National Exercise Trainers Association
Group Exercise Instructor
Exam Content Outline
October 2021

Target Audience Statement:

Group Exercise Instructors are fitness professionals who promote enhanced health, wellness, and fitness. They accomplish this by developing and instructing group exercise classes designed to safely and effectively meet the unique fitness goals of the individuals they serve. Group Exercise Instructors apply knowledge and skill to motivate and facilitate positive outcomes among diverse populations using a variety of class formats and exercise modalities.

Group Exercise Instructor Certification Exam Specifications	
Area of Responsibility	Number of Items
I. Group Exercise Class Design	34
II. Group Exercise Class Implementation	33
III. Group Exercise Participant Engagement	22
IV. Professional Responsibility	11
Total Scored Exam Items	100

I. Group Exercise Class Design

A. Design a group exercise class that conforms to the specific class format and objectives.

Knowledge of:

1. Principles of exercise training (e.g., overload, specificity, progression, variation) and ACSM guidelines for exercise program design (e.g., cardiorespiratory, muscular fitness, flexibility training, balance)
2. Exercise-related anatomy, kinesiology, biomechanics, and physiology
3. Components of an exercise class (e.g., warm-up, conditioning, cool-down) and their purpose
4. Exercise guidelines, contraindications, and considerations for special populations (e.g., pregnancy, older adults, youth/adolescents) and medical conditions (e.g., arthritis, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, osteoporosis)
5. Activity- and exercise-specific benefits, indications, contraindications, risks, and precautions for the general population
6. Strategies for promoting body awareness and mindfulness (e.g., meditation, breathing techniques)
7. Strategies for recovery and restoration (e.g., stretch, self-myofascial release, rest)
8. Teaching methods (e.g., linear progression, add-on)
9. Strategies for accommodating various learning styles (e.g., visual, auditory, kinesthetic)
10. Safe and effective exercise technique (e.g., joint alignment, range of motion, breathing pattern)
11. Applicable facility guidelines and safety concerns (e.g., music volume, room temperature, room capacity, equipment/participant spacing)
12. Selection of delivery methods (e.g., in-person, virtual) and their implications for group exercise class design (e.g., room set up, camera placement, lighting, color contrast, lag time, physical cueing)

B. Select safe and appropriate equipment, music, and movements consistent with the class format and objectives.

Knowledge of:

1. Appropriate selection and use of group exercise equipment
2. Considerations related to music selection (e.g., structure, genre, tempo, lyrics)
3. Choreography development
4. Music licensing and copyright laws
5. Exercise-related anatomy, kinesiology, biomechanics, and physiology
6. Exercise guidelines, contraindications, and considerations for special populations (e.g., pregnancy, older adults, youth/adolescents) and medical conditions (e.g., arthritis, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, osteoporosis)

C. Develop appropriate modifications to accommodate various abilities, fitness levels, special populations, and medical considerations.

Knowledge of:

1. Activity- and exercise-specific benefits, indications, contraindications, risks, and precautions for the general population
2. Exercise-related anatomy, kinesiology, biomechanics, and physiology
3. Exercise guidelines, contraindications, and considerations for special populations (e.g., pregnancy, older adults, youth/adolescents) and medical conditions (e.g., arthritis, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, osteoporosis)
4. Principles of exercise training (e.g., overload, specificity, progression, variation) and ACSM guidelines for exercise program design (cardiorespiratory, muscular fitness, resistance, flexibility training, balance)
5. Physical activity recommendations (e.g., Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, ACSM/AHA/CDC Consensus Statements) for improving overall health
6. Safe and effective exercise technique (e.g., joint alignment, range of motion, breathing pattern)
7. Appropriate progressions, regressions, and modifications to meet the needs of all participants
8. Appropriate selection and use of group exercise equipment

II. Group Exercise Class Implementation

A. Assess the condition of the classroom environment and equipment.

Knowledge of:

1. Appropriate selection and use of group exercise equipment
2. Applicable facility guidelines and safety concerns (e.g., music volume, room temperature, room capacity, equipment/participant spacing)

B. Develop an awareness of participants' apparent health and fitness levels.

Knowledge of:

1. Exercise guidelines, contraindications, and considerations for special populations (e.g., pregnancy, older adults, youth/adolescents) and medical conditions (e.g., arthritis, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, osteoporosis)
2. Activity- and exercise-specific benefits, indications, contraindications, risks, and precautions for the general population
3. Recognition of and appropriate response to exercise-related medical conditions and emergencies (e.g., myocardial infarction, stroke, heat-related illness)

