

National Board Certification Personal Fitness Trainers

Current Standards for Personal Fitness Trainer Certifications

- Today, almost anyone can call themselves a "certified" personal fitness trainer.
- Each of the nearly 100 certifying organizations have different criteria for the educational requirements, courses, classes, workshops and tests (whether accredited or not) to become a certified personal fitness trainer.
- There is a woeful lack of national standards or defined scopes of practice regarding what knowledge or skills should be required of an individual to become a “certified” personal fitness trainer.
- The overall unprofessional perception of personal fitness trainers by medical and allied health professionals today has resulted in a general reluctance on their part to refer their patients to personal fitness trainers.

Is Accreditation a Solution?

- Certifying organizations are being asked to obtain third party accreditation of their tests.
- Accreditation of a test alone *may not* be the complete and best answer.
- Accreditation *does* address the way certifying organizations (1) develop and deploy their exams and (2) how they conduct business.
- Accreditation is regulation of process controls (administration) and not a check of course content and applications. Manufacturers of widgets and thing-a-ma-bobs can also receive accreditation for their manufacturing controls, but there is no concern for the functional capabilities of their products. Accreditation only attempts to ensure that what you claim to have is actually what you are offering the consumer. It does not indicate a good product.
- Accreditation *does not* address the educational course requirements, hands on skills or training needed to become a competent trainer.
- Accreditation *does not* allow practical examination of a candidate’s skills. Therefore, there is no review by your peers in the industry.
- Accreditation *does not* address the fact that our industry has no national standards or defined scopes of practice.
- Accreditation *does not* even review the organizations textbooks, courses or curriculum as it relates to their exam.
- The projected outcomes of the current accreditation model being promoted:
 - There will *still be multiple standards* for becoming a personal fitness trainer without a required education component.
 - There will be *no nationally defined accepted standards* for specific course content, instructor requirements and practical skills training.
 - Accredited organizations could actually *lose their accreditation* if they were to require their students to take prescribed courses, read prescribed textbooks or attend practical workshops prior to examination.

What would be a Better Approach?

- Mandatory nationally recognized educational requirements.
- Industry developed “hands-on” practical training.
- Written Exam based on nationally accepted standards.
- Practical examination conducted by the personal fitness trainer candidate’s peers.
- Adopt a very well established, proven approach that will protect the public and ensure competency through establishing comprehensive national standards for the personal training education/certification profession.
- All medical and health care professions require their candidates to complete a prescribed coursework and evaluation process:
- They also require reading specific textbooks and require learning the practical skills needed for their respective jobs.
- Then they must pass exams and finally, sit for standardized National Board examinations.
- This is how virtually all professions function.
 - Medicine (M.D., D.O., D.C., P.A., etc.)
 - Physical Therapy (P.T., P.T.A.)
 - Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.)
 - Lab Technician, Nurse, X-ray Technologists

What Is an Advantageous Solution?

The National Board of Fitness Examiners (NBFEE) was founded as a non-profit organization specifically to:

- Address the lack of national standards for becoming a personal fitness trainer
- Define the scopes of practice for the fitness profession
- Lobby that medicine, chiropractic and allied health professions refer their patients to competent, nationally board certified fitness professionals.
- Better ensure self regulation vs. government regulation
- Be a first major step for our industry to help personal fitness trainers become a legitimate branch of the allied health profession.

Professional Fitness Instructor Training is extremely excited to support this initiative toward gaining recognized, professional status.

How can I become a nationally accepted, board certified Personal Fitness Trainer?

- The National Board Examinations provide industry developed, standardized exams that allow the testing of personal fitness trainers in much the same way that doctors are now tested under the supervision of the National Board of Medical Examiners.
- The standards of practice to be tested are defined by the industry rather than by any one individual certifying organization.
- The tests will be both written (Part I) and practical (Part II).
- To ensure the fairness, validity, reliability and legal defensibility of the boards, the NBFEE contracted Thomson-Prometric, the largest third-party testing company in the world, to

help. Their team of psychometric examination experts assisted the NBFEE in the planning and development of Part I.

- Soon, the exams will be available at any of over 300 Thomson-Prometric testing centers around the U.S. An exam can be scheduled Monday through Friday rather than just 2 or 4 times per year, like most board exams in other professions.
- To further validate the NBFEE's examinations and testing procedures, the NBFEE sought assistance and guidance from the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME).
- Since 1915, the NBME has been responsible for overseeing and developing virtually all-medical examinations. They also have tremendous experience assisting similar allied health professions evolve.

When can I sit for the NBFEE National Board Exams?

- Various training and/or certification organizations have applied for and been granted status as an NBFEE "Provisional Affiliate".
- Professional Fitness Instructor Training has been granted status as a NBFEE "Provisional Affiliate".
- The PFIT Certified Personal Fitness Trainer course will help prepare you for the National Boards.
- PFIT cannot guarantee that everyone who completes the PFIT Certified Personal Fitness Trainer Course and passes the ACIM-PFIT Personal Fitness Trainer Certification Exam will pass the National Boards. It is definitely the best way to start preparing for the NBFEE National Board Exams.
- To be eligible to sit for the NBFEE Board Certification Exam the personal fitness trainer must have one of the following:
 - hold a current certification (ACIM-PFIT CPFT) from PFIT
 - current certification from another NBFEE Affiliate organization
 - an individual or trainer who meets other eligibility criteria
- The first written component (Part I) of the National Boards for Personal fitness trainers is scheduled to be offered in April 2005.
- The practical component (Part II) of the National Boards is currently being planned for development and scheduled to be deployed toward the end of 2005.
- The practical exams will be available at health clubs; universities and hospital based fitness facilities that are granted "Affiliate" status by the NBFEE.

What happens when I pass the NBFEE National Board Exam for Personal Fitness Trainer

- Those candidate who successfully completes the Boards will become a ***Registered Personal Fitness Trainer***
- Every month, the list of NBFEE Registered trainers will be passed on to local, state, regional and national chiropractic and medical associations.
- The registry will also be made available to the public, health clubs, insurance companies and employers responsible for hiring personal fitness trainers.
- It is the intent of the NBFEE to recommend that physicians, chiropractors and allied health professionals refer their patients to competent personal fitness trainers.

Conclusion:

- PFIT firmly believes that the National Board of Fitness Examiners is a much needed step that will take all Certified Personal Fitness Trainers to the next level of professionalism.
- PFIT will incorporate the NBFEE Board Certification Examination Criteria as part of our complete education/certification process.
- For class information, visit the PFIT Website at www.PFIT.org
- For more information, visit the NBFEE Website at www.NBFEE.org.

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