



Your FREE Career Guide compliments of



how to become a HEALTH & FITNESS PROFESSIONAL

INCLUDES:

- Personal Trainer
- Fitness Instructor
- Massage Therapist

CONGRATULATIONS on your first step....

Congratulations on your first step toward a great career in the health & fitness industry!

The health and fitness industry offers **careers and business opportunities like no other.**

Imagine the satisfaction you will get from directly improving the health and wellbeing of your clients with your new skills and knowledge.

With more and more people enjoying the benefits of health professionals the prospect for an exciting and rewarding career are good. Opportunities range from full time positions with clinics or health clubs through to a great opportunity to start a profitable side line from home.

So what type of person is suited to a career in health and fitness industry? The answer is anyone! Fitness and massage therapy has a truly broad appeal. **Anyone can do it** with the right techniques and training. We have students from all walks of life coming to our College. From busy professionals, to mums, to sports orientated people.

The one thing all our students do have in common is a strong interest for a lifestyle balance and to try something new.

So I trust this free guide will help achieve your new career goals. If you need any further information, or have any questions, our College careers advisors are here to help you.

Yours in health,



Matthew Smith

Director

Australian College of Sport & Fitness



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What does a fitness trainer do?

A fitness professional, or fitness trainer, is a trained and certified professional who helps people meet fitness and exercise goals.

Your job is to provide knowledge, motivation and guidance to your client in all areas of fitness, exercise and health.

There are two broad classifications of fitness professionals in the Australian Fitness industry:

- a) Personal Trainers
- b) Fitness Instructors



Both of these fitness professionals are equipped to provide fitness advice to clients. The key difference between the two is that the personal trainer teaches one-on-one either at the gym or at home. The fitness instructor is associated with a fitness centre and focuses more on group training and exercises.

The fitness professional begins by evaluating the health history of each client. Any red flags that come up during the health assessment, like muscular or skeletal structure injuries or serious medical conditions should be referred to doctor before training starts.

In addition to understanding the health history of a client, the trainer must get some sense of the client's goals, which can be specific or general.

A person may simply want motivation and designed exercise plan to lose weight and get back in shape. Or the client may have a specific area upon which they want to focus.

Is it the right career for me?

A fitness professional can be a very rewarding career or business path. Here is some self questions to see if it could suit you:

	Yes	No
Do you like exercising yourself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you look after what you eat and take interest in nutrition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you like the idea of working in a health or fitness surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you like the idea of helping and motivating people achieve goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you generally got a positive attitude to life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Did you answer mainly yes to each question? Then read on, this career could be for you...

What does a fitness trainer need to know?

There is a base of knowledge you must have before you become a fitness trainer.

In addition, once you study at an accredited College and achieve your qualifications, it is important you continually maintain your knowledge of new developments in the industry.

Here are some key knowledge areas for fitness trainers:

- Fitness screening and testing**
- Exercise planning for groups**
- Exercise planning for individuals**
- Nutrition**
- Aerobic conditioning**
- Strength training**
- Anatomy & Sport Physiology**
- Client communication and motivation**
- Business management**
- First aid**

As part of your studies, you will learn a lot about the human body and how it works while you are studying to be a fitness trainer. This more 'scientific' knowledge is very important as you address the right exercise needs of your client.

For example, you need to know how the heart, lungs and kidneys transport nutrients, oxygen and carbon dioxide throughout body. Understanding how the heart works, what factors affect the heart rate and the effects of sedentary or active lifestyles on the circulatory system are essential before you can prescribe a safe exercise program for your client.

It is important you know about the muscular and skeletal system of the body. These effect the mechanics of how our body runs, jumps, lifts etc.

You also need to learn about energy systems, such as aerobic and anaerobic and what feeds those different systems and about the endocrine system; hormones and what they do, and the effects of steroids.

You might know all the theory in the world but if you cannot put that information into a practical setting for your client, the client will not meet their goals. So you must also learn great personal communication skills .

