

NSCA-Certified Personal Trainer Job Task Analysis Summary

On behalf of the NSCA, ACS Ventures, LLC (ACS) conducted a job task analysis study (JTA) for the NSCA-Certified Personal Trainer certification on April 5-6, 2018, in Colorado Springs, CO. The meeting was held over a 2-day period and involved ten subject-matter experts (SMEs) from the various disciplines across the personal training community (i.e. corporate, athletes, individuals or groups). The purpose of this study was to review and update the detailed content outline (DCO) for the NSCA-CPT program.

The study was conducted in three phases. The first phase, a meeting with the panel of SMEs convened to discuss the expectations an NSCA-CPT was responsible for in an organizational framework. The second phase, NSCA and ACS worked together to construct a survey to be distributed to the NSCA-CPT professionals working in the field in order to gain feedback on the tasks listed in the DCO. In the third and final phase, the responses of the survey were collected and analyzed to determine importance of each task. These measures were then used to update the DCO of the NSCA-CPT exam.

New Detailed Content Outline (DCO) Date Effective: **February 1, 2019.**

- All exams administered **before** February 1, 2019, will follow the existing DCO (Pages 2-7).
- All exams administered **on or after** February 1, 2019, will follow the NEW DCO (Pages 8-13)
- It is possible to register for the NSCA-CPT examination and be studying from the old DCO but take the exam when the new DCO becomes active. Please be conscious and aware of this if you register for the exam in the Fall 2018.

Changes to the NSCA-CPT Blueprint:

The NSCA-CPT DCO remained almost identical to the current one. The only difference is the addition of 3 subtasks in the different domains and the weighting of items in the 3 different cognitive levels (i.e., recall, application, or analysis) changed slightly.


Subtasks Added:


1.C.3: Conduct reevaluation and reassessment


2.B.8: Determine program modifications based upon the results of reevaluation and reassessment


2.D.1.l: individuals with immunological and hematological disorders (e.g. AIDS, HIV, chronic fatigue syndrome, anemia, auto-immune disorders, bleeding or clotting disorders)


Existing Detailed Content Outline (Effective **until** December 31, 2018):


 NSCA-CPT® EXAMINATION Detailed Content Outline	Cognitive Level			Total Items
	Recall	Application	Analysis	
1. CLIENT CONSULTATION & ASSESSMENT	9	19	7	35
A. Initial Interview <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Determine compatibility between a client and a personal trainer Administer a client-personal trainer and/or a client-personal trainer-fitness facility agreement Administer an informed consent and liability waiver form Administer an assessment inventory on attitude and readiness B. Medical History and Health Appraisal <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Administer a detailed medical history/health appraisal form and a lifestyle questionnaire (including exercise and injury history) Obtain a medical release from the client's primary physician, if necessary Interpret medical history/health appraisal form and lifestyle questionnaire Refer a client to and/or seek input from an appropriate health care professional Maintain a network of allied health care professionals C. Fitness Evaluation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct fitness evaluation including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> vital signs (heart rate, blood pressure) height weight body composition girth measurements muscular strength 				

 <p>NSCA-CPT® EXAMINATION Detailed Content Outline</p>	Cognitive Level			Total Items
	Recall	Application	Analysis	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> g. muscular endurance h. speed/agility/power i. cardiovascular endurance j. flexibility k. postural alignment/muscle balance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Conduct movement assessments 3. Interpret the results of a health/fitness evaluation 4. Refer a client to and/or seek input from an appropriate health care professional <p>D. Basic Nutrition Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the personal trainer's scope of practice regarding nutritional recommendations 2. Conduct a review of a client's dietary habits (e.g., recall, history, or food records) 3. Communicate basic information from peer-reviewed resources regarding nutrition, supplements, nutrient timing, and daily caloric needs 4. Recognize the signs and symptoms of an eating disorder 5. Refer client to and/or seek input from an appropriate health care professional 				
2. PROGRAM PLANNING	17	13	13	43
<p>A. Goal Setting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish needs and goals by discussing the results of a fitness evaluation with a client 2. Establish needs and goals by discussing the results of dietary habit log with a client 3. Establish needs and goals by discussing health-related lifestyle habits (e.g., smoking, alcohol use) with a client 				

