

# Appendix B

## Exam Content Outline

The Examination Content Outline is essentially a blueprint for the exam. As you prepare for the ACE Lifestyle & Weight Management Coach certification exam, it is important to remember that all exam questions are based on this outline.

### Target Audience Statement

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**T**he certified Lifestyle & Weight Management Coach is an advanced fitness professional responsible for working independently and with other professionals to help a wide variety of individuals and groups adopt structured behavioral-change programs that focus on lifestyle and weight management through physical activity, nutrition, and education necessary to improve and maintain health, fitness, weight, body composition, and metabolism. The following eligibility requirements have been established for individuals to sit for the ACE Lifestyle & Weight Management Coach certification examination:

- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Must hold a current adult CPR certificate and, if living in the U.S.A. or Canada, a current AED certificate

- Must hold one of the following:
  - ✓ ACE Personal Trainer Certification
  - ✓ ACE Group Fitness Instructor Certification
  - ✓ ACE Advanced Health & Fitness Specialist Certification
  - ✓ NCCA-accredited personal trainer or advanced fitness-related certification
  - ✓ Four-year (bachelor's) degree in exercise science or a related field. Exam candidates holding degrees in nutrition, nursing, or health may be required to submit documentation supporting completion of exercise science-related coursework at the time of registration.

## Domains, Tasks, and Knowledge and Skill Statements

A Role Delineation Study, or job analysis, was conducted by the American Council on Exercise and Castle Worldwide, Inc., for the ACE Lifestyle & Weight Management Coach certification. The first step in this process was completed by a panel of subject matter experts in the various disciplines within the field of lifestyle and weight management coaching as an advanced specialization within fitness. The primary goal of the panel was to identify the primary tasks performed by Lifestyle & Weight Management Coaches in helping a wide variety of individuals and groups adopt structured behavioral-change programs that focus on weight management. The panel first identified the major responsibilities performed by a professional lifestyle and weight management coach. These categories are defined as “Tasks” and it was determined that the profession of lifestyle and weight management coaching could be described in 14 task statements.

These tasks were then grouped into four Performance Domains, or major areas of responsibility.

These Performance Domains are listed below with the percentage indicating the portion of the exam devoted to each Domain:

**Domain I: Building Rapport and Facilitating Behavior Change – 26%**

**Domain II: Program Design and Implementation – 27%**

**Domain III: Program Progression and Adjustments – 32%**

**Domain IV: Professional Conduct and Competency – 15%**

Each Domain is composed of Task Statements, which detail the job-related functions under that particular Domain. Each Task Statement is further divided into Knowledge and Skill Statements that detail the scope of information required to perform each Task and how that information is applied in a practical setting.

The Performance Domains, Task Statements, and Knowledge and Skill Statements identified by the panel of subject matter experts were then validated by a sample of currently practicing ACE-certified Lifestyle & Weight Management Coaches. This completed the Role Delineation Study, with the outcome of this study being the ACE Lifestyle & Weight Management Coach exam content outline detailed here. Please note that not all Knowledge and Skill Statements listed in the exam content outline will be addressed on each exam administration, as there are not enough questions on a certification exam to cover every knowledge and skill statement.

Throughout this exam content outline, the following definitions will be used:

**Clients** – Refers to individuals and groups with a variety of ages, fitness levels, etc.

**Program** – Refers to behavioral-change programs that focus on lifestyle and weight management through physical activity, nutrition, and education necessary to improve and maintain health, fitness, weight, body composition, and metabolism.

## DOMAIN I: BUILDING RAPPORT AND FACILITATING BEHAVIOR CHANGE 26%

**DESCRIPTION:** Use effective communication strategies to build and sustain relationships with individuals and groups by coaching behavior change to improve and maintain health, fitness, weight, body composition, and metabolism.

### TASK 1

Use appropriate communication strategies to create and sustain rapport to establish and maintain credibility and trust with clients in order to recognize their current status (e.g., goals, barriers, progress, achievements, needs, expectations, stage of change).

#### *Knowledge of:*

1. Special populations (including diseases and eating disorders) – include psychological and physiological populations
2. Communication, coaching, and teaching strategies (e.g., verbal, non-verbal, feedback, reinforcement, formal, informal, non-judgmental listening)
3. Goal setting and motivational theories and strategies
4. Myths and misconceptions about fitness, health, nutrition, lifestyle, and metabolism
5. Theories of behavior change
6. Importance and application of feedback, reinforcement, acknowledgement, and encouragement

#### *Skill in:*

1. Communicating results, program goals, expectations, and successes with diverse populations
2. Modifying interaction style and content appropriate to the client's personal characteristics
3. Establishing an effective climate for communication with diverse populations
4. Demonstrating empathy, non-judgmental listening, and active listening
5. Educating the client on systems for self-reporting to the LWMC
6. Successfully reframing client myths and misconceptions about fitness, health, nutrition, lifestyle, and metabolism

### TASK 2

Build client independence through teaching nutrition, exercise, and lifestyle-modification skills and by emphasizing the importance of a social support network to enhance self-efficacy, motivation, program adherence, and behavior change.

