

## 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 (NSCA-CPT) certification during April 2024, in Colorado Springs, CO. The meeting was held over a 2-day period and involved nine subject-matter experts (SMEs) from the various disciplines across the strength and conditioning community (i.e., collegiate, academic, military). The purpose of this study was to review the job role of a CPT and update the detailed content outline (DCO) for the CPT program.

The study was conducted in three phases. The first phase, a meeting with the panel of SMEs convened to discuss the expectations a CPT was responsible for in an organizational framework. The second phase, NSCA and ACS worked together to construct a survey to be distributed to CPT professionals working in the field 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 CPT examination.

New Detailed Content Outline (DCO) Date Effective: July 1, 2025.

- All exams administered before July 1, 2025, will follow the existing DCO.
- All exams administered on or after July 1, 2024, will follow the NEW DCO (Pages 2-14)
- It is possible to register for the NSCA-CPT examination and study 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 2025.

### Changes to the NSCA-CPT DCO (blueprint):

The NSCA-CPT DCO remained almost identical to the current one, one new task was created, along with some renaming of Domains and Tasks and the rearrangement of some task as listed below:

#### ***Domain Change:***

Domain 3 Techniques of Exercise will become Program Execution

#### ***Task Changes***

1.C Fitness Evaluation will become Performance Evaluation

1.D Basic Nutrition Review will become Basic Wellness Review

2. A Goal Setting content was moved under 1.D Basic Wellness Review and 3C Training Adaptations

2.C Training Adaptation was moved under Domain 3 to become 3.C Training Adaptations

#### ***New Task under Domain 3 Program Execution***

3.A Exercise Instruction



## NSCA-CPT® EXAMINATION Detailed Content Outline

	Cognitive Level			Total Items
	Recall	Application	Analysis	
<b>1. CLIENT CONSULTATION &amp; ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>32</b>
A. Initial Interview				
1. Establish rapport using active listening to identify goals and determine compatibility between a client and a personal trainer				
2. Determine client attitude, readiness, and ability to participate in a personal training program				
3. Establish expectations for the client-trainer relationship including communication, participation, and timelines				
4. Evaluate fit between client needs and program options including format (1-on-1, small group, or performance training) and duration				
B. Medical History and Health Appraisal				
1. Administer a detailed personal and family medical history/health appraisal form and a lifestyle questionnaire (including exercise and injury history)				
2. Interpret personal and family medical history/health appraisal form and lifestyle questionnaire				
3. Refer a client to and/or seek input from appropriate healthcare professionals based on information in the medical history and health appraisal				
4. Obtain a medical release from the client's primary physician, if necessary				
5. Establish, and collaborate with, a network of eligible allied healthcare professionals to support client success (e.g., nutrition, mental health, rehabilitation, general medicine)				
C. Performance Evaluation				
1. Conduct a structural evaluation which may include: vital signs (e.g., heart rate, blood pressure), height, weight, body composition, girth, women's health (menstruation cycle), training age and biological age				
2. Conduct a functional evaluation which may include: flexibility and mobility, postural alignment/muscle balance, joint stability and balance, gait analysis, functional movement				
3. Conduct a fitness evaluation which may include: muscular strength, muscular endurance, speed/agility/power, cardiovascular capacity				
4. Interpret the results of a performance evaluation (structural, functional, and fitness), finalize goals with the client, and establish KPIs				
5. Establish a schedule for, and conduct, a reevaluation and reassessment				
6. Refer a client to, and collaborate with, appropriate healthcare professionals based on the performance evaluation results				
D. Basic Wellness Review				
1. Conduct a review of a client's wellbeing habits within the personal trainer's scope of practice (e.g., nutrition, sleep, stress, mental health)				
2. Educate clients using information from peer-reviewed resources regarding the relationship between wellbeing and performance				
3. Recognize the signs and symptoms of relative energy deficiency in sport (RED-S), disordered eating, and eating disorders				
4. Refer client to, and collaborate with, an appropriate healthcare professional based on the basic wellbeing review results				



