

Code of Ethical Practice

Exercise professionals can add significant value to not only the physical well being, but also the overall health & wellness, of an individual. However, in doing so it is expected that all exercise professionals maintain a high degree of professionalism and ethical behaviour. Specifically, all registered exercise professionals agree to abide by the following code of ethical practice.

(1) Professional Standards

For the protection of participants, an exercise professional will always:

- maintain the safety of participants
- promote the rights of every individual to participate in exercise, and recognise that people should be treated as individuals
- respect the rights, dignity and worth of every human being and their ultimate right to self-determination, specifically, exercise professionals must treat everyone equitably and sensitively within the context of their activity and ability – regardless of gender, age, disability, occupation, ethnic origin, colour, cultural background, marital status, sexual orientation, religion or political opinion
- challenge any form of discrimination against any participant
- ensure all physical contact is appropriate and is carried out with the participant's full consent. When testing of a participant requires moving of the participant's garments, to obtain explicit permission to do so, and also to give the opportunity of privacy as appropriate
- not adopt practices to accelerate performances or fitness improvements, which might jeopardise the safety, total well being and future participation of participants. Exercise professionals must never advocate or condone the use of prohibited drugs or other banned performance enhancing substances
- clarify in advance with participants the number of sessions fees (if any), method of payment, and any other potential costs involved in participation
- identify and respect the physical limits and ability of participants, and educate participants on these limits
- discuss with parents/guardians the potential impact of training programs offered to minors under the age of 16
- on request, disclose their qualifications, experience and registration details and provide the opportunity for the participant to consent/decline instruction by that person
- recognise when it is appropriate to refer to another professional or specialist
- when a participant is also a client of another professional (e.g. health) that may impact on the participant's health or fitness needs, then to liaise and co-operate with this professional as needed, after first obtaining explicit permission of the participant to do so.

An exercise professional will maintain personal professional standards by ensuring that they:

- work towards attaining a high level of competence through qualifications and a commitment to ongoing training that ensures safe and correct practice, which will maximise benefits and minimise risks to participants
- promote and maintain practices based on current knowledge and research
- acknowledge the boundaries of the competencies, and always act within them
- accept responsibility for their actions

Personal professional standards (continued):

- do not smoke, drink alcohol or use recreational drugs (or be under the influence of any of these) while instructing
- ensure, when making any comment (public or otherwise) to be clear whether they are representing the profession or making a personal comment, and not necessarily the opinion of the profession
- confine themselves to practice those activities for which their training and competence is recognised by the Register
- project an image of professionalism, health and functional efficiency
- maintain high standards in the use of language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation
- respect the standards, responsibilities and traditions of their own and other professions, including institutions and agencies that constitute their working environment
- disclose to all parties any conflicting obligations between any of the following: industry association, professional institute, the register, or employer

(2) Relationships

An exercise professional will:

- at all times, maintain professionalism, while working in his/her capacity as a fitness professional, regardless of the relationship between them and a participant
- not engage in any form of sexual contact with a participant, including the use of innuendo, inappropriate gestures or use of terms
- where an existing intimate relationship exists with a participant, separate, by both time and location, any sexual intimacy with a consenting participant

(3) Privacy

To protect the privacy of participants, an exercise professional will:

- safeguard confidential information relating to participants
- be discrete in conversations with participants
- only disclose information to other professionals that is necessary, and with the full permission of the participant

(4) General

A fitness professional must never:

- do anything that brings themselves, another exercise professional, a fitness centre/workplace or the fitness industry into disrepute. This includes damaging the professional trust that the participant has for an individual or organisation, and breaches of the law
- undertake any advertising, or promote material that:
 1. is deceptive or likely to be so
 2. contains comparisons with, or implies superiority to, any other fitness professional, fitness centre or other professions
 3. is offensive or sensational
 4. makes any claim associated with their services that cannot be supported

Any individual that believes a registered exercise professional is breaching the code may lay a complaint with the REPs. In serious cases the matter will be brought before the REPs disciplinary committee. The committee is empowered to make binding decisions. Full details of this procedure, and for the most up to date copy of this code, visit the REPs website – www.reps.org.nz



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