C. Educate class participants about appropriate exercise intensity and methods for monitoring it.

Knowledge of:

1. Safe and effective exercise technique (e.g., joint alignment, range of motion, breathing pattern, breathing pattern)
2. Methods for measuring and monitoring exercise intensity (e.g., target heart rate, rating of perceived exertion)
3. Principles of exercise training (e.g., overload, specificity, progression, variation) and ACSM guidelines for exercise program design (e.g., cardiorespiratory, muscular fitness, resistance, flexibility training, balance)
4. Exercise guidelines, contraindications, and considerations for special populations (e.g., pregnancy, older adults, youth/adolescents) and medical conditions (e.g., arthritis, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, osteoporosis)
5. Physical activity recommendations (e.g., Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, ACSM/AHA/CDC Consensus Statements) for improving overall health
6. Exercise-related anatomy, kinesiology, biomechanics, and physiology
7. Components of an exercise class (e.g., warm-up, conditioning, cool-down) and their purpose
8. Appropriate selection and use of group exercise equipment
9. Activity- and exercise-specific benefits, indications, contraindications, risks, and precautions for the general population
10. Signs and symptoms of overtraining and overuse (repetitive strain injury) syndromes
11. Effective verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, including appropriate cueing and feedback

D. Demonstrate safe and effective movement.

Knowledge of:

1. Safe and effective exercise technique (e.g., joint alignment, range of motion, breathing pattern)
2. Methods for measuring and monitoring exercise intensity (e.g., target heart rate, rating of perceived exertion)
3. Principles of exercise training (e.g., overload, specificity, progression, variation) and ACSM guidelines for exercise program design (e.g., cardiorespiratory, muscular fitness, resistance, flexibility training, balance)
4. Exercise guidelines, contraindications, and considerations for special populations (e.g., pregnancy, older adults, youth/adolescents) and medical conditions (e.g., arthritis, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, osteoporosis)
5. Physical activity recommendations (e.g., Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, ACSM/AHA/CDC Consensus Statements) for improving overall health
6. Signs and symptoms of overtraining and overuse (repetitive strain injury) syndromes
7. Appropriate progressions, regressions, and modifications to meet the needs of all participants
8. Appropriate selection and use of group exercise equipment
9. Effective verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, including appropriate cueing and feedback
10. Exercise-related anatomy, kinesiology, biomechanics, and physiology
11. Teaching methods (e.g., linear progression, add-on)
12. Considerations related to music selection (e.g., structure, genre, tempo, lyrics)
13. Choreography development

E. Monitor participants for safe practices based on their fitness level.

Knowledge of:

1. Recognition of and appropriate response to exercise-related medical conditions and emergencies (e.g., myocardial infarction, stroke, heat-related illness)
2. Fitness level of the group being taught
3. Safe and effective exercise technique (e.g., joint alignment, range of motion, breathing pattern)
4. Strategies for improving form and technique
5. Appropriate selection and use of group exercise equipment
6. Methods for measuring and monitoring exercise intensity (e.g., target heart rate, rating of perceived exertion)
7. Exercise-related anatomy, kinesiology, biomechanics, and physiology

F. Adapt instruction to promote safe and effective participant performance.

Knowledge of:

1. Appropriate progressions, regressions, and modifications to meet the needs of all participants
2. Exercise-related anatomy, kinesiology, biomechanics, and physiology
3. Fitness level of the group being taught
4. Exercise guidelines, contraindications, and considerations for special populations (e.g., pregnancy, older adults, youth/adolescents) and medical conditions (e.g., arthritis, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, osteoporosis)
5. Principles of exercise training (e.g., overload, specificity, progression, variation) and ACSM guidelines for exercise program design (e.g., cardiorespiratory, muscular fitness, resistance, flexibility training, balance)
6. Physical activity recommendations (e.g., Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, ACSM/AHA/CDC Consensus Statements) for improving overall health
7. Signs and symptoms of overtraining and overuse (repetitive strain injury) syndromes
8. Components of an exercise class (e.g., warm-up, conditioning, cool-down) and their purpose
9. Appropriate selection and use of group exercise equipment
10. Activity- and exercise-specific benefits, indications, contraindications, risks, and precautions for the general population
11. Effective verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, including appropriate cueing and feedback

G. Manage class progression and continuity.

Knowledge of:

