

# Personal Training: The Beginning of a New Era

For the past few years there have been undercurrents of change in our industry. This change has been driven in part by highly publicized cases where clients have died, allegedly after following the advice of an incompetent personal trainer. There has also been publicity generated by the media that brought to light how easy it is to “buy” a personal training certification through the Internet. To drive this point home, one reporter went on national television and by simply filling out a form and paying \$39.99 was able to print out a certification that indicated her **dog** was a certified personal trainer!

So obviously, some things **did** need to change in our industry! And things are changing, but it is a slow and often **confusing** process. There are many differing opinions on how this change should occur. It is difficult to know what to believe and what to look for when you want to become certified for the first time, renew an existing certification, or obtain advanced training. An example of the types of things you will run across when trying to compare different certifications is something like the following description:

*“... our organization is now only one of the few certifying organizations in the entire fitness industry whose programs have been accredited. NCCA is the accreditation body of the National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA). The NCCA accreditation serves as a benchmark on how organizations should conduct certification. Our organization initiated standards for fitness professionals in 1901 in the United States. The certification program has grown to become international in scope. We offer domestic versions at exam sites in Canada and the United States. For all other countries....”*

This sounds very impressive, and most of us would probably move this certification to the top of the list, or might even look no further, if we were in the market for a personal training certification. But if you really had an understanding of third-party accreditation with regard to certification and educational standards, along with knowledge of other available options, you might not be as influenced by descriptions like this. So the rest of this article is going to focus on explaining the different ways the industry is trying to raise the standards for the personal training profession. Hopefully this information will help you understand what is happening, and this understanding will help you make the best decisions about your training.

So first a little history on how the industry has arrived at the current state. In the aftermath of negative publicity mentioned earlier, and in an effort to help assure health club owners that the certified personal trainers they hire are well educated, the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) called together 5 of the larger certification groups and began working on an initiative to raise the standards for personal training. IHRSA is a trade association (just like the AAPT is a trade association for personal trainers) representing approximately 4,000 of an estimated 24,000 health clubs. That number can jump to 44,000 if other types of facilities like recreation centers, universities, JCCs, and YMCAs are included. This initiative formally began in late 2001 and the original certification groups invited to participate were **ACE, ACSM, AFAA, the Cooper Institute, and NSCA. NASM and ISSA** became involved a little later. Over the course of a couple of years, these groups met and as a result a recommendation, although never unanimously agreed to by the participating certifications, was made by IHRSA to its member clubs. The recommendation stated that the clubs should hire only personal trainers that were certified by organizations that were third-party accredited. IHRSA also stated in this announcement that the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), which is the accrediting body of the National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA), was at that time the *only* accrediting body recognized. But they said, *other accrediting bodies would be considered* as they were brought to IHRSA's attention. Certification organizations have been advised by IHRSA that they should be third-party accredited by December of 2005 to be recommended by IHRSA as appropriate certification organizations to their member clubs.

This recommendation with regard to third-party accreditation, and the lack of any choice other than the NCCA, has been the cause of much argument and confusion throughout the industry. And it has fostered a nasty competition, and jockeying for position and power, among certification organizations. At least two other third-party accrediting bodies have been put before IHRSA for consideration, both over a year ago and on more than one occasion. To date IHRSA has still to make a decision about endorsing other valid accrediting agencies, including those recognized by the U.S. Department of Education to grant accreditation.

This lack of a simple response by IHRSA has put certification organizations that were waiting for an answer in an awkward position due to the deadline they set for December of 2005, as it can reasonably take up to 18 months to become accredited with the NCCA. Another issue they say is that many of IHRSA's member clubs are denying jobs to **qualified, competent** personal trainers who are not certified by an organization that already has NCCA accreditation. In some cases it is reported that even trainers holding current certifications from organizations that are in the process of applying for NCCA are not being hired, although IHRSA's deadline for accreditation is December of 2005. So in actuality, no competent personal trainer holding a current certification from a nationally recognized organization should be turned away simply because that organization is not accredited (if the certification is one that was being honored by the club in the recent past). Another unfortunate result is that even clubs and facilities that are not IHRSA members are denying jobs to personal trainers who hold certification from organizations that were previously accepted in that club.