#### *Knowledge of:*

1. Nutrition, exercise, and lifestyle-modification strategies
2. Resources for community and personal support
3. Exercise physiology, anatomy, kinesiology, and nutrition
4. Communication, coaching, and teaching strategies (e.g., verbal, non-verbal, feedback, reinforcement, formal, informal, non-judgmental listening)
5. Motivational strategies, learning styles, and self-monitoring tools and techniques

#### *Skill in:*

1. Helping clients establish social support networks
2. Empowering clients to become self-reliant
3. Preparing clients for lapses and plateaus and developing a plan of action to handle them

4. Explaining the effects of exercise and nutrition on health, fitness, and performance

### TASK 3

Educate and work with clients on key behavioral-change strategies in order to impart the knowledge and skills necessary for program adoption and success.

#### *Knowledge of:*

1. Psychological factors that influence a client's self-image and their impact on the communication process
2. Behavioral-change strategies
3. Communication, coaching, and teaching strategies (e.g., verbal, non-verbal, feedback, reinforcement, formal, informal, non-judgmental listening)
4. Motivational strategies that engage clients with various skills and limitations, preferences, and expectations
5. Learning styles
6. Factors that create positive experiences for clients
7. Personal issues and biases that may interfere with program effectiveness

#### *Skill in:*

1. Working with clients to establish attainable goals using appropriate goal-setting techniques
2. Selecting and using coaching strategies
3. Teaching clients how to manage lapses, barriers, and plateaus
4. Teaching clients about nutrition, healthful dietary intake, and strategies for weight management
5. Teaching clients about exercise and physical activity

## DOMAIN II: PROGRAM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION 27%

**DESCRIPTION: Create individual and group structured behavioral-change programs**

**that focus on lifestyle and weight management through physical activity, nutrition, and education necessary to improve and maintain health, fitness, weight, body composition, and metabolism.**

### TASK 1

Identify potential areas for behavioral change and/or the need for referral by collecting and assessing clients' current fitness, health, dietary, and lifestyle information using appropriate screening tools and techniques.

#### *Knowledge of:*

1. Screening tools and techniques (e.g., interviews, surveys, questionnaires)
2. Theories and techniques of behavior change, motivation, and social support
3. Scope of practice, indicators for referral, and referral sources
4. Fitness, health, nutrition, and lifestyle guidelines and standards
5. Special populations (including diseases and eating disorders) – include psychological and physiological populations
6. Communication, coaching, and teaching strategies (verbal, non-verbal)

#### *Skill in:*

1. Evaluating data from screening tools and techniques
2. Evaluating fitness, health, nutrition, and lifestyle information
3. Assessing physiological and psychological risk
4. Communicating with diverse populations
5. Assessing readiness to change
6. Referring clients to appropriate health-care professionals as needed

### TASK 2

Select and conduct appropriate assessments based on clients' unique health, fitness, nutritional, and lifestyle data and goals to facilitate program design and implementation.

#### *Knowledge of:*

1. Fitness, health, nutrition, and lifestyle assessments, guidelines, and standards

2. Special populations (including diseases and eating disorders) – include psychological and physiological populations
3. Physiological responses to testing
4. Scope of practice
5. Contraindications for testing
6. Purpose and benefits for conducting assessments
7. Termination criteria for testing

**Skill in:**

1. Selecting and administering appropriate assessments for individuals and groups
2. Documentation of assessment data
3. Determining contraindications for fitness assessments
4. Evaluating fitness, health, nutrition, and lifestyle-assessment data
5. Identifying signs and symptoms that merit immediate termination of exercise

**Task 3**

Design and implement programs based on clients' interview, screening and assessment data, and goals to progress clients toward healthy lifestyle, weight management, and behavior change.

