

EUROPEAN

STANDARDS

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EuropeActive Occupational Standards Summary Document

Exercise for Health Specialist (EQF Level 5)

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Exercise for Health Specialist

Definition

An Exercise for Health Specialist's role is exercise training through the design and provision of personalised exercise/physical activity programs for users with a range of chronic health conditions. This includes detailed consultation, health screening and fitness assessment, user-specific programme design, monitoring, and evaluation of exercise programme effectiveness relevant to goal achievement and specific health condition (s). An Exercise for Health Specialist should be able to communicate effectively with healthcare professionals about a user's health using correct medical terminology, and with an understanding of the standard management options for a given health condition. They can also communicate with users with chronic health conditions and take a holistic approach to their well-being. This includes advising on healthy lifestyles, in addition to exercises relevant to the specific health condition and associated medication and, with respect to contraindications to exercise and professional boundaries.

Scope

An Exercise for Health Specialist can work with individuals (and groups if they hold this prior competency) with a range of chronic health conditions determined to be of low or moderate risk of an adverse event.

(Low risk adult - a person with minor, stable physical limitations or two or less chronic disease risk factors. Moderate risk adult - a person with significant physical limitation related to chronic disease or disability. Based on: NHS. Exercise Referral Systems: National Quality Assurance Framework. 2001.)

This occupation is informally referenced to the European Qualification Framework (EQF) level 5.

Specific pre-requisites

EQF Level 4 Personal Trainer skills and knowledge or equivalent accredited certification.

EQF Level 3 Group Fitness Instructor or equivalent accredited certification if the Exercise Specialist wants to deliver group exercise.

If aquatic activities are planned, the adequate qualifications for conducting exercise in water are required.

At least 3 months fulltime equivalency of working as an Exercise Professional.

Level of entry on to EREPS

Level 5

Technical expert group members and external consultation experts

These standards were fully adopted within the process of external consultation and afterwards approved by the EuropeActive Professional Standards Committee.

Chairman of EHFA Standards Council (2012):

- *Prof. Alfonso Jimenez, PhD, CSCS, NSCA-CPT*

Technical Expert Group (2012):

- *Dr. Christoffer Andersen, Fit&Sund, Denmark (TEG Leader)*
- *Stephen Wilson, FIA, UK (TEG Secretary)*
- *Dr. Antonino Bianco, University of Palermo, Italy*
- *Dr. Andrea Ermolao, University of Padova, Italy*
- *Ben Gittus, SkillsActive, UK*
- *Steven Mann, FIA Research Institute, UK*
- *Prof. Rita Santos-Rocha, ESDRM, Portugal*
- *Dr. John Searle, FIA Chief Medical Officer, UK*

Experts who participated in the external consultation process:

- *Dr. Oscar Garcia, European University of Madrid, Spain*
- *Dr. Silvano Zanuso, Technogym Research Department, Italy*
- *Dr. Anders Nedergaard, Fit&Sund, Denmark*
- *Sabine Braunegger, Body Street, Germany*
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Technical expert group (2020 Review)

- *Anna Szumilewicz, PhD, PSC Deputy Director – Standards, Gdansk University of Physical Education and Sport (Poland)*
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- *Atle Arntzen, Personal Trainer Manager, Norway*
- *Anna Bogdanova, Personal Trainer, PSC Deputy Director - EREPS, EuropeActive, Denmark*
- *Dr. Michael Harrison, PSC Deputy Director - Accreditation, EuropeActive, Belgium; Waterford Institute of Technology, Ireland*
- *Colin Huffen, Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity, SportPark Loughborough University, United Kingdom*
- *David Kingsbury, Personal Trainer, United Kingdom*
- *Prof. Simona Pajaujiene, PhD, Lithuanian Association of Health and Fitness Clubs (LSKA), Lithuanian Sports University, Lithuania*
- *Ben Pratt, Nordic Fitness Education, Iceland*
- *Prof. Rita Santos Rocha, PhD, ESDRM-IPS - Sport Sciences School of Rio Maior - Polytechnic Institute of Santarém, Rio Maior, Portugal*
- *Dipanda Silva, Personal Training Director in VivaGym, Fitness Hut, Portugal*

Technical expert group (2023 Review of essential skills)

- *Anna Szumilewicz, PhD, PSC Deputy Director – Standards, Gdansk University of Physical Education and Sport (Poland) – TEG Chair*
- *Julian Berriman, PSC Director, MA, EuropeActive (UK)*
- *Kelby Jongen, Co-Owner bij Fitness Education Group (Netherlands)*
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- *Ben Pratt, Nordic Fitness Education, Iceland*
- *Dipanda Silva, Personal Training Director in VivaGym, Fitness Hut (Portugal)*
- *Sarah Durnford, Instructor Experience Development Director, Les Mills UK (UK)*
- *Espen Arntzen, Founder and CEO of the Academy of Personal Training and Wellness Health and Technology (Norway)*
- *Marie-Veronique Bernard, Head of Human Resources, Basic Fit*