To one certification organization (AFAA) that is **already third-party accredited by an organization other than NCCA**, and to others that want more choices, the lack of a **timely** decision by IHRSA, in concert with their recommendation to member clubs with regard to accreditation, is viewed as unwarranted and as giving an unfair advantage to some certification organizations. A majority of the certifying groups have agreed, and come to a joint decision that IHRSA should support a **variety of approaches** for measuring and recognizing the knowledge and skill of fitness professionals. Many organizations support standardized testing by the National Board of Fitness Examiners (which will be discussed later in this article), which is now being implemented, and believe that licensing of fitness professionals at the state level may be forthcoming. These same groups are also asking questions about college programs. They point out that two and four year colleges now have programs to become a personal trainer, but they aren't accredited by NCCA. So they ask, will a student who puts two or four years into a college program not be qualified for a job at an IHRSA club? They say by ignoring these other approaches, and by imposing a single accreditation scheme on the entire fitness industry, IHRSA is not acting in the best interests of the industry or the public, which it serves.

Before we go any further, you need a "crash course" in third-party accreditation. First, let's look at accreditation that is concerned with testing or measurement. This is the type of accreditation that is getting all the current publicity. The NCCA (which is currently recommended by IHRSA) is an example of this type of accrediting body. Vital Research is another accrediting body that looks at the testing or measurement side of certification organizations. Accrediting bodies that are established to accredit certifications or tests do so using the principles of a science called psychometrics. Psychometrics is based on a set of standards (rules) that have been developed by specialists in this field who are called psychometricians. These standards do not vary and are used by all accrediting bodies that accredit tests. The premise behind this process is that if these psychometric rules are adhered to by a certification organization in the development of a test, then the test will be a fair assessment of the knowledge of the person taking the test. This type of accreditation **does not consider whether the knowledge base being tested is adequate** for the person to be safe and effective when working as a personal trainer. Instead its concern is whether the certification is accurately measuring the knowledge that the certification organization (i.e., ACE, AFAA, IFPA, NETA, NSCA, WITS, etc.) expects the person to have to pass the test. *What if the certification organization has a great test that is a fair assessment of your knowledge, but that knowledge is not what you need to be a safe and effective personal trainer??* That would be bad, huh? So we will look at accreditation of the training program or curriculum in a bit.

You might be wondering what the difference is between different accrediting organizations like NCCA and Vital Research, for example, if they both use the same psychometric rules or standards to accredit exams. There are differences not related to these standards that are instead fundamental philosophical differences. Susan Sterling at The Cooper Institute explains one such difference, along with her concerns regarding this difference. She writes: “NCCA states in their written material: *“A certification organization can offer educational materials for prospective candidates as long as the organization/agency sponsored education is not a required prerequisite to obtain the credential, or that other methods of preparation are not available.”* The Cooper Institute is a non-profit research **and** education center. Our mission is to educate and train, not simply be in the “testing” business. We require that students attend our classes and pass both knowledge and practical exams before we certify. If all training organizations turn into certification testers, who will **educate**? It is very naïve to think that candidates will pay our fees for education without a certification. I do not believe it is the intent of IHRSA to eliminate the educational organizations, but this may very well happen if NCCA is the only standard that is endorsed.”

To drive this required division home even more, it is noted that the NCCA standards for the accreditation of certification programs advise: “To avoid conflicts of interest between certification and education functions, the certification agency must **not** also be responsible for accreditation of educational or training programs or courses of study leading to the certification.” Many certification organizations that offer both the training courses and exam for certification (which is the majority of organizations in our industry) find this requirement unreasonable. They say they must totally reorganize their businesses into separate divisions or else have another company take over their testing.