**Knowledge of:**

1. Program-design guidelines for safe and effective nutrition, exercise, and behavior change
2. Weight management, physiology of obesity, and metabolism
3. Communication, coaching, and teaching strategies (verbal, non-verbal)
4. Programming considerations for special populations
5. Physiological, psychological, and motivational adaptations and changes to program components (e.g., exercise, nutrition)
6. Theories and techniques of behavior change, motivation, and social support
7. Goal-setting theories and strategies

**Skill in:**

1. Program design and implementation based on evaluation of fitness, health, nutrition, and lifestyle-assessment data, guidelines, and standards

2. Communicating assessment results, program goals, and expectations with diverse populations
3. Creating positive program experiences
4. Collaborating with clients and other stakeholders on goal setting

## DOMAIN III: PROGRAM

## PROGRESSION AND

## ADJUSTMENTS 32%

**DESCRIPTION: Monitor, evaluate, and modify individual and group structured behavioral-change programs designed to improve and maintain health, fitness, weight, body composition, and metabolism.**

### TASK 1

Work with clients to facilitate progression toward established goals and self-efficacy using observed and self-reported data and appropriate communication strategies (e.g., feedback).

**Knowledge of:**

1. Goal-setting theories and strategies
2. Proper progression techniques
3. Communication, coaching, and teaching strategies (e.g., verbal, non-verbal, feedback, reinforcement, formal, informal, non-judgmental listening)
4. Obstacles and barriers to successful program adherence
5. Self-monitoring techniques
6. Subjective and objective observation techniques

**Skill in:**

1. Collaborating with clients and other stakeholders on goal setting
2. Interpreting and evaluating observed and self-reported data
3. Interpreting and evaluating clients' progress toward goals
4. Helping clients develop coping and problem-solving strategies to overcome barriers to successful programs, including support systems

5. Facilitating behavior change
6. Building self-efficacy

## TASK 2

Evaluate program effectiveness by reassessing current fitness, health, dietary, and/or lifestyle data and comparing with previous results in order to recognize successes, and determine and implement appropriate program adjustments and progressions.

### *Knowledge of:*

1. Fitness, health, nutrition, and lifestyle assessments, guidelines, and standards
2. Special populations (including diseases and eating disorders) – include psychological and physiological populations
3. Physiological responses to testing
4. Scope of practice, indicators for referral, and referral sources
5. Proper progression techniques
6. Communication, coaching, and teaching strategies (e.g., verbal, non-verbal, feedback, reinforcement, formal, informal, non-judgmental listening)
7. Contraindications of testing
8. Goal setting and motivational theories and strategies
9. Obstacles and barriers to successful program adherence
10. Program-design guidelines for safe and effective nutrition, exercise, and behavior change

### *Skill in:*

1. Interpreting, comparing, and evaluating fitness, health, nutrition, and lifestyle assessment data to enable recognition of success
2. Communicating assessment results, program goals, and expectations with diverse populations
3. Determining contraindications for fitness assessments
4. Selecting and administering appropriate assessments for individuals and groups
5. Collaborating with clients and other stakeholders on goal setting

6. Interpreting and evaluating client progress towards goals
7. Identifying signs and symptoms that merit immediate termination of exercise

## TASK 3

Monitor client attitudes (e.g., perceptions, experiences, enjoyment) through continuous dialogue in order to make appropriate program adjustments.

### *Knowledge of:*

1. Coaching procedures and techniques (e.g., motivational interviewing, non-judgmental)
2. Subjective and objective attitude-assessment tools (e.g., EFI, faces)
3. Communication, coaching, and teaching strategies (e.g., verbal, non-verbal, feedback, reinforcement, formal, informal, non-judgmental listening)
4. Obstacles and barriers to healthy client attitudes
5. Learning styles
6. Cognitive, affective, and learning styles that influence progress and goal attainment (emotional states, self-motivation, self-perception, negative/positive self-talk, guilt)
7. Physical acceptance, competency, and self-efficacy

### *Skill in:*

1. Selecting and applying appropriate coaching procedures and techniques (e.g., motivational interviewing)
2. Active listening and other communication skills
3. Selecting, interpreting, and evaluating subjective and objective attitude assessments (e.g., EFI, faces)
4. Helping clients develop coping and problem-solving strategies to overcome barriers to successful programs, including support systems
5. Identifying client cognitive and emotional patterns, including self-talk patterns such as guilt, self-verification
6. Building acceptance and self-efficacy

## TASK 4

Continuously revisit goals with clients and recognize achievements, challenges, and barriers in order to maintain and progress program participation, motivation, and success.

### *Knowledge of:*

1. Theories of behavior change
2. Goal-setting theories and strategies
3. Proper progression techniques
4. Communication, coaching, and teaching strategies (e.g., verbal, non-verbal, feedback, reinforcement, formal, informal, non-judgmental listening)
5. Obstacles and barriers to successful program adherence (perceived or real)
6. Reinforcement and motivation strategies
7. Behavioral-maintenance strategies, maintaining lifestyle-change strategies

### *Skill in:*

1. Interpreting and evaluating client progress toward goals
2. Helping clients develop coping and problem-solving strategies to overcome barriers to successful programs, including support systems
3. Communicating results, program goals, expectations, and successes with diverse populations
4. Collaborating with clients to modify goals
5. Facilitating change
6. Recognizing and preventing lapses

## DOMAIN IV: PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND COMPETENCY 15%

**DESCRIPTION: Fulfill responsibilities through ongoing education, collaboration, and awareness of professional standards and practices necessary to protect clients, the profession, stakeholders, and yourself.**

## TASK 1

Adhere to legal and ethical codes, scope of practice, and standards of care in order

to protect the client, maintain professional standards, and manage risk.

