Exercise Leadership and Client Education</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domain IV</td>
<td>Legal, Professional, Business and Marketing</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</table>
# Domain I: Initial Client Consultation and Assessment

## A. Provide instructions and initial documents to the client in order to proceed to the client interview.

**Knowledge of:**
- components and preparation for the initial client consultation.
- necessary paperwork to be completed by client prior to initial client interview.

**Skill in:**
- effective communication.
- utilizing multi-media resources (i.e., email, phone, text messaging) and/or in-person resources.

## B. Interview client in order to gather and provide pertinent information to proceed to the fitness testing and program design.

**Knowledge of:**
- the components and limitations of a health/medical history, pre-participation screening tools, informed consent, trainer-client contract, and organizational policies and procedures.
- the use of medical clearance for exercise testing and program participation.
- health behavior modification theories and strategies in order to determine client goals and expectations.
- orientation procedures, including equipment utilization and facility layout.

**Skill in:**
- obtaining a health/medical history, medical clearance and informed consent.

## C. Review & analyze client data (i.e., classify risk) to formulate a plan of action and/or conduct physical assessments.

**Knowledge of:**
- ACSM risk factors and associated risk thresholds
- signs and symptoms suggestive of chronic cardiovascular, metabolic, and/or pulmonary disease.
- the ACSM model for risk stratification.
- medical clearance, exercise testing and supervision recommendations based on risk stratification.

**Skill in:**
- determining risk and stratifying clients in accordance with ACSM guidelines.
- determining appropriate physical assessments based on summary of initial client consultation, risk stratification, and medical clearance/physician recommendations.

## D. Evaluate behavioral readiness to optimize exercise adherence.

**Knowledge of:**
- behavioral strategies to enhance exercise and health behavior change (e.g., reinforcement, S.M.A.R.T. goal setting, social support).
- applications of health behavior change models (socio-ecologic model, readiness to change model, social cognitive theory, and theory of planned behavior, etc.) and effective strategies that support and facilitate behavioral change.

**Skill in:**
- setting effective client-oriented behavioral goals (i.e., S.M.A.R.T. goals).
E. Assess physical fitness, including cardiorespiratory fitness, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility and anthropometric measures in order to set goals and establish a baseline for program development.

Knowledge of:

- the basic structures of bone, skeletal muscle, and connective tissue.
- the basic anatomy of the cardiovascular and respiratory systems.
- the definition of the following terms: inferior, superior, medial, lateral, supination, pronation, flexion, extension, adduction, abduction, hyperextension, rotation, circumduction, agonist, antagonist, and stabilizer.
- the plane in which each muscle action occurs.
- the interrelationships among center of gravity, base of support, balance, stability, and proper spinal alignment.
- the following curvatures of the spine: lordosis, scoliosis, and kyphosis.
- differences between aerobic & anaerobic energy systems and the effects of acute and chronic exercise on each.
- the normal acute responses to cardiovascular exercise and resistance training.
- the normal chronic physiologic adaptations associated with cardiovascular exercise and resistance training.
- the physiologic responses related to warm-up and cool down.
- the physiological basis of acute muscle fatigue and delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS) versus musculoskeletal injury/overtraining.
- the physiological adaptations that occur at rest and during submaximal and maximal exercise following chronic aerobic and anaerobic exercise training.
- the physiological basis for improvements in muscular strength and endurance.
- blood pressure responses associated with acute, chronic exercise and postural changes.
- muscle actions, such as isotonic, isometric (static), isokinetic, concentric, eccentric.
- major muscles including, but are not limited to, the trapezius, pectoralis major, latissimus dorsi, biceps, triceps, rectus abdominis, internal and external obliques, erector spinae, gluteus maximus, quadriceps, hamstrings, adductors, abductors, and gastrocnemius.
- the identification of major bones including, but are not limited to, the clavicle, scapula, sternum, humerus, carpals, ulna, radius, femur, fibula,ibia, and tarsals.
- joint classifications (e.g., hinge, ball and socket).
- the primary action and joint range of motion for each major muscle group.
- the following terms related to muscles: hypertrophy, atrophy, and hyperplasia.
- the ability to discuss the physiologic basis of the components of health-related physical fitness: cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength, muscular endurance, and body composition.
- the normal chronic physiologic adaptations associated with cardiovascular, resistance, and flexibility training.
- relative and absolute contraindications to exercise testing, test termination criteria, and proper procedures to be followed after discontinuing an exercise test.
- the advantages, disadvantages and limitations of the various body composition techniques including, but not limited to skinfolds, plethysmography (BOD POD®), bioelectrical impedance, infrared, dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DEXA), and circumference measurements.
- pre-activity fitness testing including assessments of flexibility, cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength, muscular endurance, and body composition.
- interpretation of fitness test results (i.e., favorable vs. unfavorable results).
- the recommended order of fitness assessments (e.g., cardiovascular test prior to strength assessment).
- appropriate documentation of abnormal signs or symptoms during an exercise session and subsequent referral to a physician.
- various mechanisms for appropriate referral to a physician.
### Skill in:

