

ACSM CERTIFIED PERSONAL TRAINER®

2017 Exam Blueprint Update

Performance Domains and Associated Job Tasks

In 2016, the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) began the redevelopment process for its Certified Personal Trainer (ACSM-CPT) examination. The ACSM-CPT examination is a certification available for personal fitness trainers who develop and implement safe, effective exercise programs to help healthy individuals accomplish their fitness goals.

Job Definition

The ACSM Certified Personal Trainer (ACSM-CPT), possessing a high school diploma or GED at minimum, works primarily with apparently healthy individuals to enhance fitness. The ACSM-CPT also works with individuals who have stable health challenges and are cleared to exercise independently. The ACSM-CPT conducts basic preparticipation health screenings, lifestyle inventories, and fitness assessments for health and skill-related components of fitness. The ACSM-CPT assesses behavior adaptation readiness and offers guidance in the development of realistic, client-centered goals related to health, fitness and wellness. The ACSM-CPT develops and administers programs designed to promote optimal cardiorespiratory fitness, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, and body composition, as well as agility, balance, coordination, power, speed, and reaction time. The ACSM-CPT facilitates client motivation and adherence and honors client confidentiality. The ACSM-CPT adheres to all agreed-upon terms with each client and stays within the scope of practice of the ACSM-CPT credential. The prudent ACSM-CPT makes referrals to appropriate allied health professionals when clients' needs exceed the ACSM-CPT's scope of practice.

Approach

A three-step approach was used to conduct an analysis of the ACSM-CPT practice: a focus group meeting where an SME panel revised and updated the current content outline of the ACSM-CPT exam, a survey of certified personal trainers to provide input on the revised content, and a follow-up meeting with the SME panel to review the results of the survey. The results of these activities were then used to create the recommended specifications.

Results

The Job Task Analysis (JTA) for the ACSM-CPT certification describes what the professional does on a day-to-day basis. The JTA is divided into performance domains and associated tasks performed on the job. The percentages listed below indicate the number of questions representing each domain on the 150-question ACSM-CPT examination.

Crosswalk comparisons of performance domains and job tasks are provided in Tables 1 and 2, respectively. Exam forms published on December 18, 2017 will be based on the 2017 ACSM-CPT JTA.

Table 1. Crosswalk Comparison of 2012 and 2017 ACSM-CPT Performance Domains.

Performance Domains (2012)		Performance Domains (2017)	
Domain I: Initial Client Consultation and Assessment	26%	Domain I: Initial Client Consultation and Assessment	25%
Domain II: Exercise Programming and Implementation	27%	Domain II: Exercise Programming and Implementation	45%
Domain III: Exercise Leadership and Client Education	27%	Domain III: Exercise Leadership and Client Education	20%
Domain IV: Legal, Professional, Business and Marketing	20%	Domain IV: Legal and Professional Responsibilities	10%

Table 2. Crosswalk Comparison of 2012 and 2017 ACSM-CPT Job Tasks.

Domain I: Initial Client Consultation and Assessment (2012)		Domain I: Initial Client Consultation and Assessment (2017)	
A	Provide instructions and initial documents to the client in order to proceed to the interview.	A	Provide documents and clear instructions to the client in preparation for the initial interview.
B	Interview client in order to gather and provide pertinent information to proceed to the fitness testing and program design.	B	Interview the client to gather and provide pertinent information prior to fitness testing and program design.
C	Review and analyze client data (i.e., classify risk) to formulate a plan of action and/or conduct physical assessments.	C	Review and analyze client data to identify risk, formulate a plan of action, and conduct physical assessments.
D	Evaluate behavioral readiness to optimize exercise adherence.	D	Evaluate behavioral readiness and develop strategies to optimize exercise adherence.
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.	E	Assess the components of health- and/or skill-related physical fitness to establish baseline values, set goals, and develop individualized programs.
F	Develop a comprehensive (e.g., physical fitness, goals, behavior) reassessment plan/timeline.	F	Develop a plan and timeline for reassessing physical fitness, goals, and related behaviors.

Domain II: Exercise Programming and Implementation (2012)		Domain II: Exercise Programming and Implementation (2017)	
A	Review assessment results, medical history and goals to determine appropriate training program.	A	Review the client's goals, medical history, and assessment results and determine exercise prescription.
B	Select exercise modalities to achieve desired adaptations based on goals, medical history and assessment results	B	Select exercise modalities to achieve the desired adaptations based on the client's goals, medical history, and assessment results.
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.	C	Determine initial Frequency, Intensity, Time, Type, Volume and Progression (i.e., FITT-VP Principle) of exercise based on the client's goals, medical history, and assessment results.
D	Review proposed program with client; demonstrate and instruct the client to perform exercises safely and effectively.	D	Review the proposed program with the client, demonstrate exercises and teach the client how to perform each exercise.
E	Monitor client technique and response to exercise, modifying as necessary.	E	Monitor the client's technique and response to exercise, providing modifications as necessary.
F	Modify frequency, intensity, time and duration to improve or maintain the client's fitness level.	F	Recommend exercise progressions to improve or maintain the client's fitness level.
G	Seek client feedback to ensure satisfaction and enjoyment of the program.	G	Obtain client feedback to ensure exercise program satisfaction and adherence.

Domain III: Leadership and Education Implementation (2012)		Domain III: Exercise Leadership and Client Education (2017)	
A	Create a positive exercise experience in order to optimize participant adherence by applying effective communication techniques, motivation techniques and behavioral strategies.	A	Optimize participant adherence by using effective communication, motivational techniques, and behavioral strategies.
B	Educate clients using scientifically sound health and fitness information and resources to enhance clients' knowledge base, program enjoyment, adherence and overall awareness of health and fitness related information.	B	Educate clients using scientifically sound resources.

Domain IV: Legal, Professional, Business and Marketing (2012)		Domain IV: Legal and Professional Responsibilities (2017)	
A	Obtain medical clearance for clients based on ACSM guidelines, prior to starting an exercise program.	--	Domain I, Task C
B	Collaborate with various health care professionals and organizations in order to provide clients with a network of providers that minimizes liability and maximizes program effectiveness.	A	Collaborate with health care professionals and organizations to create a network of providers that can assist in maximizing the benefits and minimizing the risk of an exercise program.
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.	B	Develop a comprehensive risk management program (including an emergency action plan and injury prevention program) consistent with industry standards of care.
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.	--	--
E	Adhere to ACSM's Code of Ethics by practicing in a professional manner within the scope of practice of a Certified Personal Trainer	C	Adhere to ACSM Certification's Code of Ethics by practicing in a professional manner within the scope of practice of an ACSM Certified Personal Trainer.
F	Develop a business plan to establish mission, business, budgetary and sales objectives.	--	--
G	Develop marketing materials and engage in networking/business exchanges to build client base, promote services and increase resources.	--	--
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.	D	Follow industry-accepted professional, ethical, and business standards.
I	Engage in healthy lifestyle practices in order to be a positive role model for all clients.	--	--
J	Respect copyrights to protect original and creative work, media, etc. by legally securing copyrighted material and other intellectual property based on national and international copyright laws.	E	Respect copyright laws by obtaining permission before using protected materials and any form of applicable intellectual property.
K	Safeguard client confidentiality and privacy rights unless formally waived or in emergency situations.	F	Safeguard client confidentiality and privacy rights unless formally waived or in emergency situations.