



YOUR PERSONAL TRAINER CAREER ROADMAP



Whether you are new to the personal training industry and want to get an overview of how to get started and what to expect, or you are a personal trainer and want a long-term roadmap, this ebook is for you.

READ ON TO LEARN:

How to Become a Personal Trainer

Career Opportunities for Personal Trainers

- Gym Career Path
- Private Trainer/Entrepreneur Career Path

How Much You Can Make/How Long Each Path Takes

And more!

How to Become a Personal Trainer

As you'll see in this guide, there are five simple steps you'll need to take to become a personal trainer. And we'll be covering the best ways to tackle each one.



Get Your Prerequisites Completed First

Before you begin with a personal trainer course, you'll need to have a few items checked off before you can get certified. These are:

- 18 years or older
- High school diploma or GED
- CPR/AED certification

Although Fitness Mentors does not require you show proof of the prerequisites above, it is the standard for employment in the fitness industry. Additionally gyms require their trainers to hold Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Certification along with the Emergency Cardiac Care (CPR), but these certifications can usually be packaged together by the same provider.

The American Red Cross is a popular choice for the CPR/AED certification, and you can check out their website to find classes near you.



Nail Down the Best Certified Personal Trainer Course (for you)

[What is the best personal trainer certification?](#)

A better question is "what is the best personal trainer certification for me?" The certification body you choose is a highly subjective decision

— and often a confusing one — so here are some questions you can ask yourself before committing to one over another:

How do I learn new concepts best?

The certification body you choose is a highly subjective decision

Do you understand concepts better when they're presented in-person with a teacher or can you handle learning on your own?

Personal training education isn't a one-size-fits-all approach. You actually have several options, including:

- Certification via accredited US company (self-study)
- Vocational college (in-person)
- University programs with Bachelors or Masters (in-person)
- Unaccredited online options (self-study)
- Gym program (in-person)

How much time do you have?

Are you looking to get certified as soon as possible or would you prefer to get a college degree along with your certification? The [self-study options](#) are the quickest approach whereas the vocational college and university programs are obviously more long-term.

As you answer these questions, you should also be thinking about the differences between each personal training program.

Here are some answers to some common FAQs about becoming a trainer that may also help you decide which route you want to go:



Do I Need to Go to College to Become a Personal Trainer?

If the thought of becoming a full-time student isn't something that interests you, you're in luck.

You don't need to go to college to become a personal trainer.

While a university program will give you the most in-depth learning experience, including learning subjects that aren't solely personal-training focused, it comes at a price not everyone can afford, both in time and money.

However, if you have your sights set on becoming a personal trainer and you love school or are already working towards earning a Bachelor's or Master's, a college degree can strengthen your expertise and build trust with future clients.

This is especially important in the beginning of your personal training career when you're still building your client base.

So if you don't need a college degree, the next question is:



What Kind of Education Do I Need to Be a Personal Trainer?

At the bare minimum, you'll only need a high school diploma or equivalent. Beyond that, there are five education routes you can follow to become a personal trainer:

- Certification by a US company
- Vocational college
- University programs with a Bachelor's or Master's degree
- Unaccredited online options
- Internal gym programs

There are five education routes you can follow to become a personal trainer

Each option has its own educational program and certification procedures. By completing one of them, you'll hold a certification from that institute to teach people as a personal trainer.

Keep in mind, only the first three options on that list are accredited.

Let's go over the difference between an accredited and an unaccredited program so you know which sounds best for you.