1. Components of an exercise class (e.g., warm-up, conditioning, cool-down) and their purpose
2. Time management strategies
3. Appropriate progressions, regressions, and modifications to meet the needs of all participants
4. Effective verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, including appropriate cueing and feedback
5. Methods for measuring and monitoring exercise intensity (e.g., target heart rate, rating of perceived exertion)
6. Exercise guidelines, contraindications, and considerations for special populations (e.g., pregnancy, older adults, youth/adolescents) and medical conditions (e.g., arthritis, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, osteoporosis)
7. Principles of exercise training (e.g., overload, specificity, progression, variation) and ACSM guidelines for exercise program design (e.g., cardiorespiratory, muscular fitness, resistance, flexibility training, balance)

III. Group Exercise Participant Engagement

A. Facilitate a welcoming and inclusive exercise environment to meet the unique needs of a diverse group of participants.

Knowledge of:

1. Strategies for creating a fun and welcoming environment
2. Principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion
3. Strategies for interacting with diverse groups of individuals with varying backgrounds and needs
4. Hierarchy of human needs (e.g., Maslow, Erickson)
5. Strategies for determining and accommodating participants' knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests
6. NETA Code of Ethics
7. Theoretical models of behavior change (e.g., transtheoretical model)
8. Exercise guidelines, contraindications, and considerations for special populations (e.g., pregnancy, older adults, youth/adolescents) and medical conditions (e.g., arthritis, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, osteoporosis)
9. Effective verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, including appropriate cueing and feedback
10. Considerations related to music selection (e.g., structure, genre, tempo, lyrics)
11. Strategies for accommodating various learning styles (e.g., visual, auditory, kinesthetic)
12. Appropriate selection and use of group exercise equipment
13. Applicable facility guidelines and safety concerns (e.g., music volume, room temperature, room capacity, equipment/participant spacing)

B. Use effective communication skills to establish rapport and encourage group cohesiveness.

Knowledge of:

1. Effective verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, including appropriate cueing and feedback
2. Strategies for interacting with diverse groups of individuals with varying backgrounds and needs
3. Role modeling behavior
4. Relationship building strategies
5. Strategies for accommodating various learning styles (e.g., visual, auditory, kinesthetic)

C. Apply motivational strategies to promote class participation and encourage positive and lasting behavior change.

Knowledge of:

1. Principles of motivation and exercise adherence
2. Theoretical models of behavior change (e.g., transtheoretical model)
3. Strategies for effective goal setting
4. Role modeling behavior
5. Effective verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, including appropriate cueing and feedback
6. Considerations related to music selection (e.g., structure, genre, tempo, lyrics)
7. Choreography development

IV. Professional Responsibility

A. Adhere to industry and facility guidelines, legal requirements, and professional ethics to protect the interest of participants and to minimize risk exposures.

Knowledge of:

1. NETA Code of Ethics
2. Music licensing and copyright laws
3. Activity- and exercise-specific benefits, indications, contraindications, risks, and precautions for the general population
4. Applicable facility guidelines and safety concerns (e.g., music volume, room temperature, room capacity, equipment/participant spacing)

B. Maintain required professional and safety certifications through appropriate continuing education to provide a safe environment for participants.

Knowledge of:

1. Credible sources of information, education providers, and professional organizations
2. Requirements for the renewal of professional and safety (e.g., CPR) certification(s)
3. NETA Code of Ethics

C. Respond to emergencies, incidents, and injuries.

Knowledge of:

1. Recognition of and appropriate response to exercise-related medical conditions and emergencies (e.g., myocardial infarction, stroke, heat-related illness)
2. Signs and symptoms of and immediate care (e.g., P.R.I.C.E) for acute injuries (e.g., sprain, strain, fractures)
3. Written emergency response procedures (e.g., activation of emergency medical services, facility emergency response plan, pre-emergency medical preparation strategies)
4. Exercise guidelines, contraindications, and considerations for special populations (e.g., pregnancy, older adults, youth/adolescents) and medical conditions (e.g., arthritis, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, osteoporosis)

D. Abide by the GEI scope of practice and other limitations based on education, credentials, training, and experience.

Knowledge of:

1. NETA Code of Ethics
2. Basic principles of nutrition, *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, recommended healthy eating patterns and food guidance graphics
3. Principles of exercise training (e.g., overload, specificity, progression, variation) and ACSM guidelines for exercise program design (e.g., cardiorespiratory, muscular fitness, flexibility training, balance)
4. Principles and guidelines (e.g., ACSM, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, National Weight Control Registry) of safe and effective weight management
5. Theoretical models of behavior change (e.g., transtheoretical model)