But, probably the **largest** conflict, according to certification groups that feel that the NCCA is not the best choice for raising the standards in the industry, has to do with the issue of practical testing. This kind of testing proves that the student has not only acquired knowledge from a book, but can put that knowledge to use. For example, you might have memorized a list of rules with regard to how to correctly perform a squat, but can you yourself **perform** this exercise using safe form and can you **teach** and **monitor** clients to do the same? **Demonstrating** for a knowledgeable person that you can do so is a **practical test** of your knowledge/skill. Many certification organizations feel that the NCCA does not really support practical “hands-on” exams such as this. These organizations challenge that even though the NCCA says such tests are allowed, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to get such a test approved. This is because it can be difficult to assess performance on a test that is subjective (based on opinion) in nature. And since a hands-on practical is “judged” by another person, it is subjective.

Of the certification groups from our industry **currently** accredited by the NCCA, one offers questions that correspond with video segments assessing knowledge primarily in the exercise technique and client assessment areas, along with written questions that are based on scenarios that refer to a particular training situation. The other does not offer any practical exam, but instead suggests that the personal trainer attain six months of practical “hands on” experience prior to sitting for the exam. Groups disturbed with this approach point out that you can, however, pay an extra \$299 and sign up for a **non-required** course that is listed as a “Practical Course for the Personal Trainer”.

A majority of the certification organizations say the “simulated” video multiple-choice testing that they see as a common result of the NCCA process is unacceptable. In contrast, it is reported that Vital Research recognizes practical exams as an important element of certification and works diligently with organizations that want to offer such exams. Much care, they say, is taken to guarantee that the hands-on practical exam is valid and reliable. They declare the NCCA’s failure to recognize the true importance of this type of practical exam is fundamentally at odds with IHRSA’s stated mission of “raising the bar” for fitness certification. How they ask, does a program that awards certifications to fitness trainers without requiring that their practical skills be tested in

a “hands-on” setting benefit the public? No pilot or surgeon is allowed to practice his or her profession merely by demonstrating some proficiency on a simulator, and these certification organizations believe no fitness trainer should be allowed to do so either.

Of the certification organizations that have already applied for NCCA accreditation and waiting for approval, the approaches are varied, and some have reported that the provision of practical exams **is definitely** a difficult area of the accreditation process. Certifications that have looked into accreditation with, but to date have not formally applied with the NCCA, report what they see as unwarranted changes to their business organization (like the complete separation of testing and education) that must be made to meet the **non-psychometric standards** set forth by the NCCA, along with practical testing issues, as some of the biggest problems encountered. But they also say another dilemma is that the NCCA does not allow “grandfathering” – for example, if an organization obtains accreditation on January 1, 2005, those individuals who completed their program prior to January 1, 2005 are not “grandfathered in”, or considered to have graduated from an accredited program.

The following certification organizations believe that there should be other choices for accreditation in addition to the NCCA. They say their goal is to collectively raise the bar of professional certifications in our industry by providing strategies that ensure quality programming, but not at the expense of forcing all organizations into the same format, a format they believe may not best serve the industry. *They feel the next logical step for the industry should be to study the concept of national board exams and professional licensing.* **These organizations that specifically offer personal training certification are: AAI/ISMA** (American Aerobic Association International/International Sports Medicine Association), **AFAA** (Aerobics and Fitness Association of America), **AFPA** (American Fitness Professionals and Associates), **The Cooper Institute**, **ISSA** (International Sports Sciences Association), **NAFC** (National Association for Fitness Certification), **NCCPT** (National Council for Certified Personal Trainers), **NESTA** (National Endurance and Sports Trainers Association), **NETA** (National Exercise Trainers Association), **NGA** (National Gym Association), **NPTI** (National Personal Training Institute), **NSPA** (National Strength Professionals Association), **PFIT** (Professional Fitness Instructor Training), **SCW** (Sara City Workout) and **WITS** (World Instructor Training Schools) (**total 15**). *Other supporting educational organizations offering CEUs, advanced training, and related certifications are:* American Academy of Health and Fitness (AAHF), Aquatic Exercise Association (AEA), American Senior Fitness Association (ASFA), Madd Dog Athletic, Resist-a-Ball, and International Sports Conditioning Association (ISCA) (**grand total 21**).