- locating/palpating pulse landmarks, accurately measuring heart rate, and obtaining rating of perceived exertion (RPE).
- selecting and administering safe and appropriate cardiovascular assessments according to established guidelines and determining normal acute responses to cardiovascular exercise.
- locating anatomical sites for circumference (girth) measurements and associated risk.
- locating anatomical sites for skinfold measurement to estimate body fat percentage.
- selecting/administering safe muscular strength & muscular endurance assessments and determining normal acute responses to resistance training.
- selecting/administering safe flexibility assessments for various muscle groups and determining normal acute responses to flexibility training.
- recognizing postural abnormalities that may affect exercise performance and body alignment.
- delivering test and assessment results in a positive manner and not negatively impact client self-esteem (e.g., use information to encourage client, not discourage or embarrass).

### E. Develop a comprehensive (i.e., physical fitness, goals, behavior) reassessment plan/timeline.

### Knowledge of:

- development of fitness plans based on client interview, risk stratification, and physical fitness assessments.
- effective and applicable health behavior modification strategies to meet client goals.
- the purpose and appropriate time-line for re-assessing (i.e., 6 weeks, 12 weeks) each component of physical fitness (cardiovascular, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, and body composition measures).
# Domain II: Exercise Programming and Implementation

## A. Review assessment results, medical history and goals to determine appropriate training program.

### Knowledge of:

- the risks and benefits associated with guidelines for exercise training and programming for healthy adults, seniors, children and adolescents, and pregnant women.
- the benefits and risks associated with exercise training and guidelines for exercise programming for individuals medically cleared to exercise with chronic disease (e.g., stable coronary artery disease, other cardiovascular diseases, diabetes mellitus, obesity, metabolic syndrome, hypertension, arthritis, chronic back pain, osteoporosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and those with chronic pain).
- cardiovascular risk factors or conditions that may require consultations with medical personnel prior to initiating physical activity (e.g., inappropriate changes of resting or exercise heart rate and blood pressure; new-onset discomfort in chest, neck, shoulder, or arm; changes in the pattern of discomfort during rest or exercise; shortness of breath at rest or with light exertion; fainting or dizzy spells; and claudication).
- components of physical fitness including cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, and body composition.
- program development for specific client needs (i.e., specific sports, performance, lifestyle, functional, balance, agility, aerobic and anaerobic).
- special precautions and modifications of exercise programming for participation in various environmental conditions (altitude, different ambient temperatures, humidity, and environmental pollution.)
- the importance and ability to record exercise sessions and perform periodic re-evaluations to assess changes in fitness status.

