

What is a Clinical Exercise Physiologist?

A Clinical Exercise Physiologist (CEP) is a healthcare professional who is trained to work with patients with chronic diseases and comorbidities where exercise training has been shown to be of therapeutic benefit. These conditions include, but are not limited to cardiovascular, pulmonary, metabolic, immunologic, hematologic, neuromuscular and chronic musculoskeletal diseases. The CEP utilizes scientific rationale to perform clinical exercise testing, exercise prescription, physical activity counseling, exercise supervision, and health education/promotion to assist in the recovery from illness, and prevent or manage chronic disease. The CEP also helps to provide continuity of care, particularly post-rehabilitation, when patients continue to benefit from exercise guidance. The practice and supervision of the CEP is guided by published professional guidelines, standards, and applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

Where do CEPs work?

The CEP works individually, under physician supervision, or as part of an interdisciplinary team in a clinical, community, or public health setting. Common settings include:

- Hospitals/medical centers: Cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation, cardiac diagnostic laboratories, cancer rehabilitation, bariatric or diabetes clinics, hospital-based wellness facilities
- Outpatient clinics and physician offices
- University exercise science laboratories or wellness centers
- Hospital-based research facilities

What type of training is required for a CEP?

The CEP must have a Master's degree (or higher) in exercise science, exercise physiology, or kinesiology and a supervised clinical experience. They must also hold either the Certified Clinical Exercise Specialist (CES) or the Registered Clinical Exercise Physiologist (RCEP) certification by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), or be licensed by the state as a CEP.

How does a CEP differ from a physical therapist or a personal trainer?

CEPs have the broad focus of improving aerobic endurance, whole body strength, flexibility and balance to enable those with, or at risk for, a chronic disease to adopt a healthy lifestyle and effectively manage their disease. In contrast, physical therapists treat patients who have acute pain due to injury or disability (an example is rehabilitation after knee or shoulder surgery). Personal trainers are typically trained to work with individuals who are apparently healthy. The minimum educational level for certification as a personal trainer is a high school diploma.

Where can I find a CEP?

To locate a CEP in your area, you may choose to use the ACSM ProFinder service at:

http://members.acsm.org/source/custom/Online_locator/OnlineLocator.cfm

Under "Certification/Registry Level" choose: ACSM Registered Exercise Physiologist, ACSM Certified Clinical Exercise Specialist, or EIM Credential Level 3.