



ISSA Personal Trainer

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Practice Questions

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1. How many vertebrae make up the cervical region of the spine?

- A. 5
- B. 12
- C. 7
- D. 9

2. Which document is completed BEFORE any fitness testing to identify medical contraindications to exercise?

- A. A health history questionnaire (e.g., PAR-Q+)
- B. A one-repetition max test
- C. A body composition scan
- D. A signed liability waiver only

3. In the standard anatomical position, how are the palms oriented?

- A. Facing forward
- B. Facing the body
- C. Facing the floor
- D. Facing backward

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4. A personal trainer's scope of practice does NOT include which of the following?

- A. Diagnosing a client's knee injury
- B. Demonstrating proper exercise technique
- C. Designing a general fitness program
- D. Providing general fitness information



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5. Through which process can the body produce glucose from non-carbohydrate sources such as amino acids during fasting?

- A. Gluconeogenesis
- B. Lipolysis
- C. Glycolysis
- D. Ketogenesis

6. What is the immediate, usable form of chemical energy for all muscular contraction?

- A. Adenosine triphosphate (ATP)
- B. Glucose
- C. Creatine
- D. Glycogen

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7. The principle stating the body adapts specifically to the type of demand placed on it is known as:

- A. Reversibility
- B. Variation
- C. Specificity (SAID principle)
- D. Recovery

8. When designing resistance training for prepubescent youth, what is the primary safety guideline?

- A. Emphasize proper technique with light loads and supervision
- B. Use maximal 1RM testing to gauge strength
- C. Avoid all resistance training until age 16
- D. Prioritize heavy singles to build bone density

9. What type of joint is the elbow?

- A. Hinge joint
- B. Ball-and-socket joint
- C. Pivot joint
- D. Saddle joint

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10. The PAR-Q+ is primarily designed to do what?

- A. Measure aerobic capacity
- B. Identify individuals who should seek medical clearance before exercise
- C. Estimate one-rep max strength
- D. Calculate daily caloric needs

11. Flexion and extension of the elbow occur primarily in which plane of motion?

- A. Transverse
- B. Sagittal
- C. Oblique
- D. Frontal

12. Maintaining client confidentiality means a trainer should:

- A. Share client progress on social media to attract clients
- B. Keep personal and health information private unless given consent
- C. Post before-and-after photos without permission
- D. Discuss a client's health issues with other gym members

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13. Adaptive thermogenesis during prolonged dieting refers to:

- A. An increase in metabolic rate
- B. A reduction in energy expenditure beyond what weight loss predicts
- C. A rise in the thermic effect of food
- D. Increased muscle protein synthesis

14. Which energy system provides the fastest ATP for short, all-out efforts lasting up to about 10 seconds?

- A. Aerobic (oxidative) system
- B. Glycolytic system
- C. Phosphagen (ATP-PC) system
- D. Lipolytic system

15. What does the principle of progressive overload state?

- A. Train the same load until adaptation stops
- B. Always train to muscular failure
- C. Gradually increase the training stimulus over time to keep adapting
- D. Reduce volume each week to avoid injury



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16. Why are children generally less able than adults to cool themselves during exercise in the heat?

- A. They have a lower ratio of body surface area to mass
- B. They have a higher surface-area-to-mass ratio and lower sweat rate
- C. They sweat far more than adults
- D. Their core temperature falls during exercise

17. What type of joint is the shoulder (glenohumeral joint)?

- A. Hinge joint
- B. Ball-and-socket joint
- C. Gliding joint
- D. Pivot joint

18. What is the generally accepted normal resting heart rate range for healthy adults?

- A. 60–100 bpm
- B. 100–140 bpm
- C. 30–50 bpm
- D. 140–180 bpm

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19. A dumbbell lateral raise (abduction of the shoulder) occurs in which plane?

- A. Coronal-sagittal
- B. Sagittal
- C. Frontal
- D. Transverse

20. What type of insurance protects a personal trainer against claims of negligence resulting in client injury?

- A. Health insurance
- B. Renters insurance
- C. Professional liability insurance
- D. Life insurance



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21. During exercise exceeding two hours, recommendations suggest consuming roughly how much carbohydrate per hour?

- A. 0-5 g/hour
- B. 100-150 g/hour
- C. 30-60 g/hour
- D. 200+ g/hour

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22. Anaerobic glycolysis is the predominant energy system for activities lasting approximately:

- A. 0 to 6 seconds
- B. 30 seconds to 2 minutes
- C. Over 10 minutes
- D. More than 1 hour

23. The loss of fitness adaptations when training stops is called:

- A. Overload
- B. Specificity
- C. Reversibility
- D. Periodization

24. What does the term 'peak height velocity' (PHV) refer to in youth athletic development?

- A. The fastest sprinting speed a youth can achieve
- B. The maximum vertical jump height
- C. The period of most rapid growth in stature during the adolescent growth spurt
- D. The age at which strength peaks

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25. Synovial fluid is produced by which structure?

- A. Articular cartilage
- B. Periosteum
- C. Tendon sheath
- D. Synovial membrane



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26. A blood pressure reading is expressed as systolic over diastolic. Which value is the systolic pressure?