The role of a fitness trainer

Trainers are required to have the appropriate skills to work independently with a variety of individuals and groups at various fitness venues.

As a fitness trainer your role will include:

- Plan, conduct and evaluate a broad range of exercise programs. This will include activities for strength training, aerobic conditioning and flexibility exercises.
- Provide accurate and professional advice on exercise, motivation, fat loss and nutrition to their clients
- Work under guidelines set by medical and other health professionals in programs or services relating to individuals with specific needs e.g. exercise rehabilitation.

As a personal trainer you need to:

- energise & motivate your clients
- set clear client goals
- be a training partner for your clients
- have equal (or in some cases more) passion than them for achieving their goals
- keep positive attitude for you and your client
- be honest with your clients
- be sensitive

Is the role all about fitness?

No. It is important to note that your day is not necessarily just filled with exercising and training clients. There is also plenty of “admin and business” things to attend to in your daily routine.

Depending on the role you have or fitness centre you work in your role could also include:

- Customer service tasks e.g. taking fees, answering questions, bookings
- Client marketing and promotion
- Admin duties such as paying receipts or making business reports
- Cleaning equipment

Why do people want a fitness trainer?

More people these days know the benefits of good health and fitness.

They are looking for guidance and mentoring from a knowledgeable, motivational and inspiring fitness trainer.

Some people are already self-motivated and want the pleasure of physical activity. So they want you as their trainer to provide a sound structure in their program and ensure their implementation of technique is sound.

Others people need you to motivate them. They have no ability to begin or maintain a period of physical activity over a period of time themselves. So they use you as the trainer to get them where they want to go. Many people will want their trainer to help them set goals.

Here are some examples of goals a client might want to achieve:

- Weight loss
- Reduce body fat.
- Work on stress management through exercise.
- Sports conditioning.
- Rehabilitation from an injury
- Strength training to increase body strength
- Increased endurance for greater energy
- Increase of muscle mass to increase their body size by enlarging their muscles.

Whatever the reason for taking on a trainer, hiring a professional will help individuals achieve their goals much easier and quicker.

What clients want from you

- ✓ **Support**
- ✓ **Motivation**
- ✓ **Goal Setting**
- ✓ **Fitness Knowledge**

What attributes do you need?

A great fitness trainer will need many attributes, not only to help their clients get through their training session but to also run their business.

Here are some of the attributes you'll need to develop as a trainer:

Commitment

Commitment is a great attribute to have. Be committed to your career or business. Be committed to your clients.

Organisation

You need to be organised prior and during a fitness session. It's very unprofessional to turn up to a session and not have anything prepared.

Patience

Patience is essential. You have to realise that everybody in the world has strengths and weaknesses. Not all clients are the same, and not all clients learn the same.

Listening

As a personal trainer you will need to listen to what your clients are saying and asking you. Your client will expect your full attention throughout the session. If you don't listen to what your client is saying, you will not know what their needs are.

Communication

Being a good communicator is another important attribute. You need to get your message across to your client or class.

Sense of humour

This is a great attribute to have as a trainer. At times you need to brighten up the day and be light hearted. It's great to be able to share a laugh with your clients.

Good health & Fitness

You need to practice what you preach. So a good level of health is essential for a trainer.

Career opportunities?

Where can you work?

- ✓ Gymnasiums
- ✓ fitness centres
- ✓ self-defence centres
- ✓ health studios
- ✓ Rehabilitation Clinics
- ✓ sports clubs
- ✓ Corporate Gyms
- ✓ community organisations
- ✓ Swimming Complexes
- ✓ outdoor training
- ✓ your own business

Personal training can be a rewarding, dynamic occupation. It can be a lifestyle.

Fitness instructing and personal training in Australia is one of the fastest growing occupations.

As a personal trainer you can work for yourself as a business or work for wages. To work your own business you can potentially earn a higher rate of money, but with it you need other skills.

