

IDEA Code of Ethics

Personal Fitness Trainers

As a member of IDEA Health & Fitness Association, I will be guided by the best interests of the client and will practice within the scope of my education and knowledge. I will maintain the education and experience necessary to appropriately train clients; will behave in a positive and constructive manner; and will use truth, fairness and integrity to guide all my professional decisions and relationships.

Ethical Practice Guidelines for Personal Fitness Trainers

1. Always be guided by the best interests of the client.

- a. Remember that a personal trainer's primary responsibility is to the client's safety, health and welfare; never compromise this responsibility for your own self-interest, personal advantage or monetary gain.
- b. Recommend products or services only if they will benefit the client's health and well-being, not because they will benefit you financially or occupationally.
- c. If recommending products or services will result in financial gain for you or your employer, be aware that disclosure to the client may be appropriate.
- d. Base the number of training sessions on the client's needs, not your financial requirements.

2. Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

- a. Never exploit—sexually, economically or otherwise—a professional relationship with a supervisor, an employee, a colleague or a client.
- b. Respect the client's right to privacy. A client's conversations, behavior, results and—if appropriate—identity should be kept confidential.
- c. Use physical touching appropriately during training sessions, as a means of correcting alignment and/or focusing a client's concentration on the targeted area. Immediately discontinue the use of touch at a client's request or if the client displays signs of discomfort.
- d. Focus on the business relationship, not the client's personal life, except as appropriate.
- e. When you are unable to maintain appropriate professional boundaries or to work within the legitimate agenda of the training relationship, whether because of your own attitudes and behaviors or those of the client, either terminate the relationship or refer the client to an appropriate professional, such as another trainer, a medical doctor or a mental health specialist.
- f. Avoid sexually oriented banter and inappropriate physical contact.

3. Maintain the education and experience necessary to appropriately train clients.

- a. Continuously strive to keep abreast of the new developments, concepts and practices essential to providing the highest-quality services to clients.
- b. Recognize your limitations in services and techniques, and engage only in activities that fall within the boundaries of your professional credentials and competencies. Refer clients to other professionals for issues that fall beyond the boundaries of a personal fitness trainer's profession or your current competencies.
- c. For health screening, fitness assessment, prudent progression and exercise technique, follow the standards outlined by professionals in the fields of medicine and health and fitness.

4. Use truth, fairness and integrity to guide all professional decisions and relationships.

- a. In all professional and business relationships, clearly demonstrate and support honesty, integrity and trustworthiness.
- b. Accurately represent your qualifications.
- c. In advertising materials, be truthful and fair. When describing personal training services, be guided by the primary obligation of helping the client develop informed judgments, opinions and choices. Avoid ambiguity, sensationalism, exaggeration and superficiality.
- d. Make your contract language clear and understandable.
- e. Administer consistent pricing and procedural policies.
- f. Never solicit business from another trainer's client. When interacting with clients of other trainers, be open and honest so those clients cannot interpret the interaction as solicitation of their business.
- g. If you work for a business that finds clients and assigns them to you, recognize that the clients belong to that business.

5. Show respect for clients and fellow professionals.

- a. Act with integrity in your relationships with colleagues, facility owners and other health professionals to help ensure that each client benefits optimally from all professionals.
- b. Never discriminate based on race, creed, color, gender, age, physical handicap or nationality.
- c. When disagreements or conflicts occur, focus on behavior, factual evidence and nonderogatory forms of communication, not on judgmental statements, hearsay, the placing of blame or other destructive responses.
- d. Present fitness information completely and accurately in order to help the client make informed decisions.

6. Uphold a professional image through conduct and appearance.

- a. Avoid smoking, substance abuse and unhealthy eating habits.
- b. Speak and dress in a manner that increases the client's comfort level.