 <p>NSCA-CPT® EXAMINATION Detailed Content Outline</p>	Cognitive Level			Total Items
	Recall	Application	Analysis	
<p>4. Determine the motivational/coaching techniques (e.g., reward system, reinforcement strategies, mental imagery techniques, visualization) that will be effective for a client</p> <p>B. Program Design</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select the exercise modality or type 2. Select the warm-up/cool down exercises 3. Determine the order of exercises or exercise components 4. Determine the exercise intensity or workload 5. Determine exercise duration 6. Determine exercise frequency 7. Determine the rate of exercise progression <p>C. Training Adaptations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe exercise-induced changes to body structures <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. muscles b. tendons, ligaments, and connective tissue c. bone and cartilage d. adipose tissue (fat stores) 2. Describe exercise-induced changes to body systems <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. neuromuscular b. cardiorespiratory c. metabolic d. endocrine e. psychological 				

 <p>NSCA-CPT® EXAMINATION Detailed Content Outline</p>	Cognitive Level			Total Items
	Recall	Application	Analysis	
<p>D. Special Populations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine the capacities and limitations of a client with a specialized need or condition <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. age-specific conditions (e.g., older adults, prepubescents, adolescents) b. female-specific conditions (e.g., prenatal, postpartum, postmenopausal) c. individuals with psychological disorders/conditions (e.g., depression, eating disorders) d. individuals with orthopedic disorders/conditions (e.g., arthritis, osteoporosis/osteopenia, amputations, musculoskeletal trauma, rhabdomyolysis) e. individuals with cardiovascular disorders/conditions (e.g., hypertension, hyperlipidemia, post-cardiac rehabilitation, peripheral vascular disease, stroke) f. individuals with metabolic disorders/conditions (e.g., overweight, obese, diabetes, metabolic syndrome) g. individuals with respiratory disorders/conditions (e.g., asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) h. individuals with neurological disorders (e.g., epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries, paralysis, Parkinson's disease, Down's syndrome, traumatic brain injury) i. individuals training for a certain sport/ competition (e.g., athletes) j. Individuals with fibromyalgia k. Individuals with cancer 2. Modify the exercise program to coincide with the limitations and capacities of a client with a specialized need or condition 3. Refer a client to and/or seek input from an appropriate health care professional 				


 NSCA-CPT® EXAMINATION Detailed Content Outline	Cognitive Level			Total Items
	Recall	Application	Analysis	
3. TECHNIQUES OF EXERCISE	7	15	21	43
<p>Evaluate exercise technique (including body position, speed/control of movement, movement/range of motion, progression, cueing, muscular involvement, breathing, spotting/safety guidelines, and functional movement*)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Machine Resistance Exercises (e.g., plate-loaded, selectorized, hydraulic, air, friction, tubing) B. Free Weight Exercises (e.g., barbells, dumbbells) C. Flexibility Exercises (e.g., static, ballistic, dynamic, PNF, active-isolated stretching) D. Calisthenic and Body Weight Exercises (e.g., yoga, pull-up, push-up, torso exercises) E. Sport-specific/Performance-related Activities (e.g., plyometrics, sprinting, agility drills, reaction) F. Cardiovascular Machines (e.g., treadmill, stationary bike, rowing machine, stair-stepper, elliptical trainer) G. Non-machine Cardiovascular Activities (e.g., running, walking, swimming, aerobic dancing) H. Alternative Training Activities (e.g., tire-flipping, weighted carries, sandbags, ropes, chains, stability balls, kettlebells, medicine balls, resistance bands, balance) 				
4. SAFETY, EMERGENCY PROCEDURES and LEGAL ISSUES	7	11	1	19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Safety Procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain exercise equipment 2. Establish an exercise environment consistent with industry standards 3. Respond to symptoms of overtraining, overuse injuries, and temperature-induced illness B. Emergency Response 				