Working for someone else you may not need the business skills and will need to only concentrate on the client aspect of personal training. Often these days the opportunities available for personal trainers will require you to be self-employed.

When looking for work, jobs advertised may have different names than personal trainer, for example, fitness instructor, fitness professional, and gym instructor.

Gym Instructor

Becoming a gym instructor is a great first step before you think about self employment as a PT. Consider it an apprenticeship to being a personal trainer. You will be working in a fitness centre environment, working with other qualified fitness professionals. It is perfect way to consolidate and enhance the skills you gain from your studies. Your role will be to keep the gym or centre running smoothly and that means keeping your clients happy.

Personal Trainer

Most personal trainers decide to run their own business. This can be far more financially rewarding with training 1 to 1 sessions costing between \$50 to \$100+.

Another great benefit is the flexibility. You can choose how and when you want to work. You also get to decide the type of clients you want to work with.

Some personal trainers establish their own home based businesses. The advantages are no rental fees, working at different locations and convenience. The downside can include travel time to clients, paying for equipment and maintaining a car.

Working as a personal trainer in a gym can be motivating and appealing to some trainers. Typically this involves being part of a roster of other trainers. The gym essentially provides a client base and you In return pay a rental fee or percentage to the gym for your sessions.

Working Part-time

If you are just looking for more casual work or a small part time income then the fitness industry offers lots of great opportunities. Gyms and fitness centres are often looking for staff for casual shifts. Similarly, if you want to work for yourself, it is very simple to establish a mobile training business from home to suit your available times and other commitments.

What do trainers earn?

The pay and earnings of fitness trainers really depend on the type of fitness role or fitness business that you are involved in.

Your income will vary according to level of qualification and area of specialisation.

Personal Trainers

Personal trainers can run group sessions (multiple clients) or one-on-one sessions. These sessions can cost anything from \$15 through to \$100+ per session.

So a trainer charging \$60 for a 1 to 1 session and who conducts just 20 one hour sessions per week is earning \$60,000 per year.

Obviously the more sessions you manage or the higher the fee you charge, the more you stand to earn.

From these earnings you then need to factor in expenses that you will incur including insurance, equipment, phone, advertising etc

Gym Instructor

Gym instructors will typically be on a salary or casual hourly rate. What you are paid will really depend on your age, experience and functions you will have at the centre.

As examples, here are some job advertisements posted on an industry website this year:

- *Group Fitness Instructor - \$35 ph + super + benefits*
- *Health & Fitness Team Leader - \$37,248 pa + super*
- *Assistant Club Manager - \$60,000 - \$90,000*
- *Personal Trainers - \$45,000 to \$80,000 pa*
- *Fitness Operations Coordinator - \$60,000 pa + super*

How do I get accredited?

Fitness Instructors

A **Certificate III in Fitness** is the qualification for a fitness instructor.

Registration by Fitness Australia is now generally accepted as the minimum level of qualification necessary to work as an instructor in the health and fitness industry. To be eligible for registration as a Fitness Instructor through Fitness Australia, you should hold the required units of competency from the Certificate III in Fitness.

Fitness Trainers or Personal Trainers

The **Certificate IV** in Fitness is the certificate for a qualified fitness trainer, operating as a Personal Trainer.

Registration by Fitness Australia is now generally accepted as the minimum level of qualification necessary to work as an instructor in the health and fitness industry. To be eligible for registration as a Fitness Instructor through Fitness Australia, you should hold the required units of competency from the Certificate IV in Fitness and also the Certificate III in Fitness.

Fitness Australia is the national fitness industry association working for a fitter, healthier Australia. Registered Fitness Professionals are those that have successfully attained the recognised qualifications, have registered with Fitness Australia and are generally employed or contracted by fitness professionals by fitness businesses or are self-employed within the fitness industry.



What does a massage therapist do?

