

CSCS Examination Content

A detailed content outline is further defined in the Exam Content Description manual available through the NSCA Certification Commission.

Test Content

To begin your preparation in an informed and organized manner, you should know what to expect from the actual examination in terms of the content and performance areas tested. The test matrices that appear below and on the following page describe the content categories covered on the examination. The matrices can be used to get a general impression of the examination and, with closer inspection, can give you specific study direction. For example, by comparing the number of items in each category, you can determine the relative importance given to each category on the examination. The detailed content outlines relate the specific job tasks available for testing. A detailed content outline is further defined in the Exam Content Description manual that is available through the NSCA Certification Commission.

Content Outline for the Scientific Foundations Section of the CSCS Examination

I. Exercise Sciences (58 questions)

- A. Develop training programs that demonstrate an understanding of human muscle anatomy and physiology
- B. Develop training programs that demonstrate an understanding of human neuromuscular anatomy and physiology
- C. Develop training programs that demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles of human biomechanics with respect to exercise selection, execution and sport performance
- D. Develop training programs that demonstrate an understanding of human bone and connective tissue (e.g., tendon and ligament) anatomy and physiology
- E. Develop training programs that demonstrate an understanding of human bioenergetics and metabolism
- F. Develop training programs that demonstrate an understanding of human neuroendocrine physiology
- G. Develop training programs that demonstrate an understanding of human cardiopulmonary anatomy and physiology
- H. Develop training programs that demonstrate an understanding of physiological adaptations to exercise
- I. Develop training programs that demonstrate an understanding of the anatomical, physiological and biomechanical sport-specific differences of athletes (e.g., age, gender, training status, various sports)
- J. Use psychological techniques to enhance the training and/or performance of an athlete

II. Nutrition (22 questions)

- A. Explain nutritional factors affecting health and performance
- B. Explain the techniques to manipulate food choices and training methods to maximize performance
- C. Recognize signs, symptoms and behaviors associated with altered eating habits and disorders
- D. Explain the effects, risks and alternatives of various performance-enhancing substances and methods
- E. Recognize the nature of an athlete's nutritional status and determine the appropriateness of a referral to a qualified healthcare professional

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To purchase an Exam Content Description manual or other exam review materials from the NSCA Certification Commission, visit www.nscacc.org or call 888-746-2378.

Content Outline for the Practical/Applied Section of the CSCS Examination

I. Exercise Technique (39 questions)

- A. Describe, teach and evaluate safe and effective resistance training exercise technique
- B. Describe, teach and evaluate safe and effective plyometric exercise technique
- C. Describe, teach and evaluate safe and effective speed and speed-endurance development technique (e.g., resisted and assisted sprinting, special fitness, speed-strength methods)
- D. Describe, teach and evaluate safe and effective agility technique (e.g., forward, backward, and lateral movements; turn, transition, and stop-and-go maneuvers)
- E. Describe, teach and evaluate safe and effective aerobic endurance exercise technique
- F. Describe, teach, and evaluate safe and effective flexibility exercise technique

II. Program Design (39 questions)

- A. Design training programs that maximize performance by prescribing various training methods and modes based upon an athlete's health status, strength and conditioning levels and training goals
- B. Design training programs that maximize performance and muscle balance by selecting exercises based upon an athlete's health status, strength and conditioning levels and training goals
- C. Design training programs that maximize performance by applying the principles of exercise order based upon an athlete's health status, strength and conditioning levels and training goals
- D. Design training programs that maximize performance by determining and prescribing appropriate loads/resistances (including heart rate guidelines) based upon an athlete's health status, strength and conditioning levels and training goals
- E. Design training programs that maximize performance by determining and prescribing appropriate volumes (defined as sets x reps) based upon an athlete's health status, strength and conditioning levels and training goals
- F. Design training programs that maximize performance by determining and prescribing appropriate work/duration and rest periods, recovery methods, and training frequencies based upon an athlete's health status, strength and conditioning levels and training goals
- G. Design training programs that maximize performance by determining and prescribing appropriate exercise progression based upon an athlete's health status, strength and conditioning levels and training goals
- H. Design training programs that maximize performance by utilizing the principles of periodization
- I. Design training programs for an injured athlete to maintain training level during the rehabilitation and reconditioning period (e.g., include safe and appropriate exercise(s) for a given injury or condition)

III. Organization and Administration (10 questions)

- A. Establish policies and procedures associated with the day-to-day operation of the strength and conditioning facility
- B. Determine the layout of the facility for effective use of time and space
- C. Maintain equipment and facility to provide a safe training environment

IV. Testing and Evaluation (22 questions)

- A. Select and administer appropriate tests to maximize test reliability and validity
- B. Evaluate and identify the significance of testing results