

An Educational Perspective with a Director of Education

An Interview with Scott Lucett, Director of Education for NASM

by John Izzo



The last decade has really seen an increase in the rate of individuals entering the personal training profession. The National Academy of Sports Medicine, although one of over 300 certifications available to enthusiasts, seems to stand out. Many believe it is the NASM's assessment-focused curriculum, or its attention to biomechanical detail; others believe it is NASM's OPT model that fits like a glove for almost all client prospects...

Let's just say it is all of those reasons and then some.

I, being a NASM-certified professional, am intrigued with the organization, its courses, and its viewpoint on exercise. Its texts are one of a kind in this industry and the organization itself, is without a doubt, a top notch machine. I had the chance to shoot Mr. Scott Lucett some questions regarding the NASM and the personal training industry as a whole. Here is what NASM's Director of Education had to say.

JOHN: Scott, can you please tell my readers a little more about you and your fitness/educational background? How did you get started with the NASM?



Scott: I've been in the fitness industry now for 13 years. After graduating from Fresno State with a BS in Exercise Science, I worked as a Personal Trainer for 24 Hour Fitness running Apex programs and doing one-on-one personal training. At the same time I work as a Physical Therapy Aide at a sports therapy clinic. I worked at both 24 Hour and the sports therapy clinic for two years and then worked for the Apex Fitness Group as an Apex Representative, installing the program in clubs across the country. I then became an educator for Apex teaching Apex workshops across the country, primarily for 24 Hour Fitness trainers. After teaching for a year I became the Director of Education for the 24 Hour Fitness division of Apex. Apex had purchased NASM in 1997 making NASM the preferred personal training certification for the organization. As

NASM grew, so too did the need for more staff, and in 2001 I left Apex to become an instructor for NASM teaching workshops across the country. I am now the Director of Education for the organization and have since received my MS degree in Performance Enhancement and Injury Prevention through California University of Pennsylvania. I also act as adjunct faculty for the University teaching NASM rich courses.

JOHN: Scott, NASM has grown in popularity and industry acceptance over the last few years. What do you think has helped NASM grow and why do you think NASM simply stands out amongst other certification organizations?

Scott: NASM provides very unique, cutting edge information that has been exciting for the industry. The programming scheme taught in the certification (the Optimum Performance Training model) helps put together a very easy to use program design model that can be used with any client for any goal. It is scientifically sound and helps trainers understand exactly where to start someone and how to progress them accordingly based upon their physical capabilities and goal. The model provides the answers so a trainer can feel confident in working with any client, whether they are a 65 year old senior or a professional athlete. The certification also teaches trainers the concept of integrated training, which is the utilization of all of the key aspects that needs to be incorporated into one's training program (flexibility training, cardiorespiratory training, core training, balance training, reactive training, speed, agility and quickness training and integrated resistance training) versus just the traditional

cardiorespiratory and resistance training. The combination of a systematic training model and the progressive utilization of all aspects that needs to be included into one's program creates huge value in the personal trainer certified through NASM.

JOHN: Many organizations are trying to unify the testing process in an effort to regulate the industry. What are your thoughts concerning the regulation of the personal training process and do you think we will ever get anything close to a "license"?

Scott: NASM's personal training certification is accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (or NCCA), a third party accreditation organization that is designed to help ensure the health, welfare, and safety of the public through the accreditation of a variety of certification programs/organizations that assess professional competence. Certification programs that receive NCCA Accreditation demonstrate compliance with the NCCA's *Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs*, which were the first standards for professional certification programs developed by the industry. I applaud the industry's efforts in taking the first step in making some level of regulation in certification. There are a large number of certifications in the industry today and by having the recommend accreditation guidelines in place helps to decipher the more credible organizations from some of the more "fly-by-night" groups. There are some steps being taken in some states for personal training to be regulated by the state (like Physical Therapist or Athletic Training). This would make the process to become a personal trainer take much longer, but will certainly ensure one's ability to perform the necessary skills and abilities needed to be safe and successful personal trainer. Although it seems that initial steps are being taken down the road of regulation, I feel that formal licensure is pretty far down the road.

JOHN: What do you see changing or evolving in the personal trainer's role in the next 12-16 months?

Scott: With the influx of the baby boomer population, trainers will need to be competent in working with seniors. Also seeing that roughly 60% of gym members are females, trainers must also be competent in working with this population which would also include the pre/post natal client. Corrective exercise and dealing with musculoskeletal issues is also crucial (due to sedentary lifestyles). And as always, being very competent in working with weight management clients and becoming more skilled in areas other than exercise (coaching, nutrition) will ensure trainers are more well-rounded to work with clients with weight management goals. Also providing more services other than just one-on-one training will be important. Providing youth programs, small group training and coaching sessions helps the trainer increase their value, offer new ways to generate revenue to the gym or their own business and help to provide new, affordable ways for individuals to get involved in living a healthier lifestyle.

JOHN: The idea of "bracing" the abs versus the "drawing in" maneuver has been confused/challenged/and dissected with the popularity of studies conducted by Stuart McGill. As trainers, are we building a mountain out of an ant hill on this topic? Is it just simply a case of "activating the transverse abdominis (TVA)" that is being over-specified?

Scott: There are two schools of thought regarding core stabilization - intrinsic stability (from researchers such as Hodges and Richardson) and global stability (McGill). When it is all said and done, for optimal stability you need both. One is not more important than the other. More often than not, many people have good strength in the outer core musculature, but lack intrinsic stability. So from a progression stand-point, you may need to teach someone how to draw in to develop intrinsic stability, but then teach them to use the intrinsic stabilizers with their global musculature (bracing). This leads to optimal spinal stability.

JOHN: What is your take on trainers stepping into the realm of physical therapy? Trainers are learning to use goniometers, taping methods, and manual therapy...good or bad?...your thoughts?

Scott: I think it depends on what the trainers do. I do not recommend trainers getting involved in manual therapy techniques, such as joint manipulations and the like. These techniques take time to learn (not just through a weekend workshop) and should be dealt with by those who are skilled in the techniques. On the other hand, the use of corrective exercise (through movement assessments, flexibility techniques and strengthening techniques) has been a popular form of training due to all the musculoskeletal issues people are suffering from due to a sedentary lifestyle. These are techniques a PT also does, but I feel are also very important for the trainer to learn how to perform. If a client comes in and has had back pain in the past, the trainer needs to know what may have been a reason for that pain and design a program to make sure the individual doesn't have to go to rehab (more injury prevention in nature). Or, a client may be coming off of rehab and the trainer needs to be able to pick up where the PT left off. Being skilled in performing corrective exercise/therapeutic techniques that are not a form of manual manipulation is definitely warranted by the trainer. As for goniometers, they are simply a measuring device (like a body fat caliper) and with the right training, I think they can be very helpful to determine potential issues that need to be addressed in a corrective exercise program and to make sure the client is going in the right direction. **[END]**