Accreditation



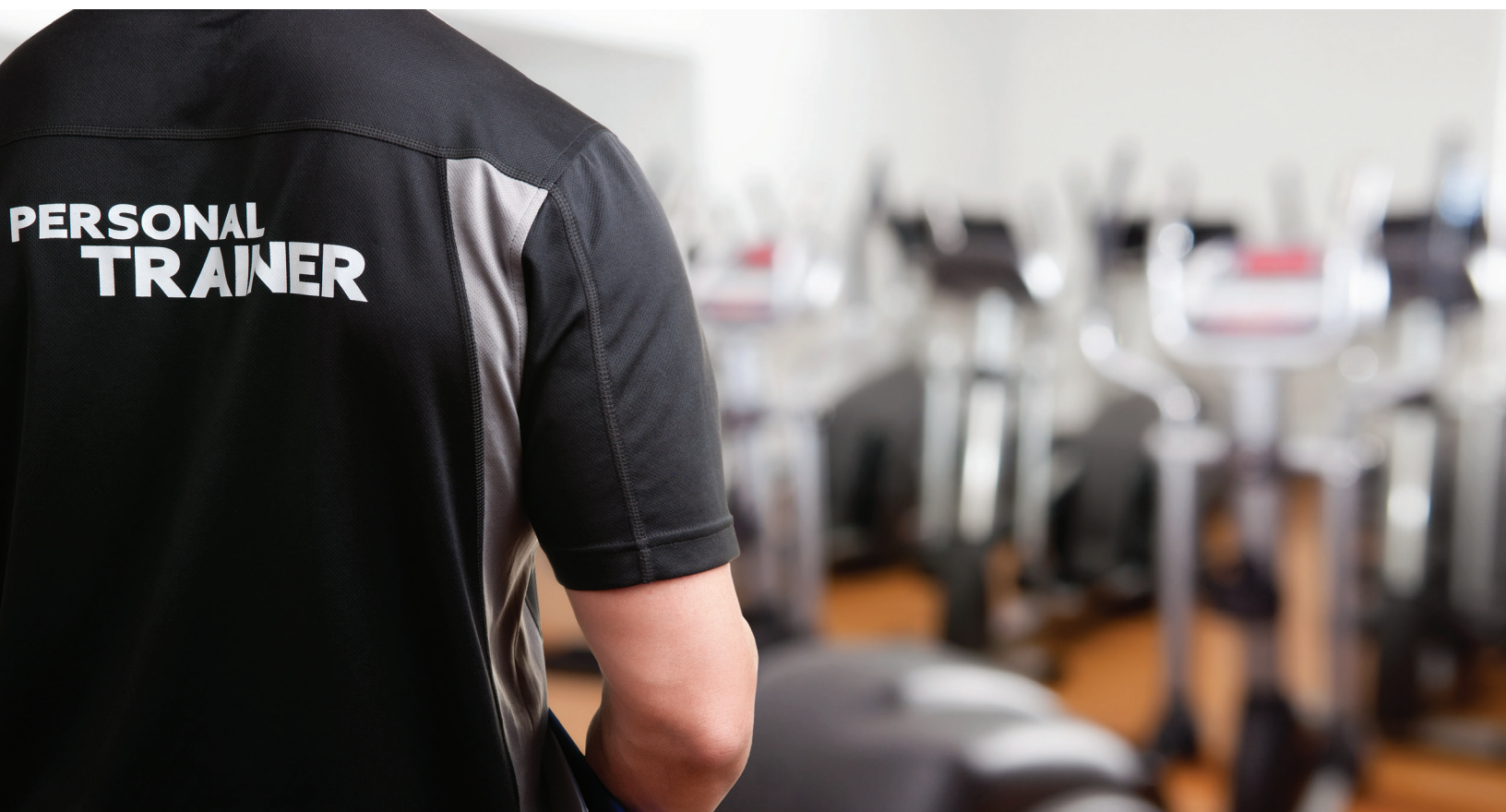
Accreditation standards are developed by several third-party credentialing organizations to maintain a level of professionalism within the fitness industry. This ensures that they meet the highest standard and validates that the aspiring trainer has the competency for entry level employment.

Most gyms will only accept an NCCA-accredited certification.

A program with the option for accreditation, such as [Fitness Mentors](#), is important to trainers because most gyms will only accept an NCCA-accredited certification. So, if you are like many trainers who want to jumpstart their career by working in a gym, an [NCCA-accredited certification](#) is of importance.