### *Knowledge of:*

1. Building and maintaining a collaborative referral network through various channels (e.g., community involvement, networking groups) in order to benefit clients and maintain professional standards
2. American Council on Exercise Code of Ethics
3. American Council on Exercise Professional Practices and Disciplinary Procedures
4. Scope of practice and accepted standards of care for fitness professionals
5. Liability issues associated with acting outside the standard of care, scope of practice, and ACE Code of Ethics
6. Standards, laws, and regulations governing confidentiality
7. Risk-management strategies
8. Various insurance policies and coverage (e.g., professional liability insurance, general liability insurance, workers' compensation insurance, health and disability insurance) for fitness professionals working in a variety of settings (e.g., clubs, non-profit facilities, medical fitness facilities, community centers, homes, outdoor settings)
9. Indicators for referral and referral sources
10. Intellectual property laws as they apply to video, DVD, written materials, Internet, music, copyright, and trademark

### *Skill in:*

1. Assessing areas of risk (e.g., client, facilities, use of technology)
2. Identifying professional boundaries based on scope of practice and professional and ethical obligations
3. Following industry guidelines to minimize risk for the LWMC and clients
4. Determining appropriate insurance and levels of coverage necessary for the fitness professional based on the facility and client logistics

- Referring clients to more qualified fitness, medical, or health professionals when appropriate

## TASK 2

Maintain and enhance competency by staying current on scientifically based research, theories, and best practices using credible resources such as continuing education, professional organizations, industry journals, and periodicals to provide safe and effective services and education.

### *Knowledge of:*

- Staying current with research for diverse populations
- Reputable sources for product and service evaluation
- Requirements for certification renewal
- Available and credible continuing education providers and programs (e.g., conferences, workshops, college/university courses, online courses, home study courses) and providers
- Appropriate agencies and organizations that establish and publish scientifically based lifestyle-modification standards and guidelines for the general public and special populations (e.g., USDA, ADA, ACSM, ACOG, NSCA, CDC, NIH, OSHA)

### *Skill in:*

- Recognizing credible resources
- Critically evaluating new products and services
- Applying appropriate knowledge and skills gained through continuing education with clients

## TASK 3

Document client-related data, communications, and progress using a record-keeping system that is secure, confidential, accurate, current, and retrievable in order to manage risk.

### *Knowledge of:*

- Health, legal, and insurance obligations regarding confidentiality (privacy laws)

- Terminology utilized in client-related data collection and communication (e.g., SOAP notes)
- Effective and confidential record keeping and data security
- Professional ethics regarding technology, communication, and protection of privacy
- Importance of maintaining, and implications of breaching, client confidentiality
- Paperwork and documentation related to client confidentiality and program participation (e.g., waivers, informed consent, medical history, health-risk appraisal, client contracts)
- Security laws, standards, and guidelines regarding client confidentiality and storage of data

### *Skill in:*

- Appropriate use of social marketing tools
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Differentiating between confidential and non-confidential documents and information
- Understanding the importance of confidentiality
- Keeping professional records using healthcare technology and terminology (e.g., SOAP notes)

## TASK 4

Prepare for, practice, and respond to facility emergencies, acute medical conditions, and injuries by following established protocols and documentation requirements in order to maximize clients' safety and manage risk.

### *Knowledge of:*

- Components of a comprehensive risk-management program and worksite emergency plan
- Credible resources for risk-management strategies (e.g., McGraw, Wong, ACSM, NSCA, OSHA, IHRSA, ACE, IDEA, Fitness Management, Athletic Business)

3. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillator (AED) procedures
  4. Appropriate emergency medical service (EMS) system activation
  5. Basic first aid
  6. Occupational Health and Safety Administration guidelines regarding bloodborne pathogens
  7. Procedures for evaluating safety of equipment and the exercise environment
  8. Industry standards for reducing risk of injury
  9. Sources for, and limitations of, waivers and informed consent forms
  10. How to communicate a sense of security and safety to clients
- Skill in:*
1. Identifying and responding to emergency situations
  2. Identifying and responding to hazards in training situations
  3. Implementing the emergency plan in a professional manner
  4. Communicating the rationale for various techniques that limit the risk of injury
  5. Using equipment properly and safely