To date **ACE** (American Council On Exercise) and **NSCA** (National Strength and Conditioning Association) are the only certification organizations (that specifically offer personal training certifications) to currently have NCCA accreditation. It is rumored that the NCCA awarded accreditation to the first for-profit certification in November, but a formal announcement has not been made. Both of these organizations are not-for-profit and do not directly offer educational programs. The NCCA has recently reorganized and has been accepting applications from for-profit organizations since the end of 2003. **ACSM** (American College of Sports Medicine), which is not-for-profit, along with the following for-profit organizations (**that offer personal training certification**) have also applied with the NCCA and are awaiting approval: **IFPA** (The International Fitness Professionals Association), **NASM** (National Academy of Sports Medicine), **NCCPT** (National Council for Certified Personal Trainers), **NCSF** (National Council of Strength and Fitness), **NESTA** (National Endurance and Sports Trainers Association) and **NFPT** (National Federation of Personal Trainers) (**total 9**). *There is one additional fitness related educational organization that has announced it is seeking NCCA accreditation:* Pilates Method Alliance, which is not-for-profit (**grand total 10**).

You might have noticed that the **NCCPT** and **NESTA** were listed in both of the above sections. John Platero, the owner of NCCPT, says he is **very much in support** of other options for raising the standards in the personal training industry, but has gone ahead with his application for NCCA accreditation because he feels he really has no option. He says he doubts though, that this sort of

third-party accreditation will do much to raise the standards for our industry in the way that is needed. He has promised to share his opinions and views in response to this article, and I look forward to hearing what he has to say. John Spencer Ellis, the owner of NESTA, is also planning to apply for NCCA accreditation, but says that doesn't mean that he feels that there shouldn't be other choices available. In addition, Dr. Ellis is supportive of the National Board of Fitness Examiners, which you will learn about in a bit.

Okay, so what about that other type of accreditation that was mentioned earlier? The second type of accreditation is concerned with the **training or education side** of certification programs. Before there can be a way to accredit the training or education programs, there have to be standards established to use as a "baseline" against which to measure. These national standards must first be established for the profession in question. One accrediting body that works with professional associations to establish educational standards and accredit programs is the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP). Many of you may not realize that the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) already sponsors a Committee within CAAHEP, the Committee on Accreditation for the Exercise Sciences. In July of 2004 that Committee established educational standards for baccalaureate level programs in exercise science and masters level programs in exercise physiology.

Recently, ACSM and the Committee on Accreditation for the Exercise Sciences asked that the profession of Personal Trainer be added to the CAAHEP system, and the CAAHEP Board of Directors approved that request in November. The next step will be development of educational standards for such programs. These programs could be at the certificate or the associate degree level (or both), depending upon the educational standards that are ultimately approved. CAAHEP policy does not allow for more than one Committee within the same profession, so if the field of personal training wishes eventually to have programs accredited by CAAHEP, it will have to be through the Committee on Accreditation for the Exercise Sciences.

There is one professional field within CAAHEP that has many parallels to our profession. In the Emergency Medical Services Profession there are four levels – first responder, Emergency Medical Technician (Basic), Emergency Medical Technician (Intermediate) and Paramedic. The first responder and EMT-Basic programs are shorter in duration and do not result in a degree. Thus, they don't lend themselves to a "full blown" accreditation process. So, CAAHEP's Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the EMS Professions has established a process whereby the educational standards provide guidance for all four levels, but the first responder and EMT-Basic levels are granted an "approval" from the Committee rather than an accreditation from CAAHEP. This lends a continuity to the EMS professions, allowing for a quality review of shorter term programs and a "career ladder" for those who may start with first responder or EMT-Basic and then wish to go on to pursue EMT-Intermediate or paramedic status.

