

**THE REGISTER of EXERCISE PROFESSIONALS**

# **CODE OF ETHICAL PRACTICE**

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January 2005

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## INTRODUCTION

The Register of Exercise Professionals is a rigorous system of self-regulation for all instructors, coaches, trainers and teachers involved in supervising people who exercise and partake of physical activity programmes. The Register has created a framework within which individual instructors can achieve the highest standards of professionalism linked to best practice in the health, fitness, and exercise industry.

Registration is achieved and maintained through the gaining of qualifications and training, which are nationally recognised and linked to the National Occupational Standards for the fitness industry. Membership signifies that an exercise professional meets required standards of good practice, and professionals who join the Register will need to :

- **Have gained a recognised and approved qualification**
- **Demonstrate competence in their working environment**
- **Be committed to their own (ongoing) professional development**
- **Hold current CPR and first aid certificates**
- **Have public liability insurance that meet the minimum requirements for registration**
- **Adhere to an industry accepted Code of Ethical Practice**

In isolation, any one of these six points is of little value - but together they measure the suitability of individuals to be members of the exercise community and members of the Register.

Any alleged professional mis-conduct or avoidance of compliance with the terms of membership of the Register will be referred to the Professional Practice Committee (PPC) which will consider any need for sanctions against the instructor, coach, trainer or teacher. The appropriate authority will deal with any criminal allegations. The terms of reference for the PPC can be viewed at: <http://www.exerciseregister.org/who-runsit.asp>

This Code of Ethical Practice defines what is best in good practice for professionals in the fitness industry by reflecting on the core values of rights, relationships, responsibilities and standards. The term 'professional' is used in a qualitative context in this Code and does not necessarily imply a paid position or person. Exercise professionals who assent to this Code accept their responsibility to people who participate in exercise; to other fitness professionals and colleagues; to their respective fitness associations, professional bodies and institutes; to their employer; and to society.

## BACKGROUND

It is important to establish, publicise and maintain standards of ethical behaviour in fitness instructing practice, and to inform and protect members of the public and customers using the services of exercise professionals.

Physical activity and exercise can contribute positively to the development of individuals. It is a vehicle for physical, mental, personal, social and emotional development. Such development is enhanced if the individual is guided by an informed, thinking, caring and enlightened fitness professional operating within an accepted ethical framework as a self-monitoring professional.

**The Mission Statement of the Register of Exercise Professionals is:**

***"To ensure that all exercise professionals are suitably knowledgeable and qualified to help safeguard and to promote the health and interests of the people who use their services."***

**The role of the fitness professional is to :**

- **Identify and meet the needs of individuals**
- **Improve performance or fitness through programmes of safe, effective and enjoyable exercise**
- **Create an environment in which individuals are motivated to maintain participation and improve performance or fitness**
- **Conform to ethical standards in a number of areas - humanity, relationships, co-operation, integrity, advertising, confidentiality and personal standards**



## PRINCIPLE 1 - RIGHTS

### *Exercise professionals will:*

- Promote the rights of every individual to participate in exercise, and recognise that people should be treated as individuals.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every human being and their ultimate right to self-determination. Specifically, exercise professionals must treat everyone equitably and sensitively within the context of their activity and ability - regardless of gender, age, disability, occupation, ethnic origin, colour, cultural background, marital status, sexual orientation, religion or political opinion.
- Not condone or allow to go unchallenged any form of discrimination, nor to publicly criticise or engage in demeaning descriptions of others.
- Be discreet in any conversations and not impart any personal information without consent.
- Recognise the rights of individuals to confer with other professionals

## PRINCIPLE 2 - RELATIONSHIPS

### *Exercise Professionals will:*

- Develop a relationship with their customers based on openness, honesty, mutual trust and respect.
- Inform participant(s) of their qualifications, experience and Registration details and should provide the opportunity for the participant to consent or decline for training/instruction by that person and respect their opinions when making exercise decisions.
- Not engage in behaviour that constitutes any form of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, bullying, etc).
- Always promote the welfare and best interests of their participants, and encourage and guide their customers to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and actions in training and in their relationship with others.
- Ensure that physical contact is appropriate and necessary and is carried out within recommended guidelines and with the participant's full consent and approval.