## B. Select exercise modalities to achieve desired adaptations based on goals, medical history and assessment results

### Knowledge of:

- selecting appropriate exercises and training modalities based on age, functional capacity and exercise test results.
- the principles of specificity and program progression.
- the advantages, disadvantages, and applications of interval, continuous, and circuit training programs for cardiovascular fitness improvements.
- activities of daily living (ADLs) and their role in the overall health and fitness of the individual.
- differences between physical activity recommendations and training principles for general health benefits, weight management, fitness improvements, and athletic performance enhancement.
- advanced resistance training exercises (e.g., super setting, Olympic lifting, plyometric exercises, pyramid training) and when such techniques are contraindicated.
- the six motor skill related physical fitness components; agility, balance, coordination, reaction time, speed and power.
- the benefits, risks, and contraindications for a wide variety of resistance training exercises specific to individual muscle groups (e.g., for rectus abdominus performing crunches, supine leg raises, and plank exercises).
- the benefits, risks, and contraindications for a wide variety of range of motion exercises (e.g., dynamic and passive stretching, tai chi, Pilates, yoga, proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation, partner stretching)
- the benefits, risks, and contraindications for a wide variety of cardiovascular training exercises and applications based on client experience, skill level, current fitness level and goals (e.g., progression example: walking, jogging, cross-country skiing, and racquet sports).
C. Determine initial frequency, intensity, time (duration) and type (i.e., the FITT principle of exercise prescription) of exercise based on goals, medical history and assessment results.

Knowledge of:

- the recommended frequency, intensity, and duration of physical activity necessary for development of cardiovascular & musculoskeletal fitness in healthy adults, seniors, children/adolescents, and pregnant women.
- the recommended frequency, intensity, and duration of physical activity necessary for development of cardiovascular and musculoskeletal fitness in clients with stable chronic diseases who are medically cleared for exercise, including stable coronary artery disease, other cardiovascular diseases, diabetes mellitus, obesity, metabolic syndrome, hypertension, arthritis, chronic back pain, osteoporosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and chronic pain.
- appropriate exercise modifications based on individual abilities, physical limitations, and other special considerations (e.g., injury rehabilitation, neuromuscular and postural limitations, and scoliosis).
- implementation of exercise program components including warm-up, training stimulus, cool down, and stretching.
- applied biomechanics and exercises associated with movements of the major muscle groups (e.g., seated knee extension: quadriceps).
- the application of various methods for establishing and monitoring levels of exercise intensity, including heart rate, RPE, pace, oxygen consumption and/or metabolic equivalents (METs).
- the determination of target/training heart rates using predicted maximum heart rate and the heart rate reserve method (Karvonen formula) with recommended intensity percentages based on client fitness level, medical considerations, and goals.
- periodization for cardiovascular, resistance training, and conditioning program design and progression of exercises when necessary to avoid training plateaus or injury.
- repetitions, sets, load, and rest periods necessary for desired outcome goals.
- using repetition maximum test results procedure to determine resistance training loads.

D. Review proposed program with client; demonstrate and instruct the client to perform exercises safely and effectively.

Knowledge of:

- and ability to describe the unique adaptations to exercise training with regard to strength, functional capacity, and motor skills.
- and the ability to safely demonstrate exercises designed to enhance cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength and endurance, balance, and range of motion.
- appropriate teaching techniques and the ability to demonstrate exercises for improving range of motion of all major joints.
- and the ability to safely demonstrate a wide range of resistance-training modalities, and activities including variable resistance devices, dynamic constant external resistance devices, kettlebells, static resistance devices, and other resistance devices.
- and ability to safely demonstrate a wide variety of functional training exercises involving non-traditional equipment such as stability balls, balance boards, resistance bands, medicine balls, and foam rollers.
- the physiological effects of the Valsalva Maneuver and the associated risks.
- the biomechanical principles for the performance of common physical activities (e.g., walking, running, swimming, cycling, resistance training, yoga, Pilates, functional training).
- the concept of detraining or reversibility of conditioning and effects on fitness and functional performance.
- signs and symptoms of over-reaching/overtraining and recommendations to prevent and/or reverse the detrimental effects.
- improper exercise form and/or techniques to modify/prevent musculoskeletal injury.
- appropriate exercise attire (e.g., footwear, layering for cold, light colored in heat) for specific activities, environments, and conditions.
## Knowledge of (continued):
- communication techniques for effective teaching and client retention with awareness of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles.
- proper spotting positions and techniques for injury prevention and exercise assistance.

