

NSCA-CPT Exam Content Description

April 2008

NSCA Certification recently conducted a Job Analysis Survey to revalidate the NSCA-CPT certification exam. As a result, the content weighting and scope of the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) tested on the exam will change somewhat. The format of the exam you choose — Paper/Pencil or Computer-Based — and the date you plan to take the exam will determine which set of KSAs you will be tested on.

Paper/Pencil

If you are planning to take the Paper/Pencil format of the NSCA-CPT exam before June 1, 2008, please refer to the following content weighting and abridged list of KSAs for the exam. (If you are planning to take the Paper/Pencil format of the NSCA-CPT exam after June 1, 2008, use the 6th Printing [April 2008] of the *NSCA-CPT Exam Content Description* booklet to see the new KSAs for the exam.)

Computer-Based

If you are planning to take the Computer-Based format of the NSCA-CPT exam before August 1, 2008, please refer to the following content weighting and abridged list of KSAs for the exam. (If you are planning to take the Computer-Based format of the NSCA-CPT exam after August 1, 2008, use the 6th Printing [April 2008] of the *NSCA-CPT Exam Content Description* booklet to see the new KSAs for the exam.)

NSCA-CPT® EXAMINATION

Detailed Content Outline

(final version; approved October, 2007)

| Domain, Sub-category and Specific Task | Recall | Application | Analysis | Total Items |
|---|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
| 1. CLIENT CONSULTATION & ASSESSMENT | 8 | 15 | 9 | 32 |
| A. Initial Interview | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| 1. Determine compatibility between a client and a personal trainer | X† | X | X | |
| 2. Complete a client-personal trainer and/or a client-personal trainer-fitness facility agreement | X | X | | |
| 3. Administer an informed consent and liability waiver form | X | X | | |
| B. Medical History and Health Appraisal | 2 | 2 | 5 | 9 |
| 1. Administer a detailed medical history/health appraisal form and a lifestyle questionnaire (including exercise history) and, if necessary, obtain a medical release from the client's primary physician | X | X | | |
| 2. Evaluate and interpret medical history/health appraisal form and lifestyle questionnaire | X | X | X | |
| 3. Recognize when to refer a client to and/or seek input from an appropriate health care professional | X | X | X | |
| C. Fitness Evaluation | 4 | 7 | 2 | 13 |
| 1. Conduct fitness evaluation: | | | | |
| a. Vital signs (heart rate, blood pressure) | X | X | | |
| b. Height | X | | | |
| c. Weight | X | | | |
| d. Body composition | X | X | | |
| e. Girth measurements | X | X | | |
| f. Muscular strength | X | X | | |
| g. Muscular endurance | X | X | | |
| h. Speed/agility/power | X | X | | |
| i. Cardiovascular endurance | X | X | | |
| j. Flexibility | X | X | | |
| k. Postural alignment/muscle balance | X | X | | |

| Domain, Sub-category and Specific Task | Recall | Application | Analysis | Total Items |
|---|---------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 2. Evaluate and interpret the results of a health/fitness evaluation | X | X | X | |
| 3. Recognize when to refer a client to and/or seek input from an appropriate health care professional | X | X | X | |
| D. Basic Nutrition Review | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| 1. Identify the personal trainer's scope of practice regarding nutritional recommendations | X | X | | |
| 2. Conduct a review of a client's dietary habits (e.g., recall, history, or food records) | X | X | | |
| 3. Communicate basic information regarding nutritional aids, supplements and daily caloric needs | X | X | | |
| 4. Recognize the signs and symptoms of an eating disorder | X | X | | |
| 5. Recognize when to refer a client to and/or seek input from an appropriate health care professional | X | X | X | |
| 2. PROGRAM PLANNING | 12 | 22 | 11 | 45 |
| A. Goal Setting | 2 | 2 | 4 | 8 |
| 1. Discuss the results of a fitness evaluation with a client to determine needs and goals | X | X | X | |
| 2. Discuss results of dietary habit review with a client to determine needs and goals | X | X | X | |
| 3. Discuss health-related lifestyle habits (smoking, alcohol use, etc.) with a client to determine needs and goals | X | X | X | |
| 4. Determine the motivational/coaching techniques (reward system, reinforcement strategies, mental imagery techniques, visualization, etc.) that will be effective for a client | X | X | X | |
| B. Program Design | 3 | 7 | 3 | 13 |
| 1. Select the exercise modality or type | X | X | X | |
| 2. Select the warm-up/cool down exercises | X | X | X | |
| 3. Determine the order of exercises or exercise components | X | X | X | |
| 4. Determine the exercise intensity or workload | X | X | X | |
| 5. Determine exercise duration | X | X | X | |