- Avoid sexual intimacy with clients whilst instructing, or immediately after a training session, and should arrange to transfer the client to another professional if it is clear that an intimate relationship is developing.
- Take action if they have a concern about the behaviour of an adult towards a child, and must not engage in any form of sexually related contact with minors, including the use of innuendo, flirting or inappropriate gestures and terms.
- Be aware of the physical needs of people, especially those still growing, and ensure that frequency, intensity, duration and type of training is appropriate.
- Discuss with parents, carers and other interested parties the potential impact of training programmes offered to children, young adults or those with disabilities and/or impairments.
- Clarify in advance with participants the number of sessions, fees (if any), method of payment, and any other potential costs involved in participation.
- Who become aware of a conflict between their obligation to their customers and their obligation to their trade association, professional institute, the Register or employer must make explicit to all parties concerned the nature of the conflict, and the loyalties and responsibilities involved.
- Communicate and co-operate with other sports and allied professions in the best interests of their customers. An example of such contact could be the seeking of advice from the British Association of Sport Sciences.
- Communicate and co-operate with registered medical, clinical and ancillary practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and management of participants' medical, physical and mental problems.
- Not to work with any other professional's customer without first discussing or agreeing both with the professional and customer involved.

## PRINCIPLE 3 - PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

### *Exercise Professionals will:*

- Demonstrate proper personal behaviour and conduct at all times.
- Be fair, honest and considerate to all participants and others working in the fitness industry, and to display control, respect, dignity and professionalism.



- Project an image of health, cleanliness and functional efficiency, and display high standards in use of language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation.
- Not smoke, drink alcohol or use recreational drugs before or whilst instructing, or to take actions which could compromise the safety of participants.
- Not adopt practices to accelerate performance or fitness improvements which might jeopardise the safety, total well-being and future participation of their customer(s). Exercise professionals must never advocate or condone the use of prohibited drugs or other banned performance enhancing substances.
- Ensure that the activities and training programmes they advocate and direct are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of the participant(s).
- Advertise their services taking respect of their qualifications, training, knowledge and ability and must be accurate and professionally restrained. They must be able to present evidence of current qualifications and registration upon request and to be able to support any claim associated with the promotion of their services.
- Have valid public liability insurance cover to adequately and appropriately cover their legal liability in the event of any claim being made.
- Within the limits of their control, have a responsibility to ensure as far as possible the safety of the participants with whom they work.
- Seek to achieve the highest level of qualification(s) available and maintain up-to-date knowledge of technical developments in the fitness industry
- Engage in self-analysis and reflection to identify professional needs, and to develop a concept of lifelong learning and personal development.
- Not assume responsibility for any role for which they are not qualified or prepared.
- Confine themselves to practise those activities for which their training and competence is recognised by the Register.
- Training includes the accumulation of knowledge and skills through formal education, independent research and the accumulation of relevant, verifiable experience. The National Occupational Standards for coaching, teaching and instructing (and/or other appropriate fitness awards) provide the framework for assessing competence at the different levels of Register entry. Competence should normally be verified through evidence of qualifications and practice and not inferred solely from evidence of prior experience.
- Welcome evaluation of their work by colleagues and be able to account to participants, employers, trade associations, professional bodies and the Register for what they do, and why.
- Have a responsibility to themselves and their participants to maintain their own effectiveness, resilience and abilities and need to manage their lifestyle to avoid overtraining.

## PRINCIPLE 4 - PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

### *Exercise Professionals will:*

- Work towards attaining a high level of competence through qualifications and make a commitment to ongoing training that ensures safe and correct practice which will maximise benefits and minimise risks to participants.
- Promote the execution of safe and effective practice and plan all sessions so that they meet the needs of participants, and are progressive and appropriate.
- Need to accept responsibility for their actions, and recognise when it is appropriate to refer to another professional or specialist.

A copy of this Code may be downloaded from the REPs web site:

<http://www.exerciseregister.org/codeofethicalpractice.asp>

Any complaint or matter arising from the application of this Code should be addressed to:

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