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	Cognitive Level			Total Items
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<b>2. PROGRAM PLANNING</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>41</b>
A. Program Design				
1. Create a plan for the client program (e.g., macro, meso, and micro cycles) targeting client goals				
2. Determine format for workout (1-on-1, small group, performance-based group) and session length				
3. Select the warm-up, exercise modality or type, and recovery procedures				
4. Determine the order of exercises or exercise components				
5. Determine exercise frequency, intensity, time, and type (FITT), and work-to-rest ratio				
6. Determine tempo based on time under tension in each phase of muscle contraction (e.g., eccentric, isometric, and concentric)				
7. Create a plan for which exercise variables will be progressed over time (e.g., FITT, exercise selection, tempo)				
8. Modify program variables based upon the results of reevaluation and reassessment				
B. Special Populations				
1. Recognize the specialized need or condition of a client including areas of opportunity for improvement				
2. Identify contraindications to exercise based on a client's limitations or conditions and seek input from healthcare professionals if needed				
3. 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				
<b>3. PROGRAM EXECUTION</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>50</b>
A. Exercise Instruction				
1. Select and use motivational and coaching techniques (e.g., reward system, reinforcement strategies, mental imagery techniques, visualization, use of technology)				
2. Educate clients on the purpose and intent of an exercise				
3. Teach and demonstrate general safety guidelines for movement (e.g., breathing, proper biomechanical)				
B. Evaluation Exercise Technique				
1. Machine Resistance Exercises (e.g., plate-loaded, selectorized, hydraulic, air, friction, rod)				
2. Free Weight Exercises (e.g., barbells, dumbbells, kettlebells, bands, water-based resistance)				
3. Flexibility and Mobility Exercises (e.g., static, ballistic, dynamic, PNF, active-isolated stretching)				
4. Callisthenic and Body Weight Exercises (e.g., yoga, pull-up, push-up, torso exercises, suspension training)				
5. Sport-specific/Performance-related Activities (e.g., plyometrics, sprinting, agility drills, reaction)				



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6. Cardiovascular Machines (e.g., treadmill, stationary bike, rowing machine, stepping and climbing machine, elliptical trainer, upper body ergometer)				
7. Non-machine Cardiovascular Activities (e.g., running, walking, swimming, aerobic dancing)				
C. Training Adaptations				
1. Explain exercise-induced changes to body structures. [muscles, tendons, ligaments, and connective tissue, bone and cartilage, adipose tissue (fat stores)]				
2. Explain exercise-induced changes to body systems. (neuromuscular, cardiorespiratory, metabolic, endocrine, psychological)				
3. Explain long term impact of exercise on the health span and longevity				
4. Use client experience feedback and performance outcomes to modify program design				
<b>4. SAFETY, EMERGENCY PROCEDURES, AND LEGAL ISSUES</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>
A. Safety Procedures				
1. Establish and maintain exercise environment consistent with industry standards. (e.g., CDC, OSHA)				
2. Maintain functionality and cleanliness of exercise equipment				
3. Monitor client performance and response to exercise to determine if/when consultation with a healthcare professional is needed				
4. Respond to symptoms of overtraining, overuse injuries, and temperature-induced illness				
5. Identify and utilize relevant resources/guidelines to better understand client conditions and relevant safety concerns				
B. Emergency Response				
1. Perform basic first aid consistent with industry standards				
2. 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., informed consent, liability waiver form, client-personal trainer-fitness facility agreement, session log, incident reporting, PAR-Q+, HIPAA, compliance, facility maintenance requirements)				
5. Model professional behavior by adhering to the NSCA's Code of Ethics and demonstrating consideration for personal well-being				
<b>Totals</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>140</b>

## NSCA-CPT SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following describes when the personal trainer should administer a medical history questionnaire to a client?
  - A. before the fitness evaluation
  - B. immediately after the first exercise session
  - C. during the physician's medical examination
2. A moderate intensity (8 - 12RM loads) resistance training program involving one minute rest periods between sets and exercises is designed primarily to improve a client's
  - A. strength
  - B. hypertrophy
  - C. power
3. A personal trainer offers free sessions to clients who achieve their goals within a predetermined amount of time. Which of the following describes this motivational technique?
  - A. intrinsic motivation
  - B. achievement motivation
  - C. positive reinforcement
4. What is the day's caloric intake of a client who consumed 100 g of protein, 450 g of carbohydrates, and 40 g of fat in one day?
  - A. 5310 kcals
  - B. 4180 kcals
  - C. 2560 kcals
5. A client's 10RM in the bench press exercise is 150 lb (68 kg). Which of the following is this client's estimated 1RM?
  - A. 170 lb (77 kg)
  - B. 200 lb (91 kg)
  - C. 230 lb (105 kg)

**Answers: (1) A (2) B (3) C (4) C (5) B**