### E. Monitor client technique and response to exercise, modifying as necessary.

#### Knowledge of:
- normal and abnormal responses to exercise and criteria for termination of exercise (e.g., shortness of breath, unusual joint pain, dizziness, abnormal heart rate response).
- proper and improper form and technique while using cardiovascular conditioning equipment (e.g., stair-climbers, stationary cycles, treadmills, and elliptical trainers).
- proper and improper form and technique while performing resistance exercises (e.g., resistance machines, stability balls, free weights, resistance bands, calisthenics/body weight).
- proper and improper form and technique for flexibility exercises (e.g., static stretching, dynamic, partner stretching).

#### Skill in:
- interpreting client understanding/comprehension and body language during exercise.
- effective communication, including active listening, cuing, and providing constructive feedback during and after exercise.

### F. Modify frequency, intensity, time and duration to improve or maintain the client’s fitness level.

#### Knowledge of:
- specific exercises and program modifications for healthy adults, seniors, children and adolescents, and pregnant women.
- specific exercises and program modifications for individuals with chronic disease who are medically cleared to exercise: stable coronary artery disease, other cardiovascular diseases, diabetes mellitus, obesity, metabolic syndrome, hypertension, arthritis, chronic back pain, osteoporosis, chronic pulmonary disease, and chronic pain.
- principles of progressive overload, specificity, and program progression to avoid training plateaus and promote continued improvement and goal achievement.
- appropriate methods to teach progression of exercises for all major muscle groups (e.g., progression of standing lunge to walking lunge to walking lunge with resistance).
- modifications to periodized conditioning programs to increase or maintain muscular strength and/or endurance, hypertrophy, power, cardiovascular endurance, balance, and range of motion/flexibility.

### G. Seek client feedback to ensure satisfaction and enjoyment of the program.

#### Knowledge of:
- effective techniques for program evaluation and client satisfaction (e.g., survey, written follow up, verbal feedback).
- client goals and appropriate review and modification.
**Domain III: Leadership & Education Implementation Associated Job Tasks**

**A. Create a positive exercise experience in order to optimize participant adherence by applying effective communication techniques, motivation techniques and behavioral strategies.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge of:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• effective and timely uses of a wide variety of communication modes (i.e., email, telephone, web site, newsletters).</td>
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<td>• verbal and non-verbal behaviors that communicate positive reinforcement and encouragement (i.e., eye contact, targeted praise, empathy).</td>
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<td>• and skill in engaging active listening techniques.</td>
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<td>• different types of learners (auditory, visual, kinesthetic) and how to apply teaching and training techniques to optimize a client’s training session.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• different types of feedback (i.e., evaluative, supportive, descriptive) and the ability to use feedback to optimize a client’s training session.</td>
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<td>• and the application of health behavior change models (socio-ecological model, readiness to change model, social cognitive theory, and theory of planned behavior, etc.) and effective strategies that support and facilitate exercise adherence.</td>
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<td>• barriers to exercise adherence and compliance (e.g., time management, injury, fear, lack of knowledge, weather).</td>
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<td>• triggers to relapse and relapse prevention strategies.</td>
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<td>• specific techniques to facilitate motivation (e.g., goal setting, incentive programs, achievement recognition, social support)</td>
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<td>• extrinsic and intrinsic reinforcement strategies (e.g., t-shirt, improved self-esteem).</td>
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<td>• strategies to increase non-structured physical activity levels (e.g., stair walking, parking farther away, bike to work).</td>
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<td>• health coaching principles and lifestyle management techniques related to behavior change.</td>
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<td>• specific, age-appropriate leadership techniques and educational methods to increase client engagement.</td>
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**B. Educate clients using scientifically sound health and fitness information and resources to enhance client’s knowledge base, program enjoyment, adherence and overall awareness of health and fitness related information.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge of:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• the influence of lifestyle factors, including nutrition and physical activity habits, on lipid and lipoprotein profiles.</td>
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<td>• the value of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins as fuels for exercise and physical activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the following terms: body composition, body mass index, lean body mass, anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and body fat distribution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• the relationship between body composition and health.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• the effectiveness of diet, exercise and behavior modification as a method for modifying body composition.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• the importance of maintaining hydration before, during and after exercise.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• the USDA Food Guide Pyramid and ACSM-endorsed Dietary Guidelines (American Dietetics Association).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• the Female Athlete Triad</td>
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<tr>
<td>• the myths and consequences associated with inappropriate weight loss methods (e.g., fad diets, dietary supplements, over-exercising, starvation diets).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• the number of kilocalories in one gram of carbohydrate, fat, protein and alcohol.</td>
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</table>
| Knowledge of (continued): | • the ACSM guidelines for caloric intake for individuals desiring to lose or gain weight.  
• accessing and dissemination of scientifically-based, relevant health, exercise and wellness-related resources and information.  
• community-based exercise programs that provide social support and structured activities (e.g., walking clubs, intramural sports, golf leagues, cycling clubs).  
• stress management and relaxation techniques (e.g., progressive relaxation, guided imagery, massage therapy). |
## Domain IV: Legal, Professional, Business and Marketing

