



Exercise Theory Exam Guide

SPRA would like to acknowledge the British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association for the development of the Exercise Theory Exam Study Guide.

Congratulations on your initiative in preparing to write the SPRA Exercise Theory Exam! The exam is based on the Exercise Theory Performance Standards as recommended by Fitness Leadership Canada (FLC).

This study guide contains the following valuable information:

- Specific theory exam topics and their weighting
- Sample exam questions and answers
- Nine assumptions about adult learning
- Additional resource recommendations and suggested readings

The study guide will help focus your preparation on the more pertinent areas for the exam and will help to dispel any apprehension you may have regarding the exam.

Good luck!

Section 1: Exam Topics and Their Weighting

Exam Weighting

Health-Related Benefits of Physical Activity	3.5%
Holistic Approach to Physical Activity and Lifestyle	3.5%
Anatomy	15%
Movement and Mechanics	25%
Physiology	11.5%
Principles of Exercise Conditioning	18%
Exercise Analysis and Risk Management	10%
Basic Nutrition and Body Composition	7%
Program Planning	5%
Leadership Skills	1.5%
<i>Total (60 multiple-choice questions)</i>	<i>100%</i>

Sample Study Topics

1. Health Related Benefits of Physical Activity (3.5%)
 - Summarize health-related benefits of physical activity.
 - Demonstrate the ability to provide an atmosphere that values individual choices and diversity relating to physical activity.
 - Identify lifestyle behaviors that can and cannot be modified and how they increase or decrease health risks.



2. Holistic Approach to Physical Activity and Lifestyle (3.5%)
 - Define active living.
 - Describe the features and benefits of holism. Give an example of each and how to impart this knowledge in a fitness leadership setting.
 - Explain intrinsic and extrinsic factors of motivation for adults in a fitness leadership setting.
 - Describe different approaches a leader could take to encourage participants to make a commitment and to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

3. Anatomy (15%)
 - Identify the major bones and joints and describe how bone structure influences joint function.
 - List and describe the different types of connective tissue and their role in human movement.
 - Locate the major muscle groups on another person or diagram.
 - Identify the major antagonist muscle pairs of the major muscle groups.
 - Identify and describe the anatomical limitations to joint flexibility.
 - Describe the stretch reflex and how it influences range of motion and joint flexibility.

4. Movement Mechanics (25%)
 - Demonstrate and define the joint actions at the major joints.
 - In a given exercise, discuss the joint action and identify the agonist and the antagonist muscle group.
 - Design exercises for the major joints that will provide a balanced conditioning to the muscles surrounding the joint area.
 - Describe the various types of muscle contractions.
 - In a given exercise, identify the prime mover during the concentric and eccentric phases of the movement.
 - Using the principle of levers, explain how to vary the intensity of an exercise.
 - Select the most stable and state which of the following three factors has provided the increased stability:
 - a) widening the base of support,
 - b) lowering the centre of gravity,
 - c) moving the centre of gravity over the base of support.

5. Physiology (11.5%)
 - Identify the average range for resting heart rate as well as the range for target exercise heart rate for an individual of a stated age and gender.
 - List techniques to control and self-monitor pacing to prevent doing too much exercise too soon or too vigorously.
 - Describe the acute responses to aerobic/anaerobic exercise for each of the following systems:
 - a) cardiovascular,
 - b) respiratory,
 - c) musculoskeletal.



- Summarize the key elements of the three energy systems and when they are used in the muscle contractions.
 - Describe the oxygen transport system and how a trained individual differs from an untrained individual.
 - Describe the relative contribution of anaerobic and aerobic energy during the following: warm- up, aerobic workout, muscular strength/endurance, and selected physical activities.
6. Principles of Exercise Conditioning (18%)
- Identify the components of physical fitness and describe the importance of each to overall well- being.
 - Describe the frequency, intensity, time (duration), and type of exercise (FITT) capable of improving each of the following fitness components:
 - a) flexibility,
 - b) cardiovascular conditioning (aerobic/anaerobic),
 - c) muscular strength,
 - d) muscular endurance.
 - Compare and contrast different techniques to improve joint flexibility.
 - Describe and demonstrate an exercise that is designed to assist in the performance of daily activities (functional movements).
 - Explain the specific order to the performance of the components of fitness and the recommended period of time to be spent on each.
 - Compare the training effects of the following: continuous; intermittent; aerobic; anaerobic; isometric; isotonic strength training; static/dynamic stretching; weight-bearing; non-weight bearing; progressive overload; specific adaptation to imposed demands (SAID).
 - Demonstrate a competent use of Canada’s Physical Activity Guide.
 - Describe techniques to monitor intensity for all components of physical fitness.
7. Exercise Analysis and Risk Management (10%)
- Give precautionary measures for beginning exercise participants that are designed to prevent injury and increase safety for all components of fitness.
 - Analyze the suitability of an exercise for general safety, by modifying it, avoiding it or maintaining the exercise.
 - Identify potential risky exercises to joint structures.
 - Compare and contrast the signs and symptoms of acute and chronic physical distress with respect to overtraining and high intensity exercise.
 - Identify and describe three environmental factors that can affect the body’s response to sustained physical activity.
 - Know the set of emergency procedures for the facility and the employer. (i.e. first aid, support procedures, medical referral procedures and follow-up).
 - Explain the RICE principle (i.e. rest, immobilize, cold and elevation).
 - Describe responsibilities (i.e. pre-screening methods) and liabilities associated with the instructor and the facility.