You can opt for an accredited self-study program, such as [Fitness Mentors](#), or you can enroll in a vocational college or bachelor's program at your local college, as mentioned earlier. Vocational schools or colleges will have relationships with accredited certification bodies so you'll walk away with a degree and your CPT.

Once you select a program, grab a calendar and set your exam date





Choose an Exam Date & Prepare

Picking an exam date is the first major step towards seeing your personal trainer dreams through.

Put it off and you may end up backburning your goal indefinitely.

That's why certain programs have you set a date right away for this very reason.

Keep in mind, you should be realistic with your date.

Fortunately, this next section can help you understand the real magnitude of the work so you can adjust your timeline and plan accordingly.

How Long Does it Take to Become a Personal Trainer?

Consider your schedule, current workload, and other obligations before setting a date that's too close for comfort. Fitness Mentors recommends giving yourself at least 8-12 weeks of study time to prepare.

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Plan on committing anywhere from 75-100 hours to doing so.

With your target test date in mind, you can then work backwards to plan out how many chapters you'll need to cover each week and month in order to be best prepared for it.

However, if you want to fast track your certification without sacrificing how much information you're learning, use this study schedule to knock it out in just two months:

- Read one or two hours per day at a minimum
- Create your own chapter-by-chapter notes from the book/coursework
- Use study guides to review hand-picked topics for reference
- Listen to audio lectures to review the information while driving/working out/during down time
- Take practice tests for each chapter
- Quiz yourself on 5-10 chapters of the book at a time every few weeks
- Reread study guides as you build upon new concepts
- Quiz yourself and document the questions you miss; revisit the sections of the book discussing the topics you didn't get right
- Take a quiz every day leading up to the final week of study
- Sit down for an entire practice exam and write down questions you missed; revisit topics you need a better understanding of
- Take the official certification exam when you consistently earn at least 85% passing score on practice exams

All this can help ensure you make it to this next (huge) step.



Pass Your Exam

There's nothing better than seeing the words PASS after you submit your personal training certification exam.

But you can only get there if you put in the necessary time reading and studying the material and understanding the concepts.

Practicing test questions and using practice test preps also help increase your chances of passing your exam.

And once you do, you'll officially be ready to start working as a personal trainer.



Land a Job as a Personal Trainer

Before you spend countless hours applying for jobs you may not enjoy, you should take the time to figure out what you really want and think about what gets you excited first.

You'll save time by only applying to positions that check these boxes.

So consider these questions:

Where exactly do you want to work?

- Do you prefer large group training classes or one-on-one sessions at the gym?
- Would you prefer working in a hotel or country club setting?
- Are you trying to start your own bootcamp or studio?

If you're looking to gain experience, it can also help to approach the staff where you currently work out to see if there are any openings. Since you're already familiar with the place and the staff may be familiar with you, you'll boost your chances of getting your foot in the door.





Career Opportunities for Personal Trainers

As an existing or aspiring personal trainer, you'll want to familiarize yourself with some of the most common career routes.

If upward mobility -- more money and responsibilities -- in your career are important to you, you'll want to start planning for your future as soon as you can.

Familiarize yourself with some of the most common career routes

Typically, most personal trainers go one of two routes:

1. Within a gym or corporate setting
2. As a private trainer or entrepreneur

Let's take a closer look at each route.



Gym Career Path

Many personal trainers choose to kick off their careers as personal trainers in gyms or similar corporate environments.

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These are appealing jobs because they provide a new trainer a way to gain experience and work with clients from all types of backgrounds. It allows trainers to focus on their sales techniques.

As a new personal trainer, you can likely expect to make anywhere from around \$25k to \$40k a year, depending on the gym you work at and how many new clients you book. The next natural step up within the gym environment is a personal trainer manager, and it usually takes new personal trainers 2-5 years to get a promotion like this. Many personal trainer managers can expect to make around \$55k to \$60k per year.