The EMS Profession might be a good model for our profession to follow, as our non-degreed personal training programs are very much like the first responder and EMT-Basic programs. Additionally, the ACSM will be offering their first non-degreed personal training certification program beginning in 2005. With their move into the non-degreed area of training, it seems logical to expect that they will want to help the industry start a process whereby the educational standards that have already been established provide guidance for all levels of personal training, just like is done for the EMS Profession. Hopefully, these educational standards will also be coordinated with the "scopes of practice" established by the National Board of Fitness Examiners, which you will learn more about later.

**So currently there are no national educational standards established for the personal trainer programs at the non-degreed level.** This is thought to be unfortunate by many certification program directors that feel it is even more important to consider the **training side** of a program than the certification side. They also say there is a mistaken notion by some certification organizations that accreditation of their certification also guarantees adequate education standards. This mistaken belief they say may be based on the skill set survey (or jobs

skill analysis) that is part of the certification accreditation process. The NCCA standard related to this issue states: *“A job/practice analysis must be conducted leading to clearly delineated performance domains and tasks, associated knowledge and/or skills, and sets of content/item specifications to be used as the basis for developing each type of assessment instrument (e.g., multiple-choice, essay, oral examination).”*

This portion of the accreditation process is common to all certification accreditation, not just to the NCCA. And while it is conceded that it may improve the quality of the certification, is not intended to guarantee educational quality, but instead is needed for the test or exam construction. Currently the closest thing the industry has to national education standards for non-degree programs would appear to be the “scopes of practice” that industry experts of the National Board of Fitness Examiners (NBFEE) have identified for the national board exam.

The National Board of Fitness Examiners has been mentioned more than once so far, and it is the other option, besides third-party accreditation, that is currently being considered to help raise the standards for the personal training industry. There are articles available to you through the AAPT about the NBFEE. If you haven't already, you ought to read them, because by March / April 2005 the first national board exams for personal trainers will become available. **You should understand that the NBFEE is not an accrediting body or educational organization.** Instead, its purpose is to provide **nationally standardized examinations** for different levels of personal training based on scopes of practice, no matter what school or program you attend – a system that all other health professions utilize. In fact the NBFEE has been patterned after the National Board of Medical Examiners, which certifies all physicians (medical doctors). The NBME will also be providing oversight for the NBFEE.

To be eligible to sit for the national boards, a personal trainer is required to hold a current certification from a national certification organization **that is affiliated with the NBFEE**, or graduate from a two or four year program with a related degree. To become affiliated with the NBFEE, the organization must submit its curriculum for review. This is simply so the NBFEE can determine if an organization's curriculum adequately prepares their students for the board. It's also necessary for the NBFEE to “officially” verify that trainers applying to take national boards do indeed hold a current certification. I'm sure you know some trainers fake their certifications or scan their friends and substitute their name! Like college transcripts, the NBFEE will request an official verification of the trainer's status from certification organizations.

As national board statistics become available, the NBFEE may make suggestions on ways to improve a certification organization's curriculum based on the strengths and weakness of how their students perform on the exam, but organizations are under no obligation to make the suggested changes. The assumption is that eventually those certifications that are doing the best job training and educating their personal trainers will flourish because their graduates will be well prepared for the national board test. Equally, students from those certification organizations that are not sufficiently preparing their students will fail. In time, those organizations will not last. It is not a requirement of the NBFEE that affiliate certification organizations hold third-party accreditation because the NBFEE has its own curriculum review process. However, the NBFEE does not discourage third-party accreditation of either the exam or education programs of certification organizations.

While it's not yet mandatory for a certified personal trainer to become board certified, the NBFEE Registered Personal Fitness Examination is the only exam that is based on national standards and scopes of practice. Something else to consider, the NBFEE will provide a list of NBFEE registered trainers to the public and medical organizations. They feel physicians and chiropractors understand national boards and will aggressively lobby to national, state and regional associations that they refer patients to board registered trainers.