| Domain, Sub-category and Specific Task | Recall | Application | Analysis | Total Items |
|---|---------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 6. Determine exercise frequency | X | X | X | |
| 7. Determine the rate of exercise progression | X | X | X | |
| C. Training Adaptations | 4 | 7 | 0 | 11 |
| 1. Understand exercise-induced changes to body structures: | | | | |
| a. Muscle | X | | | |
| b. Tendons and ligaments | X | | | |
| c. Bone and cartilage | X | | | |
| d. Adipose tissue (fat stores) | X | | | |
| 2. Understand exercise-induced changes to body systems: | | | | |
| a. Neuromuscular | X | X | | |
| b. Cardiorespiratory | X | X | | |
| c. Metabolic | X | X | | |
| d. Endocrine | X | X | | |
| e. Psychological | X | X | | |
| D. Special Populations | 3 | 6 | 4 | |
| 1. Determine capacities and limitations of a client with a specialized need or condition: | | | | |
| a. Older adults/elderly | X | X | | |
| b. Pre-pubescents and adolescents | X | X | | |
| c. Females who are prenatal or postpartum | X | X | X | |
| d. Females who are postmenopausal | X | X | | |
| e. Individuals who are overweight or obese | X | X | | |
| f. Individuals with eating disorders | X | X | X | |
| g. Individuals with orthopedic disorders/conditions | X | X | X | |
| h. Individuals with arthritic disorders | X | X | X | |
| i. Individuals with hypertension | X | X | X | |
| j. Individuals with hyperlipidemia | X | X | | |
| k. Individuals who are in post-cardiac rehabilitation | X | X | X | |
| l. Individuals with Type 1 diabetes | X | X | X | |
| m. Individuals with Type 2 diabetes | X | X | X | |

| Domain, Sub-category and Specific Task | Recall | Application | Analysis | Total Items |
|--|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| n. Individuals with respiratory disorders/conditions (asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, etc.) | X | X | X | |
| o. Individuals with osteoporosis/osteopenia | X | X | X | |
| p. Individuals with peripheral vascular disease | X | X | X | |
| q. Individuals training for a certain sport/competition (athletes) | X | X | X | |
| r. Individuals with back pain | X | X | X | |
| s. Individuals with fibromyalgia | X | X | X | |
| t. Individuals with cancer | X | X | X | |
| u. Individuals with neurological disorders (epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries, paralysis, Parkinson's disease, Down's syndrome, etc.) | X | X | X | |
| v. Individuals with metabolic syndrome | X | | | |
| w. Individuals who have had a stroke | X | X | X | |
| 2. Modify the exercise program to coincide with the limitations and capacities of a client with a specialized need or condition | X | X | X | |
| 3. Recognize when to refer a client to and/or seek input from an appropriate health care professional | X | X | X | |
| 3. TECHNIQUES OF EXERCISE Instruct a Client On Proper Exercise Technique (including body position, speed/control of movement, movement/range of motion, muscular involvement, breathing and spotting/safety guidelines) | 15 | 20 | 10 | |
| A. Machine Resistance Exercises (plate-loaded, selectorized, hydraulic, air, friction, tubing, etc.) | 2 | 4 | | 6 |
| B. Free Weight Exercises | 2 | 2 | 4 | 8 |
| C. Flexibility Exercises (static, ballistic, dynamic, PNF) | 1 | 3 | | 4 |
| D. Functional Training Exercises (stability ball, medicine ball, elastic tubing, balance, etc.) | 2 | 2 | 3 | 7 |
| E. Calisthenic and Body Weight Exercises (yoga, pull-up, push-up, torso exercises, etc.) | 2 | 3 | | 5 |
| F. Sport-specific/Performance-related Activities (plyometrics, sprinting, agility drills, reaction, etc.) | 2 | 2 | 2 | 6 |

| Domain, Sub-category and Specific Task | Recall | Application | Analysis | Total Items |
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| G. Cardiovascular Machines (treadmill, stationary bike, rowing machine, stair-stepper, elliptical trainer, etc.) | 2 | 2 | | 4 |
| H. Non-machine Cardiovascular Activities (running, walking, swimming, aerobic dancing, etc.) | 2 | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| 4. SAFETY, EMERGENCY PROCEDURES and LEGAL ISSUES | 6 | 8 | 4 | 18 |
| A. Safety Procedures | 2 | 3 | 1 | 6 |
| 1. Properly monitor and maintain exercise equipment | X | X | X | |
| 2. Create a safe exercise environment according to industry standards | X | X | X | |
| 3. Recognize symptoms relating to overtraining, overuse injuries, and temperature-induced illness | X | X | X | |
| B. Emergency Response | 2 | 3 | 1 | 6 |
| 1. Understand how to perform basic first aid | X | X | X | |
| 2. Understand how to perform CPR | X | X | | |
| 3. Understand how to use an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) | X | X | | |
| 4. Implement a plan to respond to an emergency in an exercise facility (fire, tornado, medical situation, etc.) | X | X | | |
| C. Professional, Legal and Ethical Responsibility | 2 | 2 | 2 | 6 |
| 1. Recognize litigation issues and circumstances | X | X | X | |
| 2. Maintain a professional client-personal trainer relationship | X | X | X | |
| 3. Maintain client-personal trainer confidentiality | X | X | | |
| Totals: | 41 | 65 | 34 | 140 |

† An “X” denotes that the examination may contain questions for the given task at the cognitive level indicated (i.e., recall, application, or analysis). The shaded boxes indicate that questions should NOT be written at that cognitive level for the given task.