### A. Obtain medical clearance for clients based on ACSM guidelines, prior to starting an exercise program.

**Knowledge of:**
- risk stratification and medical clearance procedures in order to decrease client injury and/or medical complications thereby minimizing Certified Personal Trainer negligence and risk of liability.
- the application of the ACSM risk stratification process.
- medical clearance requirements prior to exercise testing and program participation.
- the appropriate level of supervision and monitoring recommended for individuals with known disease based on disease-specific risk stratification guidelines and current health status.

### B. Collaborate with various healthcare professionals and organizations in order to provide clients with a network of providers that minimizes liability and maximizes program effectiveness.

**Knowledge of:**
- reputable professional resources and referral sources to ensure client safety and program effectiveness.
- the scope of practice for the Certified Personal Trainer and the need to practice within this scope.
- effective and professional communication with allied health and fitness professionals.
- Identifying individuals requiring referral to a physician or allied health services such as physical therapy, dietary counseling, stress management, weight management, and psychological and social services.

### C. Develop a comprehensive risk management program (including emergency action plan and injury prevention program) to enhance the standard of care and reflect a client-focused mission.

**Knowledge of:**
- and skill in obtaining basic life support, automated external defibrillator (AED), and cardiopulmonary resuscitation certification.
- appropriate emergency procedures (i.e., telephone procedures, written emergency procedures, personnel responsibilities) in a health and fitness setting.
- basic first-aid procedures for exercise-related injuries, such as bleeding, strains/sprains, fractures, and exercise intolerance (dizziness, syncope, heat injury).
- precautions taken in an exercise setting to ensure participant safety (e.g., equipment placement, facility cleanliness, floor surface).
- the following terms related to musculoskeletal injuries (e.g., shin splints, sprain, strain, bursitis, fractures, tendonitis, patello-femoral pain syndrome, low back pain, plantar fasciitis).
- contraindicated exercises/postures and potential risks associated with certain exercises (e.g., straight-leg sit-ups, double leg raises, full squats, hurdler’s stretch, cervical and lumbar hyperextension, and standing bent-over toe touch).
- the responsibilities, limitations, and the legal implications for the Certified Personal Trainer of carrying out emergency procedures.
- potential musculoskeletal injuries (e.g., contusions, sprains, strains, fractures), cardiovascular/pulmonary complications (e.g., chest pain, palpitations/arrhythmias, tachycardia, bradycardia, hypotension/hypertension, hyperventilation), and metabolic abnormalities (e.g., fainting/syncope, hypoglycemia/hyperglycemia, hypothermia/hyperthermia).
| Knowledge of (continued): | • the initial management and first-aid techniques associated with open wounds, musculoskeletal injuries, cardiovascular/pulmonary complications, and metabolic disorders.  
• the need for and components of an equipment service plan/agreement and how it may be used to evaluate the condition of exercise equipment to reduce the potential risk of injury.  
• the need for and use of safety policies and procedures (e.g., incident/accident reports, emergency procedure training) and legal necessity thereof.  
• the need for and components of an emergency action plan.  
• effective communication skills and the ability to inform staff and clients of emergency policies and procedures for the facility or program. |
| Skill in: | • demonstrating and carrying out emergency procedures during exercise testing and/or training.  
• assisting, spotting, and monitoring a client safely and effectively during exercise testing and/or training. |