There is ever growing support for the NBFEE from the industry, public, medicine, and the media. Many agree with the NBFEE that our industry is best served by developing national standards,

then testing the knowledge and skills of personal trainers nationwide, no matter what certification program they took or where they live. This process is not a new one. Most every recognized profession, medical or allied health care group, utilizes National Boards. And if individual states resort to licensing or regulating personal trainers, more than likely they will use a standardized National Board as a prerequisite for licensure, like other health professions.

Recently, the National Board of Fitness Examiners (NBFEE) met with the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME). Since 1911, the NBME has become one of the largest, most credible and respected testing organizations in the world. As you already learned, they test the knowledge and skills of all physicians and literally dozens of medical specialties, as well as most allied health professions. The NBME has agreed to assist the NBFEE in the development of both specialty and skills based, (hands-on) practical exams for the fitness profession, something that they say has been needed, but lacking in our industry since it's inception. The NBME and the NBFEE are engaged in preliminary discussions and planning that will allow certification organizations to assist in the delivery of practical exams for personal trainers.

Most certification groups have joined with the NBFEE and the NBME in concluding that hands-on practical exams, along with a nationally standardized test, are in the best interest of protecting the public and the fitness industry and will be registering their programs with the NBFEE in anticipation of the board exams availability in early 2005. **If National Board certification is a credential you want to pursue, you should be aware that some certification groups have not yet decided to affiliate with the NBFEE.**

So in conclusion, you have lots to consider when choosing a certification that goes beyond price, convenience, **and even whether or not the program is a good one.** Choose the certification you want to pursue based on what is right for YOU. Do your homework and you will make a wise and informed decision. There is no one certification that is best for everyone, but there is one that is best for **YOU!**

If you would like to learn more, there are links provided below for all the organizations discussed in this article, including the certification organizations offering personal training certification. Links to the most important pages are supplied that will hopefully make it easier for you. If the link doesn't work when you "click", then copy and paste the address that has also been supplied.

#### **CAAHEP**

CAAHEP Home

<http://www.caahep.org/caahep/>

Obtain Accreditation

<http://www.caahep.org/caahep/accredit.asp>

Exercise Science

<http://www.caahep.org/caahep/accredit.asp?pdraft=yes&doc=EXS>

Standards

<http://www.caahep.org/caahep/accredit/40802ExerSciStandard.pdf>

Exercise Physiology

<http://www.caahep.org/caahep/accredit.asp?pdraft=yes&doc=EXP>

Standards

<http://www.caahep.org/caahep/accredit/Exercise%20Phys%20Final%20Standards.pdf>

#### **National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians**

The National Registry is a private certifying organization. The various state offices of EMS or like agencies serve as the state licensing agencies. Certification by the National Registry is a distinct

process from licensure; and it serves the important independent purpose of identifying for the public, state licensure agencies and employers, those individuals who have successfully completed the Registry's educational requirements and demonstrated their skills and abilities in the mandated examinations. Furthermore, the National Registry's tracking of adverse licensure actions and criminal convictions provides an important source of information, which protects the public and aids in the mobility of EMT providers.

NREMT - General Information

[http://www.nremt.org/about/gen\\_info\\_overview.asp](http://www.nremt.org/about/gen_info_overview.asp)

Legal Opinion - Certification v. Licensure

[http://www.nremt.org/about/Legal\\_Opinion.asp](http://www.nremt.org/about/Legal_Opinion.asp)

EMS Education Agenda for the Future: A Systems Approach (Final Version)

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/ems/EdAgenda/final/agenda6-00.htm>

### **The National Board of Fitness Examiners (NBFEE)**

The National Board of Fitness Examiners (NBFEE) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to ensure to the public that qualified fitness professionals who have successfully passed the National Board examination have achieved an approved level of competency in the health and fitness industry. The NBFEE promotes the services of qualified fitness professions as a viable means of improving public health.

