

So You Want to be a...

WHAT DOES AN EXERCISE & WELLNESS PROFESSIONAL DO?

Fitness and exercise professionals lead, instruct, and motivate individuals or groups in exercise activities including cardiovascular exercises, strength training, flexibility, and balance. They work with people of all ages and skill levels in a range of settings such as corporate fitness, community fitness, and commercial fitness.

They devise and implement training programs, monitor progress, explain how to perform exercises to minimize injury and improve fitness. They provide resources to help individuals maintain a healthy lifestyle. Individuals can also establish their own business as personal trainers or fitness coaches.

WHAT DEGREE DO I NEED TO BECOME AN EXERCISE & WELLNESS PROFESSIONAL?

Increasingly employers are looking for individuals with a formal education at the bachelor's level in an exercise and fitness specific degree program, such as Kinesiology. As the industry has expanded, the need for highly qualified and trained individuals in the science of physical activity has grown and continues to grow. In addition, employers look for certifications, such as American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) certifications that require a bachelor's degree <https://www.acsm.org/get-stay-certified/get-certified/specialization>

Training and expertise in designing and delivering appropriate training programs is critical. An understanding of physiology, anatomy, biomechanics, and nutrition is essential. Being able to motivate individuals to initiate and maintain a fitness program is required as is being able to work in individual and group settings. The capacity to work with people of all ages, abilities, and different cultural and ethnic groups is required. Effective communication and listening skills as well as customer-service skills and problem-solving skills are also looked for by employers.

Exercise & Wellness Professional

WHAT ARE THE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES?

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the median annual salary for fitness professionals is \$39,210. Employment growth is projected to grow 10% from 2016 to 2026 reflecting a growing awareness of the benefits of health and fitness to employee satisfaction and job performance. Employment prospects are expected to be better for those with higher levels of formal education.

Insurance: It is highly recommended that exercise and fitness professionals secure professional liability insurance. This can often be obtained through a professional organization or through one of the certification agencies.

DO I NEED ANY CERTIFICATIONS OR LICENSURE?

Increasingly certifications are being required by employers. Any certification should be certified by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) an independent non-governmental agency that accredits professional certifications in many professions including exercise and fitness.

<http://www.credentialingexcellence.org/nccadirectory>

Be part of the US Registry of Exercise Professionals

<http://www.usreps.org/Pages/default.aspx>

For more information about careers in exercise and wellness visit the websites of the following organizations:

American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)

<https://www.acsm.org/>

Consider Specialty Certifications

<https://www.acsm.org/get-stay-certified/get-certified/specialization>