Massage or manual bodywork comes under the category of complementary or allied health in Australia. Massage Therapy can be described as the manipulation of soft tissues by trained massage therapists for therapeutic purposes.



Massage Therapy promotes relaxation and eases emotional and physical stress, relieves headaches, and improves the function of the skin, the lungs and digestive organs.

Massage therapists may perform the following tasks:

- massage the soft tissues of the human body, including muscles, tendons and ligaments, to assist healing
- use massage techniques to enhance relaxation and wellbeing
- use techniques such as muscle stretching to assist with recovery and to enhance muscle performance
- use finger pressure techniques in shiatsu, reflexology and other therapies.

Massage therapists generally work in three broad (sometimes overlapping) areas:

- **Remedial Massage** which is a paramedical massage treatment to assist in healing parts of the body that have been injured or left inactive due to age, illness or injury.
- **Relaxation Massage** which combines massage techniques to promote relaxation, improve circulation, relieve muscle tension and increase range of movement.
- **Sports Massage** which combines different massage techniques to enhance sports performance and recuperation and prevent injury. It can include pre-event, post-event and maintenance techniques.

Is it the right career for me?

A career as a massage therapist can be a very rewarding career or business path. Here is some self questions to see if it could suit you:

	Yes	No
Do you enjoy having a massage yourself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you like the idea of treating people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a caring and positive nature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a genuine interest in helping clients overcome their physical problems?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have an interest in the body and how it works?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Did you answer mainly yes to each question? Then read on, this career could be for you...

What does a massage therapist need to know?

There is a base of knowledge and skills you must have before you become a massage therapist.

In addition, once you study at an accredited College and achieve your qualifications, it is important you continually maintain your knowledge of new developments in the industry.

Here are some key knowledge areas for massage therapists:

- A broad range of massage techniques and skills**
- Understanding when to use certain techniques over others**
- Stretching techniques**
- Use of temperature in treatments**
- Understanding how the body works and heals itself**
- Concepts of human anatomy and physiology**
- Ethics**
- Infection control procedures**
- Self care**
- Client communication skills**
- Case history taking**
- Business management**
- First aid**

As part of your studies, you will learn a lot about the human body and how it works while you are studying to be a massage therapist. This more 'scientific' knowledge is very important as you understand therapeutic effects your massage treatments have on your clients.

You might know all the theory in the world but if you cannot put that information into a practical setting for your client, the client will not enjoy or benefit from their treatment. So you must practice your hands on skills and increase the range of techniques you can use in your treatments.

Why do people get massage therapy?

People get massage therapy for general relaxation or for a variety of health conditions:

- Back pain
- Inflammatory conditions such as arthritis and tendinitis
- Stress relief and stress-related conditions
- Headaches and migraines
- Muscle and related conditions such as spasms, strains and sprains
- Repetitive strain injury, such as carpal tunnel syndrome
- Circulatory and respiratory problems
- Post-injury and post surgical rehabilitation

What is a typical massage therapy session?

A typical massage therapy session is between 40 and 90 minutes. Your massage will begin with a brief consultation and review of symptoms, medical history, and lifestyle.

You will be asked to undress (many people keep their underwear on) while the massage therapist is out of the room, and lie face down under a sheet on a padded massage table.

The massage therapist will knock on the door to make sure you are ready. The massage therapist re-enters the room and will then adjust the face rest and pillows to ensure that you are comfortable and properly positioned. Tell the massage therapist if you are too warm or cold.

The massage therapist uses a light oil or lotion on the skin and begins the massage. A full body massage usually begins on the back and then moves down to the legs. You will then be asked to turn over so you are face up. The massage continues on your arms, legs, neck, and abdomen.

You are underneath the towels at all times and only the part of the body being treated at any one time is uncovered.

After the massage, the massage therapist leaves the room so you can get changed.

Will massage therapy hurt? Massage therapy shouldn't hurt. Occasionally there is mild aching when the massage therapist applies pressure over "knots" and other areas of muscle tension. If the pressure is too strong for you, let the massage therapist know.