Essential skills of an Exercise for Health Specialist

Sector indicator	Skill (this professional is able to:)	Explanation
Service delivery	On board new users	Provide an essential new users fitness onboarding process to ensure understanding of fitness club rules/policies. Provide all users with a fitness club induction in the safe and effective use of fitness equipment.
	Facilitate user motives and training goals related to the specific chronic health condition (s)	Facilitate individual motives and resulting short, medium- and long-term fitness and health goals together with other health professionals who may be advising on exercise interventions
	Collect detailed user information, particularly in relation to the user's specific chronic health condition (s)	Collect detailed medical, lifestyle and other information and advise users of correct procedures, protocols, and risks prior to commencing physical assessment and exercising, taking into account users' specific health condition.
	Perform health screening and fitness assessments, taking into account the user's specific chronic health condition (s)	Carry out appropriate screening and functional and physical fitness assessments, including risk stratification for users with specific health conditions and interpret results. Obtain medical consent to exercise when required as determined by screening protocols.
	Design exercise programmes following currently accepted exercise and health guidelines in relation to a specific chronic health condition (s)	Develop a range of exercise programmes, that are well matched to the users' chronic health condition (s), abilities, needs and preferences, following currently accepted exercise and health guidelines and taking into account any health professional recommendations, including the possible use of medication.
	Plan and prepare an individual exercise session	Plan the exercise session suitable for the needs of the users, including the structure of the session, training variables and necessary equipment, in relation to a specific chronic health condition (s).
	Conduct exercise sessions and provide safe instruction	Conduct safe and effective exercise sessions, providing instruction on exercise performance that follows correct and accepted exercise technique guidelines, as part of an ongoing long-term exercise programme focused on a specific chronic health condition (s).
	Adapt exercise	Apply relevant exercise adaptations or options to facilitate needs, capabilities, and exercise progression as well as, improvements in an individual user's health status and specific chronic health condition (s).
	Provide and gain user's feedback, monitor, evaluate and modify exercise programmes in relation to any change in user health status	Using users' feedback and appropriate assessment tools monitor and evaluate, and where necessary, modify individual sessions and the overall exercise programme, in relation to any change in their health status, if necessary following health professional advice.
Meeting health and safety requirements	Ensure user's safety	Observe users at all times and inform them where necessary about health and safety requirements and emergency procedures and, be able to deal with unforeseen accidents and emergencies.
	Observe and correct users' exercise performance	Observe users and offer appropriate corrections to ensure equipment set up, exercise techniques and related procedures are safe and effective.

Communication, motivation and user service	Communicate with users with a chronic health condition (s) regarding their training	Develop rapport and effective communication (i.e. constructive and positive feedback) in order to support individuals with a chronic health condition (s) to begin, adhere and /or return to exercise programmes.
	Motivate users with chronic health condition (s) to maintain their commitment to the exercise programme	Use motivational tools during and between sessions to maintain commitment and accountability of users with chronic health condition (s) to the exercise programme in the long-term and, to support the behavioural change process. Identify psychological barriers and commonly held beliefs of individuals with chronic health conditions to increasing physical activity.
	Provide information on fitness training programmes	Provide clients with information on the characteristics and benefits of participation in given fitness training programmes.
	Promote a healthy lifestyle in populations with chronic health conditions	Provide information about a healthy lifestyle and the benefits of physical activity in the management of chronic health conditions.
	Promote user referral	Encourage and invite users to bring friends, family and others to fitness activities.
Equipment and tools (including digital technology)	Select equipment for a fitness session	Use equipment to conduct a fitness session, ensuring the efficiency, safety and attractiveness of different exercises and, compliance with industry and national and international guidelines for normal operating procedures.
	Use digital technology	Use appropriate digital technology (e.g. mobile apps, wearables, online software) and artificial intelligence to better individualize the exercise programme for users with chronic health conditions, track their general activity levels, increase accountability, provide beneficial information, and enhance exercise participation and adherence.
Environment	Select and maintain a safe exercise environment	Assess risks to select and ensure the provision of a safe and clean exercise environment, whether delivering live or online, indoor or outdoor.
	Promote principles of sustainability	Identify the factors effecting the environmental impact of their role and how to improve that impact. Promote and implement sustainable practices.
Professional Technical Capacity	Demonstrate correct exercise technique	Display perfect exercise technique at all times (posture, range of motion, control, timing and form), especially for exercises performed with fitness equipment.

Professional Attitude	Demonstrate professional conduct	Work within the parameters given at EQF level 5, recognizing the standards and professional limitations that this provides, and ensuring essential personal skills and knowledge to be an Exercise for Health Specialist are maintained and updated in line with industry recognised ethical codes of practice. Be a positive role model at all times and keep up to date with industry developments.
	Cooperate with other professionals, in particular with health professionals, in relation to the users' chronic health condition (s)	Cooperate with other professionals, including health professionals, to implement proper exercise programmes for users with a chronic health condition (s). Communicate effectively with healthcare professionals about user's health using correct medical terminology, and with an understanding of the standard management options for a given health condition.
	Comply with applicable legal regulations	Comply with applicable legal regulations regarding the professional tasks of an Exercise for Health Specialist.
	Personal data management	Ensure confidentiality and management of data in compliance with national legislation, including data protection requirements.
	Demonstrate professional responsibility	Ensure that users and other workers are treated with respect and that appropriate public liability insurance is in place at all times of instructing.
	Reflect upon own performance	Reflect upon professional task performance against best practice guidelines.
	Promote equity, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace	Ensure and respect an inclusive and equitable environment.
	Promote anti-doping in a fitness and physical activity environment	Uphold fitness facilities policies in relation to anti-doping.
Business, Marketing and Sales Skills	Apply business, marketing and sales skills	Apply business, marketing and sales strategies and tools to develop a business model and, establish market position and market advantage as an Exercise for Health Specialist.



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