

ACE's 2010 Fitness Salary Survey Results



As a certified fitness professional, you can use the survey results to guide you when answering career-defining questions.

The American Council on Exercise conducted a salary survey of fitness professionals to better understand the education and occupational levels of the industry and their associated salaries. Nearly 3,000 fitness professionals nationwide answered our 2010 salary survey conducted by an independent third-party research firm, the results of which provided an intriguing glimpse into today's fitness industry.

As a certified fitness professional, you can use the survey results to guide you when answering career-defining questions, such as, "Should I pursue an advanced fitness certification to increase my earnings?" or "Is it worth it to obtain a master's degree or is that time better spent gaining work experience?" Perhaps you simply want to see where you stand in comparison to your peers. Whether you're considering becoming a personal trainer or you have worked in the industry for many years, the information gained from this survey will prove to be a valuable reference.

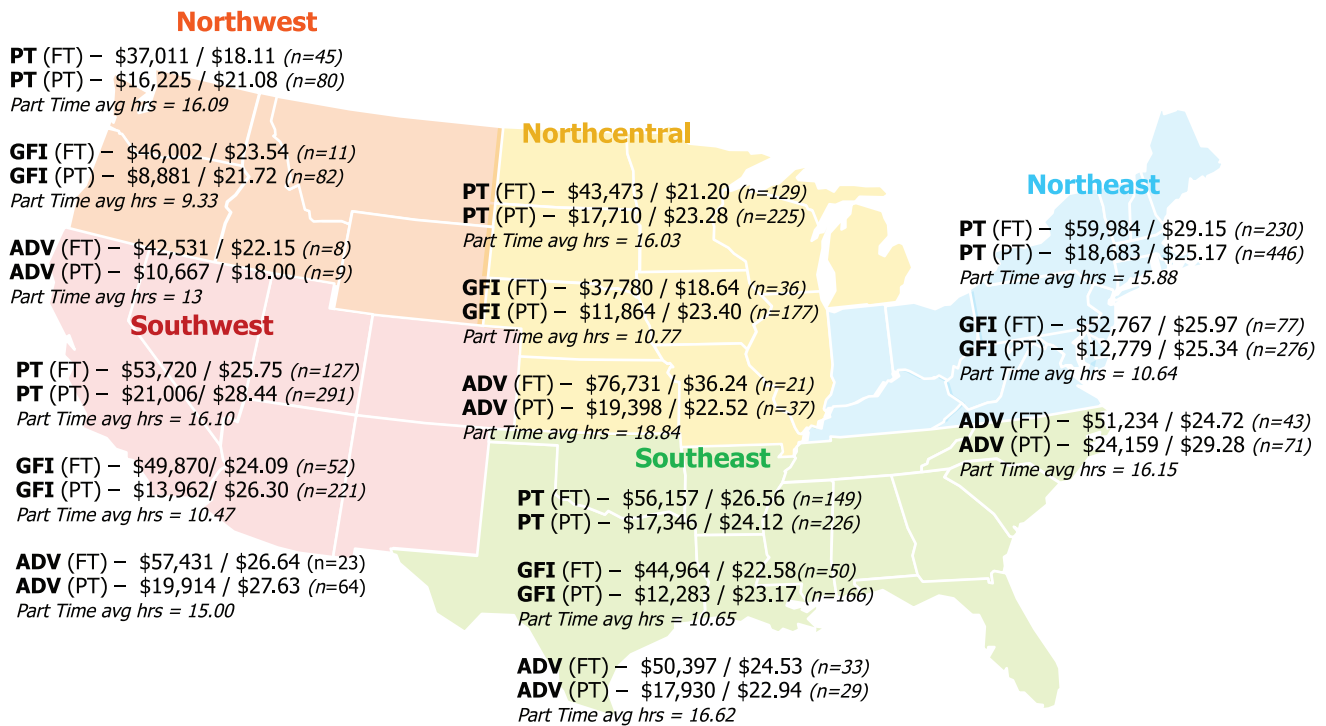
Average Salary/Hourly Rate by Fitness Certification Type

Overall, average annual salary rates for full-time professionals with Personal Training or Group Fitness Instructor certifications have increased since 2005, while part-time salaries have generally declined — possibly due to the fewer number of hours worked by these individuals as noted in the chart below. Professionals holding advanced certifications including Lifestyle & Weight Management Consultants and Advanced Health & Fitness Specialists out-earn those with Personal Training or Group Fitness Instructor certifications.

