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The health and fitness industry is booming thanks to the nation’s growing attention to disease prevention and health promotion. Professionals are needed to stand on the other side of the treadmill and lead people toward a new, healthier lifestyle. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that the employment of fitness workers is expected to increase 29 percent through 2018—significantly faster than the average career growth rate. Careers in the field of exercise science are broad. From personal trainers to cardiac rehab specialists, there is a health and fitness job to fit your career goals.

To pursue a rewarding career in health and fitness, however, the right degree is critical. Concordia University, St. Paul’s exercise science programs deliver a comprehensive study of the fundamental concepts of kinesiology and health such as biomechanics, exercise physiology, exercise prescription, health promotion, disease prevention and disease remediation, so that you are prepared for whatever career you choose in this exciting field.

An exercise science degree from Concordia will prepare students for studies in the following fields:

- Athletic training
- Exercise physiology
- Cardiac rehab

CAREERS

The health and fitness industry is a dynamic business sector with tremendous career opportunities for professionals with an exercise science degree. The growing focus on health care and overall wellness is increasing demand for many health and fitness jobs concerning health promotion and disease prevention. The following career guide has been compiled using the most recent available information from the BLS. Use this guide to learn about potential job opportunities in the health and fitness sector as well as education requirements and salary expectations for some of the top jobs in exercise science.
Stay in the game with a career as a coach. Depending on your level of experience and expertise, professionals can coach high school, college, amateur and professional-level sports teams. Coaches teach athletes the skills needed to excel at their sport and provide athletes with much guidance on and off the field.

Another side of the coaching profession is wellness coaching. Unlike sports coaches, wellness coaches develop their clients’ strategies for living healthfully and preventing disease. They provide motivation and the tools required to meet physical and emotional health goals. This can include weight management, healthy eating, stress reduction and other aspects of clients’ lives.

**Education and Training:**

**Required: Bachelor degree**

Education and training requirements vary in this field. Most coaches have a bachelor’s degree in exercise science or a related field, and have completed an internship or other form of real-world experience. When it comes to sports coaches, extensive experience in that sport is required by most employers.
Newcomers needing extra encouragement and guidance through a new workout regimen as well as seasoned pros looking to ramp up their routine for bigger results call on personal trainers to lead the way toward achieving their fitness goals. Personal trainers work with clients to develop effective fitness plans and provide guidance and motivation. Many are self-employed while others find employment at fitness centers and other health care facilities.

**Education and Training:**

**Recommended: Bachelor degree**

Understanding body mechanics and function is essential for personal trainers. A degree in exercise science or related field is necessary to gain a broader grasp of health and fitness and to better serve clients. Most fitness centers require a bachelor’s degree for employment as a personal trainer in addition to specialized certificates.

**JOB OUTLOOK**

This is projected to grow 13 percent from 2012.
Exercise can assist in the rehabilitation of individuals with a wide spectrum of issues, such as cardiovascular, body compensation, muscular strength, flexibility and more. An exercise physiologist works with patients suffering from any number of these issues to address the root of their problem through an effective exercise routine. Exercise physiologists can find employment within an athletic training department of a college or university, fitness centers, rehabilitation clinics and hospitals.

Education and Training:

Required: Bachelor degree
Recommended: Master’s degree

A bachelor’s degree in a health science is required for entry into this medical field, and many employees are looking for candidates who have specific certifications for greater career mobility.

SALARY

$47,610

This is the median annual salary as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
When a patient is diagnosed with heart or lung disease, the first step in conservative treatment can be lifestyle changes to reduce health risks and improve overall quality of life. That’s where a cardiopulmonary rehabilitation specialist comes in. They educate patients about the causes of heart and lung disease as well as help manage the symptoms.

**Education and Training:**

**Required:** Bachelor degree  
**Recommended:** Master degree

A bachelor’s degree in programs like exercise science, kinesiology or physiology is required for work as a cardiopulmonary rehabilitation specialist. Beyond entry-level positions, a master’s degree in similar fields is a good idea.

**Salary:**

This is the median annual salary as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

$42,620
Many individuals also choose to complete graduate work in the exercise science field. Students who earn master’s degrees in exercise science and related disciplines are qualified for leadership and management roles in fitness, health and sports performance settings. In fact, 57 percent of professionals in the exercise physiologist profession hold a master’s degree according to the BLS.

**Concordia University, St. Paul’s Exercise Science Programs**

The *Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Exercise Science* program consists of 41 credit hours and is offered fully online. It is designed for busy adult students who are interested in obtaining their degree and require the flexibility of attending class on their schedule. The undergraduate program focuses on kinesiology concepts in human movement, exercise and management.

The *Master of Science in Exercise Science* is designed to advance the skills and knowledge of current and future exercise science professionals. It consists of 33 to 36 credit hours. By utilizing a combination of theoretical inquiry and practical application, students will gain greater insight regarding exercise testing and prescription as they relate to working with diverse populations.

*Learn more about the exercise science programs at Concordia University, St. Paul by visiting online.csp.edu.*