 <p>NSCA-CPT® EXAMINATION Detailed Content Outline</p>	Cognitive Level			Total Items
	Recall	Application	Analysis	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perform basic first aid consistent with industry standards 2. Perform CPR and use an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) consistent with industry standards 3. Implement a plan to respond to an emergency in an exercise facility (e.g., fire, tornado, medical situation) <p>C. Professional, Legal and Ethical Responsibility</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognize litigation issues and circumstances 2. Maintain a professional client-personal trainer relationship 3. Maintain client-personal trainer confidentiality 4. Ensure documentation is maintained related to professional, legal, and ethical responsibilities (e.g., incident reporting, PAR-Q, HIPAA, compliance, facility maintenance requirements) 				
Totals	40	58	42	140


* Functional training/exercise is an activity that enhances one's kinetic duty (movement purpose), improves adaptability, and provides for significant transfer to a target activity and/or daily living.


Updated Detailed Content Outline (effective beginning February 1, 2019):


Exams administered beginning on February 1, 2019, will be based on the updated Detailed Content Outline as a result of the recent Job Task Analysis.


 NSCA-CPT® EXAMINATION Detailed Content Outline	Cognitive Level			Total Items
	Recall	Application	Analysis	
1. CLIENT CONSULTATION & ASSESSMENT	8	18	6	32
<p>A. Initial Interview</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Determine compatibility between a client and a personal trainer Administer a client-personal trainer and/or a client-personal trainer-fitness facility agreement Administer an informed consent and liability waiver form Administer an assessment inventory on attitude and readiness <p>B. Medical History and Health Appraisal</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Administer a detailed medical history/health appraisal form and a lifestyle questionnaire (including exercise and injury history) Obtain a medical release from the client's primary physician, if necessary Interpret medical history/health appraisal form and lifestyle questionnaire Refer a client to and/or seek input from an appropriate healthcare professional based on information in the medical history and health appraisal Maintain a network of allied health care professionals <p>C. Fitness Evaluation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct fitness evaluation including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> vital signs (heart rate, blood pressure) height weight body composition 				

 NSCA-CPT® EXAMINATION Detailed Content Outline	Cognitive Level			Total Items
	Recall	Application	Analysis	
e. girth measurements f. muscular strength g. muscular endurance h. speed/agility/power i. cardiovascular endurance j. flexibility k. postural alignment/muscle balance 2. Conduct movement assessment 3. Conduct reevaluation and reassessment 4. Interpret the results of a health/fitness evaluation or reevaluation 5. Refer a client to and/or seek input from an appropriate health care professional based on the fitness evaluation results D. Basic Nutrition Review 1. Identify the personal trainer's scope of practice regarding nutritional recommendations 2. Conduct a review of a client's dietary habits (e.g., recall, history, food log) 3. Communicate and educate using information from peer-reviewed resources regarding general nutrition, supplements, nutrient timing, hydration, and daily caloric needs 4. Recognize the signs and symptoms of disordered eating and eating disorders 5. Refer client to and/or seek input from an appropriate healthcare professional based on the basic nutritional review results				
2. PROGRAM PLANNING	19	14	12	45
A. Goal Setting 1. Establish needs and goals by discussing the results of an initial interview, medical history and health appraisal, and fitness evaluation with a client				

 <p>NSCA-CPT® EXAMINATION Detailed Content Outline</p>	Cognitive Level			Total Items
	Recall	Application	Analysis	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Establish needs and goals by discussing the results of dietary habit log with a client 3. Establish needs and goals by discussing health-related lifestyle habits (e.g., smoking, alcohol use, drug use) with a client 4. Determine the motivational/coaching techniques (e.g., reward system, reinforcement strategies, mental imagery techniques, visualization, use of technology) that will be effective for a client <p>B. Program Design</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select the exercise modality or type 2. Select the warm-up/cool down exercises 3. Determine the order of exercises or exercise components 4. Determine the exercise intensity or workload 5. Determine exercise duration 6. Determine exercise frequency 7. Determine the rate of exercise progression 8. Determine program modifications based upon the results of reevaluation and reassessment <p>C. Training Adaptations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain exercise-induced changes to body structures <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. muscles b. tendons, ligaments, and connective tissue c. bone and cartilage d. adipose tissue (fat stores) 2. Explain exercise-induced changes to body systems <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. neuromuscular b. cardiorespiratory 				