D. Participate in approved continuing education programs on a regular basis to maximize effectiveness, increase professionalism and enhance knowledge and skills in the field of health and fitness.

| Knowledge of: | • the role of continuing education, professional resources, and requirements for certification & re-certification.  
• the requirements for obtaining and maintaining continuing education credits (CECs) and where one can obtain ACSM approved CECs.  
• the continually evolving field of health and fitness and the need for Certified Personal Trainers to keep abreast of new research and applications in the field of exercise science. |

E. Adhere to ACSM’s Code of Ethics by practicing in a professional manner within the Scope of Practice of a Certified Personal Trainer.

| Knowledge of: | • the components of both the ACSM’s Code of Ethics as well as the ACSM Certified Personal Trainer scope of practice.  
• appropriate work attire and professional behavior. |
| Skill in: | • conducting all professional activities within the scope of practice of the ACSM Certified Personal Trainer. |

F. Develop a business plan to establish mission, business, budgetary and sales objectives.

| Knowledge of: | • Implementation methods for effective, ethical, and professional business practices.  
• various business models (i.e., sole proprietorship, independent contractor, partnership, corporation, S Corporation) |
| Skill in: | • the development of a basic business plan, which includes establishing a budget (i.e., billing, cancellation policy, late arrival policy, payment methods/plans).  
• the development of business objectives (i.e., clearly define business mission statement, business, goals, benchmarks, membership/financial goals, program evaluation)  
• market niches and the components of a mission statement (i.e., vision, values, service description).  
• utilizing spreadsheet software to develop and manage budget.  
• career development practices (i.e., hiring, setting training standards). |
**G. Develop marketing materials and engage in networking/business exchanges to build client base, promote services and increase resources.**

| Knowledge of: | • management policies, marketing, sales, and pricing.  
|              | • marketing materials to promote the business (i.e., brochures, business cards, webpages, blogs, video clips, e-marketing)  
|              | • various methods for distribution and promotion of the personal training business (i.e., social networking, press releases, feature newspaper articles) |
| Skill in:    | • the development of various marketing materials via computer applications (i.e., Microsoft Word, Microsoft Power Point, PDF, Publisher) |

**H. Obtain appropriate personal training and liability insurance and follow industry-accepted professional, ethical and business standards in order to optimize safety and to reduce liability.**

| Knowledge of: | • professional liability and common types of negligence seen in training environments.  
|              | • legal issues pertinent to healthcare delivery by licensed and non-licensed healthcare professionals providing rehabilitative services and exercise testing and legal risk-management techniques.  
|              | • equipment maintenance such to decrease risk of injury and liability (i.e., maintenance plan, service schedule, safety considerations for each piece). |

**I. Engage in healthy lifestyle practices in order to be a positive role model for all clients.**

| Knowledge of: | • appropriate professional behavior (i.e., not smoking, substance-free, non-offensive dress, courtesy, politeness, active listening skills).  
|              | • environmental influences that may negatively impact client satisfaction/compliance (i.e., music choice/volume level, personal hygiene, scent sensitivity)  
|              | • the need to avoid distractions during training sessions (i.e., texting, cell phone calls, in-person conversation with others). |

**J. Respect copyrights to protect original and creative work, media, etc. by legally securing copyright material and other intellectual property based on national and international copyright laws.**

| Knowledge of: | • and application of national and international copyright laws.  
|              | • documentation of non-original work. |
| Skill in:     | • developing original educational material. |

**K. Safeguard client confidentiality and privacy rights unless formally waived or in emergency situations.**

| Knowledge of: | • practices/systems for maintaining client confidentiality with electronic and hard copy files.  
|              | • the importance of client privacy (i.e., client personal safety, legal liability, credit protection, medical disclosure).  
|              | • the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) laws depending on setting and state that the personal training business resides in. |
| Skill in:     | • obtaining and maintaining rapid access to client health history emergency contact information. |
No matter how you prefer to study, ACSM Certification has the test prep selection for you—from textbooks and adaptive practice exams to workshops and webinars. Optional preparation materials are below—visit our website to learn more about each one!