<http://www.nbfe.org/>

<http://www.afpafitness.com/NBFEEtimeline.htm>

[http://www.nbfe.org/splash/NBFEE\\_Position\\_Statement.pdf](http://www.nbfe.org/splash/NBFEE_Position_Statement.pdf)

<http://www.nbfe.org/survey.cfm>

### **National Board of Medical Examiners (the NBME is providing oversight to the NBFEE)**

<http://www.nbme.org/about/about.asp>

<http://www.nbme.org/programs/hp.asp>

### **NOCA/NCCA**

<http://www.noca.org/about/nocamission.htm>

<http://www.noca.org/ncca/accreditation.htm>

<http://www.noca.org/ncca/nccavision.htm>

<http://www.noca.org/docs/StndFeb02.pdf>

<http://www.noca.org/ncca/accredorg.htm>

### **Vital Research, LLC**

About

[http://www.vitalresearch.com/about\\_us.html](http://www.vitalresearch.com/about_us.html)

Testing Services

[http://www.vitalresearch.com/testing\\_services.html](http://www.vitalresearch.com/testing_services.html)

Test Standards

[http://www.vitalresearch.com/test\\_standards.html](http://www.vitalresearch.com/test_standards.html)

Health Care Research & Evaluation

[http://www.vitalresearch.com/health\\_care.html](http://www.vitalresearch.com/health_care.html)

(notice that AFAA is listed on this page as a client for certification exam validation processes)

## **PERSONAL TRAINING CERTIFICATION ORGANIZATIONS**

**AAAI/ISMA:** American Aerobic Association International/International Sports Medicine Association  
<http://www.aaai-ismafitness.com>

**ACE:** American Council On Exercise  
<http://www.acefitness.org/default.aspx>

**ACSM: American College of Sports Medicine**  
<http://www.acsm.org>

**AFAA:** Aerobics and Fitness Association of America  
<http://www.afa.com>

**AFPA:** American Fitness Professionals and Associates  
<http://www.afpafitness.com>

**AFTA:** American Fitness Training of Athletics  
<http://www.aftacertification.com>

**The Cooper Institute**  
<http://www.cooperinst.org>

**IART:** International Association of Resistance Trainers  
<http://www.i-a-r-t.com>

**IFPA:** The International Fitness Professionals Association  
<http://www.ifpa-fitness.com>

**IFTA:** Interactive Fitness Trainers of America  
<http://www.ifta-fitness.com/Product.asp?ID=PT>

**ISSA:** International Sports Sciences Association  
<http://www.issaonline.com>

**ISFTA:** International Sports and Fitness Trainers Association  
<http://www.isfta.com>

**NASM:** National Academy of Sports Medicine  
<http://www.nasm.org>

**NAFC:** National Association for Fitness Certification  
<http://www.body-basics.com>

**NCCPT:** National Council for Certified Personal Trainers  
<http://www.nccpt.com>

**NCSF:** National Council of Strength and Fitness  
<http://www.ncsf.org>

**NESTA:** National Endurance and Sports Trainers Association  
<http://www.nestacertified.com>

**NETA** (Formerly NDEITA): National Exercise Trainers Association  
<http://www.netafit.org>

**NFPT:** National Federation of Personal Trainers  
<http://www.nfpt.com>

**NGA:** National Gym Association  
<http://www.nationalgym.com>

**NSCA:** National Strength and Conditioning Association  
<http://www.nscs-lift.org>

**NSPA:** National Strength Professionals Association  
<http://www.nspainc.com>

**NPTI:** The National Personal Training Institute  
<http://www.nationalpersonaltraininginstitute.com/locations/index.asp>

**SCW:** Sara City Workout  
<http://www.saracity.com>

**PFIT:** Professional Fitness Instructor Training  
<http://www.pfit.org>

**WITS:** World Instructor Training Schools  
<http://www.witseducation.com>

**YMCA** (YMCA of the USA)  
[www.ymca.net](http://www.ymca.net)