What attributes do you need?

To massage effectively a massage therapist should have the following personal attributes:

- Interest in health and natural science
- Physical and mental stamina
- Manual co-ordination, dexterity and sensitivity
- Patience and concern for people
- Balanced and confident personality
- Responsible and mature attitude
- Sensitivity towards clients
- Clean and tidy disposition.

What do massage therapists earn?

Income for massage therapists vary according to level of qualification and area of specialisation.

Currently massage therapists employed by clinics or health professionals such as a physiotherapist can earn between \$20 and \$40 per hour.

Self-employed therapists can earn between \$50 and \$100 per hour.

So a therapist charging \$60 for a treatment who conducts just 20 treatments per week is earning \$60,000 per year.

From this earnings you then need to factor in expenses that you will incur including insurance, equipment, phone, advertising, laundry etc



Career opportunities?

With all the benefits of massage therapy, the number of persons who get massage is reported to have tripled in the last decade. With the growing demand for massage therapy, there is growing demand for massage therapists.

As a massage therapist you could work with professional athletes or even teach new mothers how to massage their newborn babies.

Here are some options available to you:

Your own Business

It is very popular for massage therapists to run and operate their own business. This can be far more financially rewarding with therapists earning between \$50 to \$100+ per hour treatment.

Another great benefit is the flexibility. You can choose how and when you want to work. You also get to decide the type of clients you want to work with.

Some therapists establish their own home based businesses. The advantages are no rental fees, working at different locations and convenience. The downside can include travel time to clients, paying for equipment and maintaining a car.

Some therapists work in an established clinic. Typically this involves being part of a roster of other therapists. The clinic will provide a client base and you in return pay a rental fee or percentage of each treatment you undertake.

Relaxation Clinics and Spas

Relaxation clinics and Spas offer treatments that include stress management and relaxation treatments. This type of massage work is found in hotels, resorts, cruise ships and day spas. As a massage therapist you can be permanently employed or hired on a casual basis.

Sports Massage

Sports massage therapy involves working with athletes to enhance their performance, as well as helping them to recover from injuries. This type of massage is practiced anywhere there are athletes: health clubs, colleges, professional sports franchises, the Olympics, physical therapy offices, sports medicine clinics, doctor's offices and massage therapy practices.

Clinical Massage

Clinical massage therapy involves working with people who suffer from pain and injuries. This type of massage therapy is usually practiced in a physiotherapy office, chiropractor's office, hospitals, physical therapy centres or massage therapy practice.

Corporate Massage

Corporate massage therapy involves going to a corporate environment such as an office building, and perform anything from a 15 minute seated massage to a full table massage. If you enjoy a change of scenery, this could be the massage therapy practice for you.

FACT ► An increasing number of doctors are referring patients for massage therapy

How do I get accredited?

Qualifications

If you are intending to become a professional massage therapist then you will need to complete either the nationally accredited :

- Certificate IV in Massage or
- Diploma of Remedial Massage

A Senior First Aid Certificate is also required.

Associations

You may benefit from becoming a member of a relevant industry association.

Upon graduation with the Certificate IV qualification you may join a number of professional associations including The Association of Massage Therapists NSW, The Australian Traditional Medicine Society and The Australian Association of Massage Therapists.

The associations will help you get insurance and register for a provider number with health funds.

This could also help you with your employment prospects, networking, contact with industry and professional development and may provide you with important information and support.

State Licensing

There is no legal requirement for licensing or registration for this occupation at a State level.

Ready to get started?

We trust you found this free guide useful.

The Australian College of Sport & Fitness offers you a range of professional courses for fitness and health careers. These include:

- 'ULTIMATE Fitness Trainer' program
- Certificate III of Fitness
- Certificate IV of Fitness
- Certificate IV of Massage
- Diploma of Massage

Feel free to contact our course advisors today and the next step toward a great career.

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