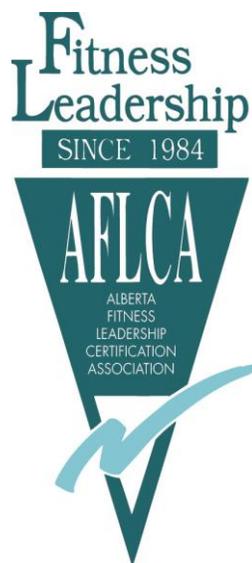




National Fitness Leadership Association

Fitness for the Older Adult Performance Standards



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An Older Adult Exercise Leader demonstrates the necessary skills to design and implement safe and effective exercise for older adults.

Older Adult Exercise Leader Performance Standards build on the NFLA Exercise Theory Prerequisite Knowledge Base.

Health-Related Benefits of Physical Activity

Performance Standard

The Older Adult Exercise Leader describes the benefits of group exercise classes.

Competencies

1. Defines group exercise
2. Explains the current trends and factors that influence the popularity of group exercise

Leadership and Communication

Performance Standard #1:

The Older Adult Exercise Leader identifies and demonstrates qualities, strategies, and skills of effective leadership appropriate for Older Adult exercise.

Competencies

1. Employs professional qualities of leadership and leadership strategies in the delivery of exercise sessions to encourage program adherence
2. Exhibits effective motivation techniques to encourage program adherence
3. Understand the difference between student-centered and teacher-centered instruction

Performance Standard #2:

The Older Adult Exercise Leader recognizes and demonstrates a variety of effective communication techniques appropriate for Older Adults.

Competencies

1. Effectively utilizes verbal, visual and kinesthetic cueing
2. Describes how to enhance verbal, visual and kinesthetic cueing to improve exercise technique of participants
3. Effectively applies techniques of giving and receiving feedback with participants
4. Utilizes techniques to reduce voice injury

Performance Standard #3:

The Older Adult Exercise Leader demonstrates knowledge of group dynamics.

Competencies

1. Creates a supportive, participant-centred environment
2. Identifies potential challenges that leaders may experience in an exercise program and describes strategies for accommodating various older adults
3. Monitors the stages of group development and takes specific actions to improve group dynamics.
4. Identifies behaviour modification strategies for motivating older adults based on the Transtheoretical Model of Behaviour Change (Stages of Change Theory)

Aging Process

Performance Standard #1

The Older Adult Exercise Leader demonstrates knowledge of the physiological, psychological and sociological effects of aging and its relationship to physical activity.

Competencies

1. Demonstrates an understanding of the terms chronological, biological and functional age through effective program planning
2. Applies the concept of functional fitness to program design
3. Describes myths, stereotypes and barriers associated with aging and how they relate to physical activity participation in later life
4. Identifies probable age-related changes to the systems that provide and support movement in the body including cardiovascular, respiratory, muscular (decreased elasticity, atrophy), skeletal, visceral (dystrophy), proprioception (balance), vision, integument (skin), digestion (nutrition), immune system and brain function; and explains the effect of physical activity on these systems in terms of increased risk & benefit
5. Identifies potential changes to the dimensions of wellness (intellectual/cognitive, emotional, physical, vocational, social, spiritual, environmental) with aging.
6. Identifies the 5 levels of functional ability as identified in the Physical Dimensions of Aging (Dependent, Frail, Independent, Fit and Elite).
7. Explains how sedentary lifestyle and other lifestyle choices/behavior impact health
8. Explains physical literacy and how it relates to older adult exercise participation and adherence

Performance Standard #2

The Older Adult Exercise Leader recognizes common health challenges facing older adults and how these changes affect functional mobility and independence.

Competencies

1. Familiar with the etiology of common health challenges relating to the aging process, including but not limited to: cardiovascular disease, stroke, hypertension, respiratory disorders, obesity, arthritis (including rheumatoid and osteoarthritis), osteoporosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), back pain, diabetes, balance and musculoskeletal conditions (including postural deviations – kyphosis, swayback and flat back) and motor control deficits (MS and Stroke), visual and hearing disorders, dementia, urinary incontinence, edema and joint replacement. chronic pain

2. Identifies contraindications for a given health challenge (including those named above) and factors that affect appropriate exercise selection and modifications. (i.e. use of medication, supplementation or physical challenges)
3. Accesses accurate and credible information on diseases and related exercise precautions (i.e. health professionals, health association, websites).