- A. The lower number
- B. The pulse pressure
- C. The higher (top) number
- D. The mean arterial pressure

27. Trunk rotation during a cable woodchop occurs in which plane of motion?

- A. Longitudinal
- B. Sagittal
- C. Frontal
- D. Transverse

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28. A document in which a client acknowledges the inherent risks of exercise and agrees not to hold the trainer liable for ordinary negligence is called a(n):

- A. Informed consent form
- B. Health history questionnaire
- C. Exercise prescription
- D. Waiver / release of liability

29. Adequate intake of which mineral is important for thyroid hormone production?

- A. Calcium
- B. Sodium
- C. Potassium
- D. Iodine

30. Which system is the primary energy supplier during prolonged, low-to-moderate intensity endurance exercise?

- A. Phosphagen system
- B. ATP-PC system
- C. Fast glycolysis
- D. Aerobic (oxidative) system



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Answer Key & Explanations

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1. C — 7

There are 7 cervical vertebrae (C1-C7), followed by 12 thoracic and 5 lumbar.

2. A — A health history questionnaire (e.g., PAR-Q+)

A health history questionnaire such as the PAR-Q+ screens for medical risk factors and contraindications before any exertion, so it must precede physical testing.

3. A — Facing forward

Anatomical position is standing erect, feet together, arms at the sides with palms facing forward (supinated). It is the universal reference for describing motion.

4. A — Diagnosing a client's knee injury

Diagnosing injuries or medical conditions is the role of a licensed physician. Trainers may design programs and teach technique but must refer medical concerns to qualified professionals.

5. A — Gluconeogenesis

Gluconeogenesis is the synthesis of glucose from non-carbohydrate precursors (amino acids, glycerol, lactate), maintaining blood glucose during fasting or low-carb states.

6. A — Adenosine triphosphate (ATP)

ATP is the only direct energy currency the muscle can use; all fuels must ultimately be converted into ATP before contraction can occur.

7. C — Specificity (SAID principle)

The SAID principle (Specific Adaptations to Imposed Demands) means the body adapts specifically to the kind of stress applied, so training must match the goal.

8. A — Emphasize proper technique with light loads and supervision

Youth can safely resistance train when the focus is on correct technique, light-to-moderate loads, and qualified supervision. Maximal lifting and 1RM testing are not recommended for children.

9. A — Hinge joint

The elbow is a hinge joint allowing flexion and extension in one plane.

10. B — Identify individuals who should seek medical clearance before exercise

The Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PAR-Q+) is a self-screening tool that flags people who may need physician clearance before starting activity.

11. B — Sagittal

The sagittal plane divides the body into left and right halves; flexion/extension movements like a biceps curl occur in this plane.



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12. B — Keep personal and health information private unless given consent

Professional ethics require keeping client information confidential. Sharing photos, progress, or health details requires the client's explicit consent.

13. B — A reduction in energy expenditure beyond what weight loss predicts

Adaptive thermogenesis is a greater-than-expected drop in energy expenditure as the body defends against weight loss, which can stall progress and promote regain.

14. C — Phosphagen (ATP-PC) system

The phosphagen system uses stored ATP and creatine phosphate to regenerate ATP almost instantly, making it dominant in very brief, maximal efforts.

15. C — Gradually increase the training stimulus over time to keep adapting

Progressive overload requires gradually increasing demand (load, volume, frequency, or intensity) so the body is continually challenged to adapt.

16. B — They have a higher surface-area-to-mass ratio and lower sweat rate

Children have a greater surface-area-to-mass ratio (gaining heat faster) and a lower sweating capacity, making them more vulnerable to heat stress and requiring extra hydration and rest.

17. B — Ball-and-socket joint

The shoulder is a ball-and-socket joint, giving the greatest range of motion of any joint.

18. A — 60–100 bpm

A normal adult resting heart rate falls between 60 and 100 beats per minute; values below 60 may reflect either fitness (athletes) or bradycardia.

19. C — Frontal

Abduction and adduction move limbs away from or toward the midline within the frontal (coronal) plane.

20. C — Professional liability insurance

Professional liability (often called professional indemnity) insurance covers claims that the trainer's professional negligence caused harm, such as a client injury during a session.

21. C — 30-60 g/hour

For prolonged endurance, about 30-60 g of carbohydrate per hour helps maintain blood glucose and sustain performance, with multiple transportable carbs allowing up to 90 g/hour in some cases.

22. B — 30 seconds to 2 minutes

Fast glycolysis predominates in high-intensity efforts roughly 30 seconds to 2 minutes long, producing ATP rapidly but yielding lactate and hydrogen ions.

23. C — Reversibility

Reversibility (the 'use it or lose it' principle) describes the gradual loss of training adaptations when the stimulus is removed.

24. C — The period of most rapid growth in stature during the adolescent growth spurt

Peak height velocity marks the time of fastest growth in height during puberty and is used to time training emphasis, as injury risk and coordination change around this period.



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25. D — Synovial membrane

The synovial membrane secretes synovial fluid, which lubricates and nourishes the joint.

26. C — The higher (top) number

Systolic pressure is the higher top number, representing arterial pressure during ventricular contraction; diastolic is the lower bottom number during relaxation.

27. D — Transverse

The transverse plane divides the body into top and bottom; rotational movements such as twisting occur here.

28. D — Waiver / release of liability

A waiver or release of liability is signed by the client to acknowledge risk and waive the right to sue for ordinary negligence. It does not protect against gross negligence.

29. D — Iodine

Iodine is a structural component of thyroid hormones T3 and T4. Deficiency can cause goiter and impaired metabolism, which is why table salt is often iodized.

30. D — Aerobic (oxidative) system

The oxidative system uses oxygen to fully break down carbohydrate and fat, providing sustained ATP for long-duration activity.



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