

Personal Training Consumer Guide

*How to Achieve the Best You
Possible in 2020*



Hi, I'm Coach Melissa and I started Optimum Condition back in 1999. After working in the health and fitness industry for so long, I've seen a huge influx in the numbers of unqualified trainers entering the profession as "personal trainers." I've also seen a large increase in the number of injuries due to a lack of education, experience, and quite honestly, common sense.

I've learned there are a lot of misconceptions about personal training, personal training certifications, and what constitutes a "certified personal trainer". So much in fact, that I decided to put together this free educational guide to help consumers make an informed, intelligent decision before deciding to hire a trainer or other health professional.

I hope this sheds some light on some common grey areas within the health and fitness industry. I also hope the eyes of the consumer are opened as to what's required by law in order to call yourself a Certified Personal Trainer. Or should I say what is NOT required.

-Melissa Allen

3 Pitfalls to Avoid

1. Hiring a trainer based on looks. While it's certainly important to work with someone that practices what they preach, never hire solely on looks alone. Genetics play a large role in a person's appearance, both for women and men. Many people enter the personal training profession simply because they enjoy working out at the gym themselves. That doesn't qualify a person as a trainer capable of giving instruction on proper lifting, avoiding potential conflicts, or designing balanced programs that require knowledge of anatomy and physiology.

Also, be on the lookout for the so-called trainer that's an expert solely because of the number of followers they have on their social media profiles. In most cases, social following doesn't correlate to proven expertise or credentials. Dig deeper and look for legitimate qualifications from the start.

2. Assuming all certifications are equal. This couldn't be further from the truth. All so-called "personal training certifications" are not equal, and therefore, not all personal trainers are equal. It's important to choose a trainer that is certified through an NCCA accredited organization.

The National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) was created in 1978 for the purpose of ensuring the health, welfare, and safety of the public by assessing profession competence. The organization's job is to accredit certifying agencies, which set the standards for the industry. There are literally hundreds of cracker jack "personal training certifications" out there that are not NCCA accredited, and therefore not eligible for the Coalition for the Registration of Exercise Professionals® (CREP®).

The top three personal training certifications in my opinion are **ACE** (the American Council on Exercise), **NASM** (National Academy of Sports Medicine), and **ACSM** (American College of Sports Medicine). There may be some other good certifications out there aside from these three, just do your research when choosing one.

3. Assuming a certification is the same as a license. It is not. Not yet anyway. As a matter of fact, anyone can call themselves a “personal trainer” since it is neither a licensed profession nor even one that requires registration with the state.

Only Washington D.C. has required registration for personal trainers in the U.S. Since it’s not regulated, you stand a very good chance of finding a trainer that doesn’t possess the necessary knowledge to prevent you from being injured due to negligence.

As a matter of fact, a bigger problem exists. Since no laws currently exist governing this area, anyone can start their own personal training certification and “certify” other trainers. Yes, that means the jock, the fry cook, and the janitor not only can train clients, but now they can teach other trainers how to BE trainers.

10 Questions to Ask Yourself Before Starting a Program:

- What is my commitment level?
- What date do I want to start?
- What do I want to accomplish by working with a trainer?
- What is my primary goal?
- How far am I willing to travel?
- How will I fit exercise into my current schedule?
- Do I have a pre-existing condition that should first be addressed through physical therapy or corrective exercise?
- Are there other professionals needed to help me reach my goal?
- Should I see my doctor before starting a fitness program?
- What am I willing to invest? Investing in your health is one of the most important investments a person can ever make.

A Little Background on Personal Training

Consistency is the single most important factor in making progress and achieving results with any fitness program. And while some people can do this on their own, most require the assistance of a personal trainer.

In addition to making faster progress, a trainer can help prevent injury and design a program specific to your needs and goals. Your program should consist of some type of resistance training, cardiovascular conditioning and flexibility exercises.

While certification should be looked upon as an important qualification of a GOOD trainer, the BEST trainers will have a degree in one of the following fields or sub-fields:

- Sports Medicine
- Biology
- Kinesiology
- Health
- Athletic Training
- Physical Education
- Exercise Science
- Human Performance

I would highly suggest you interview some prospective trainers rather than just hire the first one that fits your budget. After all, you will be spending some time with your trainer and it's nice to get along well with the person you will be working so closely with.



15 Questions to Ask the Trainer During the Interview:

- Are you certified?
- Is the certification NCCA accredited?
- Do you specialize or have a degree in a related field?
- Are you a member of any trade organizations?
- Are you CPR and AED certified?
- If you have a special condition, is the trainer qualified to work with you?
- Do you gather health and background information in advance?
- Do you perform an initial assessment?
- What is included in the initial assessment?
- Do you carry professional liability insurance?
- Do you have a business license with the city?
- Do you carry any special qualifications that pertain to my specific condition?
- Do you offer a guarantee?
- Do you have experience working with people similar to myself?
- Do you have a list of references I can contact?

5 Additional Points to Consider:

- 1) Does the trainer seem passionate about his/ her profession?
- 2) Does the trainer's lifestyle fit their industry?
- 3) Does he/ she practice what they preach?
- 4) Is the trainer competent?
- 5) If you decide to do your training in a studio or fitness center, is the facility clean?

Thank you for taking the time to read this consumer guide, I hope you found it helpful. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me at (619) 252-4993. You're also welcome to schedule a free consultation; I would love to help you in any way I can. -Melissa



Melissa Allen graduated from Christian Heritage College in El Cajon, California with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology. Shortly thereafter she opened Optimum Condition as a mobile personal training company before opening the health & fitness studio that it is now. She's a certified personal trainer, 1st degree black belt in kickboxing, and a Brazilian jiu-jitsu purple belt. An active member of her community and the East County Chamber of Commerce, Melissa loves being outdoors with her husband, Lonnie, and their dog, Bodie, as much as possible. She can also be found playing bass guitar with her band quite frequently. Please visit our website at OptimumCondition.com to learn more about what we do.