8. Basic Nutrition and Body Composition (7%)
 - Using Canada's Guide to Healthy Eating, identify the food groups, describe the guiding principles of the guide, and state for adults the recommended number of servings per day from each food group.
 - Identify the recommended daily percentage of calories required and metabolic breakdown from carbohydrates, fat and protein for healthy living.
 - Explain the concept of energy balance as it relates to healthy body composition including reference to energy-in and energy-out. Describe one limitation to the energy balance concept.
 - Explain how changes in body composition influence basal metabolic rate and subsequent energy balance.
 - Demonstrate an awareness of Body Mass Index (BMI).

9. Program Planning (5%)
 - Within a program plan, demonstrate pre-screening methods, progressive overload by indicating when adjustments in activity intensity variations can be made.
 - Describe ways to evaluate the effectiveness of a physical activity program.
 - Describe different methods which will create or sustain a positive exercise climate for participants.
 - Apply the principles in Canada's Physical Activity Guide to program planning.

10. Leadership Skills (1.5%)
 - Describe the principles of adult learning and how they relate to the exercise environment.
 - Demonstrate effective communication skills in working with a variety of participants.
 - Describe and apply the principles of effective leadership.
 - Describe a variety of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors relating to exercise adherence.

Section 2: Sample Questions

1. A benefit of regular participation in physical activity is:
 - a. Increases the rate of physiological aging.
 - b. Guarantees that you never gain excess body weight.
 - c. Strengthens your bones and muscles.
 - d. Increases calcium absorption in your teeth.

2. Which of the following is not an agonistic/antagonistic muscle pair?
 - a. Subscapularis/Infraspinatus
 - b. Rectus Abdominus/Erector Spinae
 - c. Gastrocnemius/Soleus
 - d. Gluteus Maximus/Iliopsoas

3. The primary muscle or muscle group responsible for extension of the hip joint is the:
 - a. Sartorius



- b. Gluteus Maximus
 - c. Gluteus Medius
 - d. Iliopsoas
4. Rank the following exercises in order from least to most stable:
1. Seated calf raises 2. Standing one-leg calf raises 3. Standing calf raises
- a. 1, 3, 2
 - b. 3, 2, 1
 - c. 2, 3, 1
5. The normal physiological response to an aerobic exercise session is:
- a. An increase in heart rate and decrease in stroke volume.
 - b. An increase in O₂ consumption and ventilation.
 - c. A decrease in cardiac output.
 - d. A decrease in blood flow to the working muscles.
6. Fitness components to consider when planning a fitness program are:
- a. Muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, power, and body composition.
 - b. Aerobic and anaerobic capacity, muscular strength and endurance, and body composition.
 - c. Body composition, aerobic and anaerobic capacity, power, and flexibility.
 - d. Flexibility, cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, and muscular endurance.
7. Two individuals who weigh exactly the same amount and follow an identical exercise program will:
- a. Lose the same amount of weight in a 4-week period.
 - b. Respond differently to the program.
 - c. Probably eat the same amount of calories per day.
 - d. Gain the same amount of muscle mass.

Answer Key: 1(c); 2(c); 3(b); 4(c); 5(b); 6(d); 7(b)

Section 3: Nine Assumptions About Adult Learning

- Assumption 1: **Personal Meaning**
Adult learning is enhanced when learners perceive that the learning process and its results have personal meaning to them and are relevant to their own purpose.
- Assumption 2: **Learning Climate**
Adults learn best in environments that are supportive and free from threats, and in a learning climate that fosters self-esteem, freedom of expression, acceptance of differences, and an acknowledgment that mistakes are necessary.



- Assumption 3: **Emerging Needs and Interests**
Adults learn best when learning is viewed as an evolutionary process and when the structure of a learning design can adapt to the emerging needs and interests of a maturing group.
- Assumption 4: **Self Responsibility**
Adult learning is enhanced when learners are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning by participating actively in the decision-making, planning, and implementation of the learning activities.
- Assumption 5: **Group Settings**
Adult learning is enhanced when learners can work in group settings, sharing and building on the experiences and resources of others in the group.
- Assumption 6: **Respect For Individuality**
Adults learn best when they are prized and respected for their unique model of reality and their individual experiential history.
- Assumption 7: **Cognitive and Affective Learning**
Adult learning is enhanced when learning activities are designed to appeal to both the cognitive (thinking) and affective (feeling) processes of knowing - when learners are encouraged to trust their affective responses cognitive material, and vice versa.
- Assumption 8: **Ongoing Evaluation and Reflection**
Adults learn best when they are part of an ongoing evaluative process which includes time to reflect on their learning, to give and receive feedback, and to implement change as a result of their learning.
- Assumption 9: **Facilitator as Role Model**
Adult learning is enhanced in the presence of a facilitator who is reflective, is involved in active learning projects, maintains self-esteem, acknowledges mistakes in a positive framework, values group members as co-learners, lives a healthy lifestyle.

Based upon the work of Dr. Virginia Griffin, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education as reported by Strachan (1982, p. 28-29) in A Handbook for Trainers of Fitness Leaders.

Your Exercise Theory Course and Manual will prepare you for the FLC exam. Nevertheless, you may wish to supplement or update your knowledge by accessing the following resources:

1. American College of Sports Medicine. Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription, Sixth Edition; 2004. (Available in the [Resource Centre for Sport, Culture and Recreation](#))



2. Government of Canada. Canada's Food Guide; 2024. (Available at <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en>)
3. Wilmore, J. & Costill, D. L. Physiology of Sports & Exercise, (3rd Edition) Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics, 2004. (Available in the [Resource Centre for Sport, Culture and Recreation](#))