

Code of Ethics and Conduct

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REPs

The Register of Exercise Professionals



Introduction

At The Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs), we aim to ensure exercise professionals registered with us, like you, establish and maintain a high standard of ethical and professional conduct when you provide services in fitness instruction.

As such, we expect you to adhere to this *Code of Ethics and Conduct*.

We all know from our own experience that physical activity and exercise can contribute positively to the development of individuals. They are a vehicle for physical, mental, personal, social and emotional development. You can enhance such development for individuals by guiding them as an informed, thinking, aspiring and educated exercise professional operating within an acceptable ethical and professional framework.

There are five key principles to the *Code of Ethics and Conduct*:

- rights
- relationships
- personal responsibilities
- professional standards
- safe working practice.

Any breaches to the REPs Code of Ethics and Conduct will be deemed as misconduct and you could be removed from the Register.



Roles and Responsibilities

Your role as an exercise professional is to:

- **identify and meet the needs of individuals**
- **improve performance or fitness through programmes of safe, effective and enjoyable exercise**
- **create an environment in which individuals are motivated to maintain their participation and improve their performance of fitness**
- **act with integrity and respect**
- **maintain and develop your personal competence.**

This *Code of Ethics and Conduct* (the Code) defines good practice for you as a professional in

the fitness industry by reflecting the core values of rights, relationships, responsibilities, standards and safety.

It is important to note that our use of the term 'professional' in this Code does not necessarily imply a paid position or person. Likewise, the Code applies to you whether you are an employed or self-employed professional.

If you are working as an employed exercise professional, we accept that you will be subject to the codes of practice and employment rules of your employer(s). When thinking about how you comply with our Code, you should also give careful regard to the rules of your employer(s). One important issue is whether or not, in the case of any complaint being made against you, you will be subject to any internal investigation by your employer(s). With that in mind, any complaint will be referred to your employer(s).

As an exercise professional registered with REPs, you agree to accept your responsibility to:

- people who participate in exercise
- other exercise professionals and colleagues
- fitness associations, professional bodies and institutes you are a member of
- your employer(s)
- society.

When practising as an exercise professional, you must also hold adequate liability insurance.

Principle 1: Rights

As an exercise professional, you should deal with your clients openly and transparently. You should adopt the highest degree of professionalism at all times in dealing with your clients' needs.

You should maintain a standard of professional conduct as an exercise professional that is appropriate to your dealings with all client groups, and responsibly demonstrate:

- respect for individual differences and diversity
- good practice in challenging discrimination and unfairness
- discretion in dealing with confidential client disclosure.

Under these principles, and as a member registered with REPs, you should ensure your contractual arrangements with your clients are clear and transparent.

Although we cannot and will not adjudicate or deal with private contractual disputes (which should be dealt with between you and your clients), at REPs, we will nevertheless seek to ensure that all our exercise professionals have appropriate regard for dealing with and addressing concerns raised by their clients.

If a dispute arises between you and a member of the public concerning your role as an exercise professional, you should, in the first instance, try to resolve that dispute between yourselves. We have no jurisdiction at REPs to resolve such a dispute.

If a dispute arises from an injury to a client or damage to property, however, you should notify this to your insurer without delay.



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Principle 2: Relationships

As an exercise professional, you should develop a healthy relationship with your customers and other health professionals.

Your relationship with customers should be based on openness, honesty, mutual trust and respect, and you should responsibly demonstrate:

- that you are aware of the requirement to make the client's needs a priority, and when planning an appropriate training programme, promote the client's welfare and best interests

- clarity in all forms of communication with clients, professional colleagues and medical practitioners, ensuring honesty, accuracy and cooperation when seeking agreements, and avoiding misrepresentation or any conflict of interest arising between clients and your own professional obligations
- integrity as an exercise professional and recognition of the position of trust this role puts you in.



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Principle 3: Personal Responsibilities

As an exercise professional, you will demonstrate and promote a responsible lifestyle and professional conduct.

At all times, your conduct as an exercise professional and personal behaviour should be proper, and you should responsibly demonstrate:

- a high standard of professional conduct appropriate to your dealings with all your client groups that meets the image and expectations we aim to maintain for the role of an exercise professional working in the fitness industry
- an understanding of your legal responsibilities and accountability when dealing with the public, and awareness of the need for honesty and accuracy in substantiating your claims of authenticity when promoting your services to the public
- a duty of care to be aware of your working environment and able to deal with all reasonably foreseeable accidents and emergencies, protecting yourself, your colleagues and your clients
- that you are a positive role model, maintaining control, respect and dignity for all involved in your profession
- an image of health and well-being, delivering effective sessions to your clients.

Principle 4: Professional Standards

As an exercise professional, you will seek to adopt the highest level of professional standards in your work and the development of your career.

You should commit to ongoing training while achieving appropriate qualifications as an exercise professional to responsibly demonstrate:

- that you are engaged in actively seeking to update your knowledge and improve your professional skills to ensure your service is always of a high standard
- your willingness to accept responsibility and be accountable for your professional decisions or actions
- that you welcome evaluation of your work, and recognise the need, when appropriate, to refer to another professional specialist
- a personal responsibility to maintain your own effectiveness and only practise activities for which your training and competence are recognised by us at REPs.



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Principle 5: Safe Working Practice

As an exercise professional, you should thoroughly prepare for all activities, ensuring the safety of your clients is a priority.

You should maintain a safe exercise environment for all your clients at all times, and demonstrate:

- a responsible attitude to the care and safety of your clients within the training environment and in planned activities, ensuring both are appropriate to the needs of your clients
- an appropriate ratio of instructors to clients within any group sessions to ensure that, at all times, the safety of all clients is paramount
- that you have systematically prepared all your clients for the activity in terms of safety, including the safe use of equipment.



Implementation

As an exercise professional, you should proactively champion ethical behaviour.

Our Code defines good practice for you as a professional in the fitness industry by reflecting the core values of rights, relationships, responsibilities, standards and safety. It will support you in looking to recognise and resolve ethical issues and conflicts, and it sets out the key principles that you should adhere to as an exercise professional to ensure an ethical and professional approach to your work.

Ethical reflection is an essential part of everyday

practice. Our Code cannot contain all the answers to the ethical issues that you will face as an exercise professional. Some actions that constitute a breach of the Code will be more clearly distinguishable than others. However, in all cases, you should conduct a process of careful reflection, reasoning and consultation with others, as well as consulting further detailed guidance on key areas of practice.

However, a Code alone is of limited value. We have designed it to be a guidance and benchmarking document only, and for it to truly impact on practice and behaviour, this Code should be:

- incorporated into wider constitutions, governance and employment documents
- incorporated into education and development programmes and processes
- assessed as part of any accreditation process
- part of the policy and procedure for dealing with allegations and complaints
- used as the benchmark of good practice in determining the need for sanctions
- supported by the appropriate training and resources.

For more information on The Register of Exercise Professionals, please call 0330-004 0004, or visit www.exerciseregister.org

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