	Personal Trainer		Group Fitness Instructor		Advanced Certifications (AHFS and LWMC)	
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
United States	\$53,323 annually / \$25.71/hr	\$18,650 annually / \$25.14/hr <i>Avg. Hours Work = (15.95/wk)</i>	\$47,659 annually / \$23.50/hr	\$12,451 annually / \$24.49/hr <i>Avg. Hours Work = (10.51/wk)</i>	\$55,771 annually / \$26.74/hr	\$20,588 annually / \$26.23/hr <i>Avg. Hours Work = (16.20/wk)</i>

Average Salary/Hourly Rate by Region and Fitness Certification Type

Overall, the trend appears to be that full-time fitness professionals are earning more across most regions compared to 2005, the exception being personal trainers in the Northwest. However, part-time professionals appear to be earning less compared to 2005 likely due to fewer hours worked as previously mentioned. Professionals with Personal Training or Group Fitness Instructor certifications earn the most money in the Northeast, while those working full-time with advanced certifications of Lifestyle & Weight Management Consultant and Advanced Health & Fitness Specialist earn the most in the Northcentral region.



Salary vs. Education and Fitness Certification Type

In general, education levels are positively related to salary levels, particularly full-time salaries. Lifestyle & Weight Management Consultants and Advanced Health & Fitness Specialists who also hold a bachelor's degree earn 24% more than those with advanced certifications who have only some college. Additionally, professionals with advanced certifications with a Master's degree earn 16% more than personal trainers with a Master's degree, and 45% more than group fitness instructors who also hold a Master's degree.

	Personal Trainer		Group Fitness Instructor		Advanced Certification (AHFS and LWMC)	
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
High School Diploma	\$45,516 annually/ \$22.14/hr	\$19,011 annually/ \$22.79/hr <i>Avg. Hrs = 16.92/wk</i>	Insufficient Data	\$12,094 annually/ \$20.45/hr <i>Avg. Hrs = 12.45/wk</i>	Insufficient Data	Insufficient Data
Associates / Some College / Trade School	\$47,356 annually/ \$23.39/hr	\$17,246 annually / \$22.33/hr <i>Avg. Hrs = 16.26/wk</i>	\$42,617 annually/ \$20.95/hr	\$12,443 annually/ \$22.11/hr <i>Avg. Hrs = 11.31/wk</i>	\$41,615 annually/ \$20.49/hr	\$16,039 annually/ \$24.29/hr <i>Avg. Hrs = 13.85/wk</i>
Bachelors Degree	\$50,597 annually/ \$24.42/hr	\$19,986 annually/ \$25.91/hr	\$43,746 annually/ \$21.02/hr	\$12,403 annually/ \$24.58/hr <i>Avg. Hrs = 10.73 wk</i>	\$51,428 annually/ \$24.47/hr	\$23,364 annually/ \$27.65/hr <i>Avg. Hrs = 17.34/wk</i>
Master's Degree	\$67,287 annually/ \$31.77/hr	\$18,442 annually/ \$28.23/hr <i>Avg. Hrs = 14.79/wk</i>	\$54,137 annually/ \$27.17/hr	\$12,717 annually/ \$27.41/hr <i>Avg. Hrs = 9.14/wk</i>	\$78,382 annually/ \$37.59/hr	\$21,076 annually/ \$26.98/hr <i>Avg. Hrs = 16.37/wk</i>

Salary vs. Experience and Education

Years of experience in the fitness industry is more directly related to compensation levels than education. In general, more years of experience in the fitness industry leads to a larger paycheck, more so than the increase in pay associated with earning an advanced degree.