 NSCA-CPT® EXAMINATION Detailed Content Outline	Cognitive Level			Total Items
	Recall	Application	Analysis	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. metabolic d. endocrine e. psychological <p>D. Special Populations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognize and determine (if appropriate) the capacities and limitations of a client with a specialized need or condition <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. age-specific conditions (e.g., older adults, prepubescents, adolescents) b. female-specific conditions (e.g., prenatal, postpartum, postmenopausal) c. individuals with psychological disorders/conditions (e.g., depression, disordered eating, eating disorders) d. individuals with orthopedic disorders/conditions (e.g., arthritis, osteoporosis/osteopenia, amputations, musculoskeletal trauma, rhabdomyolysis) e. individuals with cardiovascular disorders/conditions (e.g., hypertension, hyperlipidemia, post-cardiac rehabilitation, peripheral vascular disease, stroke) f. individuals with metabolic disorders/conditions (e.g., overweight, obese, diabetes, metabolic syndrome) g. individuals with respiratory disorders/conditions (e.g., asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) h. individuals with genetic, cognitive or neurological disorders (e.g., epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries, paralysis, Parkinson's disease, Down's syndrome, traumatic brain injury, Alzheimer's) i. individuals training for a certain sport or competition (e.g., athletes) j. individuals with fibromyalgia k. individuals with cancer l. individuals with immunological and hematological disorders (e.g. AIDS, HIV, chronic fatigue syndrome, anemia, auto-immune disorders, bleeding or clotting disorders) 				

 NSCA-CPT® EXAMINATION Detailed Content Outline	Cognitive Level			Total Items
	Recall	Application	Analysis	
2. Modify the exercise program within the scope of medical recommendations (if appropriate) to coincide with the limitation and capacities of a client with a specialized need or condition 3. Refer a client to and/or seek input from an appropriate health care professional based on the specific needs of the client				
3. TECHNIQUES OF EXERCISE	8	15	20	43
Evaluate exercise technique (including body position, speed/control of movement, movement/range of motion, progression, cueing, muscular involvement, breathing, spotting/safety guidelines, and functional movement*)				
A. Machine Resistance Exercises (e.g., plate-loaded, selectorized, hydraulic, air, friction, rod) B. Free Weight Exercises (e.g., barbells, dumbbells) C. Flexibility Exercises (e.g., static, ballistic, dynamic, PNF, active-isolated stretching) D. Calisthenic and Body Weight Exercises (e.g., yoga, pull-up, push-up, torso exercises, suspension training) E. Sport-specific/Performance-related Activities (e.g., plyometrics, sprinting, agility drills, reaction) F. Cardiovascular Machines (e.g., treadmill, stationary bike, rowing machine, stepping and climbing machine, elliptical trainer, upper body ergometer) G. Non-machine Cardiovascular Activities (e.g., running, walking, swimming, aerobic dancing) H. Alternative Training Activities (e.g., tire-flipping, weighted carries, weighted bags, ropes, chains, stability balls, kettlebells, medicine balls, resistance bands, balance, club, sled, manual resistance)				
4. SAFETY, EMERGENCY PROCEDURES and LEGAL ISSUES	7	11	2	20
A. Safety Procedures <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain exercise equipment Establish an exercise environment consistent with industry standards 				

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	Recall	Application	Analysis	
3. Respond to symptoms of overtraining, overuse injuries, and temperature-induced illness B. Emergency Response 1. Perform basic first aid consistent with industry standards 2. Perform CPR and use an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) consistent with industry standards 3. Implement a plan to respond to an emergency in an exercise facility (e.g., fire, environmental disasters, medical situation, security threats) C. Professional, Legal and Ethical Responsibility 1. Recognize litigation issues and circumstances 2. Maintain a professional client-personal trainer relationship (all forms of communication) 3. Maintain client-personal trainer confidentiality 4. Ensure documentation is obtained, maintained and secured relating to professional, legal, and ethical responsibilities (e.g., incident reporting, PAR-Q+, HIPAA, compliance, facility maintenance requirements)				
Totals	42	58	40	140

* Functional training/exercise is an activity that enhances one's kinetic duty (movement purpose), improves adaptability, and provides for significant transfer to a target activity and/or daily living.