Program Planning

Performance Standard #1:

The Older Adult Exercise Leader designs an effective program using established methods and training principles. The Older Adult Exercise Leader evaluates programs using measurable outcomes to ensure effective and appropriate programming.

Competencies

1. State the steps in effective class design for older adults
2. Prepare an effective lesson plan for an older adult program, including lengthened warm up and cool down, gradual aerobic progression, flexibility, muscle conditioning and relaxation
3. Explain the importance of a given component of fitness to wellness of the older adult
4. Implements functional fitness skills within the class setting to support ADL's
5. Compares and contrasts methods for continued monitoring of older adult exercise intensity
6. Assess the effectiveness of an older adult exercise program using appropriate formal and informal means
7. Applies the concept of falls prevention to ensure a safe program and environment
8. Utilizes the WHO Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health as an educational tool for physical activity recommendations
9. Demonstrate continuity of movements, progressions and compatibility with participants' abilities
10. Effectively applies exercise principles for older adult programs including FITT, specificity, progressive overload, periodization and ceiling effect

Performance Standard #2:

The Older Adult Exercise Leader demonstrates how to use equipment to enhance training for various participants and class types, ensuring that it is both safe and effective for the older adult.

Competencies

1. Describe the purpose of different pieces of portable exercise equipment
2. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of using a piece of equipment
3. Identify when it is appropriate to use equipment or not.
4. Design appropriate exercises and alternatives using various pieces of equipment

Performance Standard #3:

The Older Adult Exercise Leader demonstrates an understanding of the reasons for using music (or not) in an older adult exercise program.

Competencies

1. State reasons for using music (or not) in an older adult exercise program
2. Identify the relationship between music and motivation for older adults
3. Identify music appropriate for different class formats and styles
4. Describe music copyright laws

Exercise Analysis

Performance Standard

The Older Adult Exercise Leader selects safe and appropriate exercises for the goals and objectives of the older adult exercise class.

Competencies

1. Apply the process of movement analysis to adapt exercises to given health limitations, musculoskeletal disorders and postural deviations
2. Explain the intended and actual purpose of a given exercise; analyze its potential risks and provide modifications for older adults (progression, regression, alternative)
3. Explain contraindicated exercises for given health limitations, musculoskeletal disorders and postural deviations
4. Explain the importance of proper body alignment, posture and core stabilization in injury prevention
5. Identifies errors in technique and provides corrections appropriate to the learning ability of the older adult
6. Utilizes appropriate exercises for strength, muscular endurance, balance, agility, posture, and cardio-respiratory fitness for older adults
7. Incorporates appropriate static stretch(es) for the muscles used during the exercise class

Professional Practice & Risk Management

Performance Standard #1:

The Older Adult Exercise Leader demonstrates an understanding of their scope of practice and pursues continuing education related to exercise leadership.

Competencies

1. Adheres to the scope of practice
2. Acts in accordance with the code of conduct
3. Acts an informed resource to colleagues and participants
4. Understands the role of maintaining accreditation to continued professionalism
5. Demonstrate an understanding of a fitness leaders' code of conduct and scope of practice, including legal liability and insurance coverage
6. Choose relevant, current applicable professional development opportunities to maintain certifications

Performance Standard #2:

The Older Adult Exercise Leader designs and conducts classes in such a way to minimize and manage risk.

1. Utilizes pre-screening strategies for safe program delivery for older adults and their participation in physical activity (e.g., PAR-Q+, ePARmed-X+)
2. Use of space effectivity to account for safety issues and needs of participants with visual, hearing, proprioception or cognitive impairments
3. Familiar with Emergency Action Plan requirements, including safety issues related to but not limited to floor surfaces, proper footwear, lighting, acoustics, telephone, ventilation, and accessibility to water, washrooms, facility emergency procedures and exits
4. Aware of how facility type, size, location, etc. impacts older adult programming