	HS Diploma	Some College/ Associates	Bachelors	Masters/ MBA	PhD/MD
Under 1 year	Insufficient Data	\$12,509 annually/ \$16.62/hr	\$11,778 annually/ \$19.04/hr	\$9,870 annually/ \$25.27/hr	Insufficient Data
1 < 2 years	Insufficient Data	\$13,692 annually/ \$16.17/hr	\$17,938 annually/ \$17.96/hr	\$14,818 annually/ \$23.50/hr	Insufficient Data
2 < 3 years	Insufficient Data	\$14,851 annually/ \$17.96/hr	\$17,238 annually/ \$15.79/hr	\$14,472 annually/ \$18.63/hr	Insufficient Data
3 < 4 years	Insufficient Data	\$17,684 annually/ \$18.89/hr	\$21,465 annually/ \$21.72/hr	\$17,126 annually/ \$21.31/hr	Insufficient Data
4 < 5 years	Insufficient Data	\$24,402 annually/ \$23.85/hr	\$35,680 annually/ \$29.11/hr	\$21,379 annually/ \$24.23/hr	Insufficient Data
5 < 10 years	Insufficient Data	\$25,159 annually/ \$22.90/hr	\$33,602 annually/ \$26.42/hr	\$32,916 annually/ \$29.56/hr	\$16,002 annually/ \$27.97/hr
10 < 15 years	\$17,879 annually/ \$21.61/hr	\$20,079 annually/ \$22.84/hr	\$29,943 annually/ \$25.57/hr	\$42,975 annually/ \$33.43/hr	Insufficient Data
15 < 20 years	\$20,473 annually/ \$20.43/hr	\$28,235 annually/ \$25.14/hr	\$32,934 annually/ \$30.30/hr	\$28,045 annually/ \$28.23/hr	Insufficient Data
Over 20 years	\$23,177 annually/ \$24.46/hr	\$26,057 annually/ \$24.77/hr	\$25,907 annually/ \$26.41/hr	\$30,612 annually/ \$28.59/hr	\$16,911 annually/ \$27.84/hr

Most Popular Fitness Job Titles

Personal trainers and group fitness instructors still remain as the top job titles among fitness professionals, the top seven of which are listed here. Not surprisingly, club owners earn the most money among both full-time and part-time fitness workers.



	Full-Time	Part-Time
Personal Trainer	\$42,204 annually/ \$21.42/hr	\$18,648 annually/ \$24.57/hr <i>Avg. Hrs = 16.38/wk</i>
Group Fitness Instructor	\$31,963 annually/ \$17.16/hr	\$8,538 annually/ \$24.05/hr <i>Avg. Hrs = 7.5/wk</i>
Fitness Director	\$41,921 annually/ \$20.19/hr	\$25,400 annually/ \$31.69/hr <i>Avg. Hrs = 23.55/wk</i>
Advanced Health & Fitness Specialist	\$47,163 annually/ \$23.58/hr	\$25,470 annually/ \$27.19/hr <i>Avg. Hrs = 19.17/wk</i>
Pilates Instructor	\$46,650 annually/ \$24.00/hr	\$21,560 annually/ \$26.57/hr <i>Avg. Hrs = 15.46/wk</i>
Group Fitness Director	\$37,226 annually/ \$18.87/hr	\$17,450 annually/ \$18.08/hr <i>Avg. Hrs = 19.82/wk</i>
Club Owner	\$80,382 annually/ \$33.43/hr	\$35,336 annually/ \$31.84/hr <i>Avg. Hrs = 22.18/wk</i>

Employee Benefits Offered

Among full-time fitness professionals, there is a positive trend in employee benefits — health, dental, vision, life insurance, 401K + employer match, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), paid vacation, paid sick leave and paid maternity leave are more prevalent among full-time workers compared to five years ago. However, benefits, including health coverage, remain elusive for part-time workers with seven out of ten part-time workers not receiving any employee benefits. On average, advanced health & fitness specialists and lifestyle & weight management consultants receive greater employee benefits across all benefit categories.

	Full-Time	Part-Time
Health (full/partial coverage)	43% / 24%	4% / 7%
Dental (full/partial coverage)	31% / 25%	3% / 5%
Vision (full/partial coverage)	21% / 22%	2% / 4%
Life Insurance	38%	4%
401k	19%	5%
401k + employer match	36%	5%
Employee discount	36%	19%
Service awards	17%	4%
Employee assistance program (EAP)	26%	3%
Paid vacation	62%	8%
Paid sick leave	51%	5%
Maternity leave	27%	3%
Disability (long/short term)	31% / 34%	3% / 3%
None	25%	70%



Quick Facts

- Average salary rates for full-time fitness professionals have increased since 2005.
- Average salary rates for full-time personal trainers have increased by 19% since 2005.
- The top 5 states/territories reporting the highest annual income for fitness professionals includes the District of Columbia, Rhode Island, Oklahoma, Kansas and Maine.
- 54% of fitness professional with an advanced certification from ACE feel their advanced credentials enable them to earn a higher income.
- 4 out of 10 personal trainers believe the recession has had a negative impact on their income.
- 69% of fitness professionals are paid hourly.
- Over 1/3 of all fitness professionals work 21-40 hours per week, with 10% working over 40 hours.
- 51% of personal trainers work for a club/fitness facility while 49% work independently.
- Resistance training, traditional aerobics and step training are among the top areas of expertise among group fitness instructors.
- 69% of personal trainers work with overweight or obese adults.
- 68% of personal trainers work with older adults.

