

FITNESS COACH/INSTRUCTOR/TRAINER

Entry Level: At least a high school diploma, though an increasing number of employers are requiring an Associate's or Bachelor's degree.¹

***Please Note:** Many online sources specify differences for these fields, but opinions vary and it is difficult to reach a conclusion. The following information is mostly based off of Bureau of Labor Statistics data for fitness trainers and instructors.

JOB REQUIREMENTS

What is the exact job title?

- Fitness Coach
- Fitness Instructor
- Fitness Trainer
- Group fitness instructor

How do I become one?

- Become certified: Employers prefer to hire fitness trainers and instructors who are certified. Group fitness instructors can begin work without certification, but employers often encourage or require them to become certified. Most specialized fitness instructors receive certification for their preferred type of training, such as yoga or Pilates.¹
 - The NCCA lists certifying organizations that are accredited.¹
 - All certification exams have a written part, and some also have a practical part. The exams measure the candidate's knowledge of human physiology, understanding of proper exercise techniques, and ability to assess clients' fitness levels and develop appropriate exercise programs. Many certifying organizations offer study materials to prepare for the exam, including books, webinars, other audio and visual materials, and exam preparation workshops and seminars.¹
 - Most trainers or instructors need certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillators (AED) before applying for certification in physical fitness.¹

What qualities do I need?

- Customer-service skills: Many fitness trainers and instructors must sell their services, motivating clients to hire them as personal trainers or to sign up for the classes they lead. Fitness trainers and instructors must therefore be polite, friendly, and encouraging, to maintain relationships with their clients.¹
- Communication skills: Fitness trainers and instructors must clearly explain or demonstrate exercises to clients.¹
- Listening skills: Fitness trainers and instructors must listen carefully to what clients tell them in order to determine the clients' fitness levels and desired fitness goals.¹
- Motivational skills: Getting fit and staying fit takes a lot of work for many clients. To keep clients coming back for more classes or to continue personal training, fitness trainers and instructors must keep their clients motivated.¹

¹<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/personal-care-and-service/fitness-trainers-and-instructors.htm#tab-1>

²https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Fitness_Instructor/Hourly_Rate

- **Physical fitness:** Fitness trainers and instructors need to be physically fit because their job requires a considerable amount of exercise. Group instructors often participate in classes, and personal trainers often need to demonstrate exercises to their clients.¹
- **Problem-solving skills:** Fitness trainers and instructors must evaluate each client's level of fitness and create an appropriate fitness plan to meet the client's individual needs.¹

TYPICAL WORK DAY

What do they do?

- Demonstrate or explain how to perform various exercises and routines to minimize injuries and improve fitness.¹
- Watch clients do exercises to ensure that they are using the correct techniques.¹
- Provide alternative exercises during workouts or classes for different levels of fitness and skill.¹
- Monitor clients' progress and adapt programs as needed.¹
- Explain and enforce safety rules and regulations on sports, recreational activities, and the use of exercise equipment.¹
- Give clients information or resources about nutrition, weight control, and lifestyle issues.¹
- Give emergency first aid if needed.¹

Where do they normally work?

- Fitness trainers and instructors work in facilities such as health clubs, fitness or recreation centers, gyms, and yoga and Pilates studios. They may work nights, weekends, or holidays.¹

What hours do they work?

- Fitness trainers and instructors may work nights, weekends, or holidays. Some travel to different gyms or to clients' homes to teach classes or conduct personal training sessions. Some group fitness instructors and personal fitness trainers hold full-time jobs in other fields and teach fitness classes or conduct personal training sessions during evenings or weekends.¹

BENEFITS

What is a typical salary in this field?

- BLS: In May, 2018 median pay was \$19.15/hour or \$39,820/year.¹
- Payscale: \$19.94/hour or \$37,189/year.²

Does this job come with any benefits? (vision, dental, 401k, PTO, etc.)

- Medical: 19%²
- Vision: 12%²
- Dental: 12%²
- None: 80%²

GROWTH

What is the projected job growth?

- Between 2018 - 2028, job growth is projected to be 13%.¹

Last Updated: October 2019

¹<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/personal-care-and-service/fitness-trainers-and-instructors.htm#tab-1>

²https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Fitness_Instructor/Hourly_Rate