After 4-10 years as a personal trainer manager, you are likely to move into a role as a gym general manager, making upwards of \$75k. General managers at gyms are often required to have a college degree, but this requirement may vary from gym-to-gym.

After you gain experience as a general manager of one gym, your natural progression is to oversee many gyms within a designated geographical area. This position, titled regional manager, can make \$80k a year, and usually requires 3-5 years as a general manager before this promotion takes place.

Eventually, an executive position within a gym is attainable where you are likely to make upwards of \$100k a year. Becoming an executive of a gym chain can take 5-20 years after becoming a regional manager, as this position is only reserved for the most seasoned employee.



Private Trainer / Entrepreneur Career Path

For personal trainers that aspire to run their own business, the most common routes for them are to become private personal trainers (unaffiliated with any corporate gym) and move up from there.

Private personal trainers typically start off by renting out space from a local gym when they are training clients, but are free to charge their clients whatever they like and only have to pay the gym when they are doing in-person training.

These trainers, at early stages of their careers, typically make around \$50k but are often looking to scale their businesses into larger operations. The process of planning for this transition is covered in-depth in our [Fitness Mentors CPT course](#), and is worth a look if you plan on becoming a private personal trainer.

Establishing a decent client base and being able to justify the costs of expanding a personal training business into a larger operation usually takes anywhere from 2-5 years. This time period is much quicker than that of the gym career and can be much more lucrative.

The two most popular routes for the burgeoning entrepreneurial personal trainer are to:

1. Open a gym
2. Start an online personal training business



Opening a Gym

Opening a gym of your own can be a great way to expand your personal training business, increase your income, and continue to help others reach their health and fitness goals.

Many private trainers transition to gym ownership after 3-6 years and make upwards of \$80k a year.

To learn more about the business skill sets as well as the financial and personal development of opening a gym, check out this resource on [How Personal Trainers Will Know When They're Ready to Open a Gym](#).

Start an Online Personal Training Business

One of the fastest-growing areas of personal training is online-based businesses. Many private personal trainers start their own online training businesses within 1-3 years after starting their in-person training businesses, and can often make upwards of \$100k.

An Online Personal Trainer is someone who enhances the health of others through internet-based technological mediums.

Unlike in-person personal training that is limited to how many clients you can see in a day, online personal training as a business model is scalable. This is why so many trainers can become so successful using this model or can blend their in-person training with online training to make extra income.

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What Are the Benefits of Personal Training Online?

Personal training online allows you to do what you love, scale your business, and enjoy personal freedom and flexibility:

- **Personal Freedom**- Online personal training provides freedom for you as a trainer to work when you want, where you want, and how you want.
- **Financial Freedom**- Leverage six different methods of online training and create money-making opportunities while still serving clients.
- **Service & Altruism**- Build trust with clientele while offering new online services to continue growing your business.
- **Job Security**- As the fitness industry grows stay competitive through online means that create accessibility and trust.

Keep in mind that online personal training businesses are not limited in terms of products or services you can sell online, you can also venture into selling all kinds of things such as:

- Online training programs
- Products to other trainers
- Online personal trainer software (like GymGo)
- Any combination of the above

The [Fitness Mentors CPT](#) combined with the [Fitness Mentors Certified Online Personal Trainer](#) (FM COPT) Certification will show you how to start your online personal training business and help your income grow while reaching and helping more people.

Summary

You now have an understanding on the steps to become a personal trainer, career opportunities as a personal trainer, and some options for becoming a private trainer and starting your own gym or becoming an online personal trainer.

Whatever direction you want your career to take, it all starts with a certification. Check out the [Fitness Mentors CPT](#) for the first, and best, 100% online certification. The coursework is entirely online, the certification exam is online, and the content you'll learn will prepare you for real-world personal training scenarios as well as business development and sales.

Learn More Today!