

How to Find Exercise Professionals

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The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) defines exercise professionals as individuals:

- With exceptional knowledge and skills
- Usually devoted full time
- Devoted to a particular area of expertise
- Have an altruistic sense of duty beyond financial incentive
- Commitment or calling to helping others
- Post signs or symbols that distinguish them from other professionals
- Govern their practice through own sense of judgment

In Addition:

- ***A competent health/fitness professional should have a bachelor's degree as a basic requirement along with professional certification.***
- Should join professional organizations, attend conferences, workshops, and continuing education so their knowledge, skills, and abilities don't become outdated.

Personal Comments:

If you are paying a trainer that doesn't meet these requirements, you probably are getting ripped off because you aren't getting holistic and balanced training methodology. There is more to being a professional trainer than teaching someone how to increase muscle mass and how to elevate heart rate. A few exceptions exist to the above guidelines—but *very few* in my opinion.

Exercise professionals need to understand many complex issues such as:

- What is valid and trustworthy information?
- How does one access this information?
- How can this information be clearly and accurately presented to clients?

Professional trainers need to understand sport and exercise psychology and how it relates to stages of behavior change, body image, eating disorders, and how self-efficacy relates to exercise adherence. These are just a few areas of knowledge that a professional trainer should know.

It's your body—why settle for something less than you are paying for?

Source: Hilgenkamp, Kathryn. (1998). Ethical behavior and professionalism in the business of health and fitness. American College of Sports Medicine Health & Fitness Journal, 2:6, 24-27.

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