**Textbooks/eBooks**
For the ACSM CPT candidate, we offer three suggested books to provide comprehensive knowledge of your subject. Our books are also available digitally—so you can study anytime, anywhere. And—be sure to check out our book bundles, and save if you plan to purchase multiple titles.

**prepU**
A unique online studying experience—prepU is an online test prep quiz that continually assesses and adapts to your level of expertise. Use it as you study your ACSM CPT materials, and prepU’s questions grow along with your level knowledge. prepU is available in different subscription levels (3-months, 6-months, 1-year, 2-years), and is accessible 24/7 online.

**Workshops**
Want a practical, hands-on experience that allows you to actively put your knowledge to the test in a health fitness-focused atmosphere? Learn from experienced, ACSM certified experts at our one, two, and three-day in-person workshops. Available every month all across the country—find a location near you that works best with your study schedule.
Webinars
Prefer a weekly class format to keep your education on track? Our exam prep webinars are a convenient, easy to access six-week series. And, you can sign up for a single session, multiple, or the complete series. Participants also have access to their webinar presentations for six months afterwards, so you can review and refresh your knowledge before your exam date.

5 Steps For Passing Your ACSM CPT Exam

1. **Pick a test date that gives you plenty of time to prepare.**
   We recommend 3 to 6 months in advance. But keep in mind: because our candidates’ current education and study habits vary it matters less how many months you spend, but how much time you invest in studying.

2. **Purchase recommended textbooks.**
   Although not required, we strongly encourage all candidates to use our textbooks to prepare. Visit acsmcertification.org to make sure you are studying the correct edition.

3. **Review the content outline.**
   Every question on the exam is associated with one of the knowledge or skill statements that can be found in the Exam Content Outline. You’ll also find the percentage of questions within each domain of the exam.

4. **Schedule or apply for your exam at www.pearsonvue.com/acsm.**
   When you schedule your exam, you should have a general idea of how much time you still need to study. Don’t worry if you need to reschedule, you can do so up to 24 hours in advance of your exam time at no charge.
   
   *Note: RCEP candidates will need to apply and be approved before scheduling your exam.*

5. **Participate in a workshop or webinar.**
   Test your knowledge in a new setting – sign-up for an in-person workshop, or participate in a live webinar. Enhance your knowledge by participating: ask questions and get answers from industry experts.
Now that you have a study plan in place, you can schedule your exam date! ACSM partners with Pearson Vue to ensure that you can take your exam at a time and location convenient to you. To do this, you’ll visit Pearson Vue’s website, find the option to create an account (unless you already have one) and then select your test date and location.

For questions directly related to your exam scheduling, please call Pearson VUE at 888-883-2276.

Frequently Asked Questions

How are the exams scored?

The passing score for all ACSM Certification exams is set in advance and applied to all candidates’ exam results. Similar to exam scoring for a wide variety of other high stakes, national standardized exams (e.g., GRE, SAT, GMAT, etc.), ACSM Certification exams are reported in a 200-800 score scale.

Specifically, all candidates are expected to meet the passing standard of a scaled score of 550 in order to receive a “Pass” on any respective ACSM certification exam. This passing standard is based upon the expectations of the subject matter experts/test developers across all topics of the competency areas, as related to each respective credential’s examination blueprint. Passing candidates are expected to answer a sufficient number of test questions correctly that demonstrates a summative amount of knowledge at a level of at least minimal competency or the lowest acceptable score to pass the exam.

Finally, each content area is weighted proportionally, based on the results of a periodic comprehensive job task analysis/role delineation study. In other words, some content areas are more important (thus, have more questions) and count more with respect to the overall score than other content areas. On the score report, candidates will receive their overall score, their pass/fail status, as well as a breakdown by each specific content area.
When will I get my results?

You will receive your exam results immediately upon completion of the exam.

What happens if I pass?

Congratulations! Six to eight weeks after a candidate passes an ACSM exam, a welcome package will be sent from ACSM that will include the ACSM certificate and wallet card. Until the welcome package is received by a candidate, all credential status will be PROVISIONAL pending validation of exam results and/or the results of an eligibility audit.

What happens if I don't pass?

It isn't uncommon for ACSM Certified professionals to take a re-test. Re-test candidates will receive a re-test voucher number on the score report from Pearson VUE. Candidates may retake the exam 15 days following the initial exam and every 15 days following.

How do I cancel or reschedule my exam?

Requests to cancel or transfer an ACSM Exam must be made at least one business day in advance of the appointment by calling Pearson VUE at 1-888-889-2276 or at www.pearsonvue.com/acsm. If you do not reschedule or cancel, you will be billed for the exam. Arriving late to the exam (15 minutes past the scheduled start time) will lead to a forfeit of your seat and a charge for the exam.

Things to Know for Exam Day

Identification Requirements

Candidates must provide two forms of proper identification and will not be seated for the exam if the proper ID is not provided. The primary ID must contain a permanently affixed photograph and signature and must be valid (not expired). An ID must be an original document and not a photocopy or a fax. Acceptable primary IDs are listed below. A secondary ID must contain the candidate’s signature. Acceptable secondary IDs are listed below. IDs are considered to be valid (non-expired) as long as they do not contain an expiration date that has passed. If there is no expiration date on an ID, it is considered to be valid. The candidate must sign the ID before arriving at the testing center; it is not acceptable for the candidate to sign the ID when checking in.

Testing Environment

Candidates should dress accordingly so that they will be comfortable in wide range of room temperatures. Personal Belongings Candidates are discouraged from bringing any personal belongings to the testing center. These items must be stored in a secure space and are not permitted in the testing room. In general, candidates are not allowed to bring any items into the testing room. The following are examples of items generally not allowed in the testing room:

- Purses
- Wallets
- Coats or jackets
- Hats and head coverings; although religious head coverings such as scarves are permitted
- Briefcases
- Cell phones
- Backpacks
- Watches
- Calculators
- Pens and pencils belonging to the candidate
- Dictionaries, including language translation dictionaries
- Food, drinks or tobacco
- Notes, notebooks and study guides
Comfort Aids Certain items defined as "minor comfort aids" may be allowed in the testing room as long as the item is checked by the test center administrator before they are brought into the testing room including: tissues, cough drops, pillow for supporting neck, back or injured limb, sweater or sweatshirt, eyeglasses and hearing aids, earplugs, neck braces or collars (worn by people with neck injuries). A candidate must provide his or her own comfort aids. These are not considered to be accommodations and therefore do not need to be pre-approved by Pearson Vue or ACSM. Eyedrops, water bottles, asthma inhalers, diabetic testing equipment and other medical devices are not allowed in the testing room unless the candidate has been granted an accommodation for the item in advance. Candidates should follow the accommodations policy for consideration of a comfort aid. If you require special accommodations, please request a special accommodations form, e-mail certification@acsm.org.

Approved Exam Supplies

The candidate will be provided with an erasable noteboard and erasable pen, or blank notepaper. Scratch paper of any kind is never permitted in the testing room. Candidates are not allowed to use their own paper or notebooks, and notepads of any kind are not allowed.

Candidates are not permitted to bring their own writing instruments into the testing room. The testing center must provide any pens or pencils that are required for an exam. Candidates are not permitted to write on the erasable noteboards or notepaper until after the exam has been started.

A standard calculator will be provided within the exam.

Need Assistance? Let Us Know.

ACSM is proud to be the Gold Standard in Health Fitness Certifications and we look forward to having you join our team! Please don't hesitate to reach out should you have any questions along the way.

Contact Us:

For general ACSM Certification questions: 800-486-5643 / certification@acsm.org

To schedule your exam with Pearson VUE: 888-883-2276 / www.pearsonvue.com/acsm

Important Web Links:

Information on the ACSM Certified Personal Trainer®: http://certification.acsm.org/acsm-certified-personal-trainer

Exam Preparation Resources: http://certification.acsm.org/exam-preparation

Scheduling Your Exam: http://www.pearsonvue.com/acsm/

Additional FAQs: http://certification.acsm.org/faqs