

Virtual Personal Training Services Guidelines

There has been substantial growth in the delivery of virtual (online) training in the Australian Health and Fitness Industry due to the continual evolution in accessibility, connectivity, and the restrictions on how and when people can exercise.

There are many benefits to delivering exercise services virtually, including:

- ▶ The ability to reach a wider range of clients such as those in rural and remote areas
- ▶ Providing clients with a new, convenient way to access services
- ▶ Adding a new income stream outside of the traditional face to face training
- ▶ Enabling clients to remain active and connected despite their working or personal commitments.

Running virtual personal training services is different to running a session where clients are physically present. There are new challenges and risks that need to be appropriately managed. Clients must always be provided with the same duty of care as they would if the session were face-to-face.

This document outlines the best practice guidelines for personal trainers delivering virtual exercise services. These recommendations should be adhered to in conjunction with the **Code of Ethical Conduct** and **Scope of Practice** for AUSactive Registered Exercise Professionals

Qualifications and Registration Categories

To deliver online personal training, a registered exercise professional must:

- ▶ be registered as a personal trainer with AUSactive
- ▶ hold a Certificate IV in Fitness and/or equivalent.

Participant Safety

Personal trainers have a professional duty of care to their clients when providing services virtually. The following are a list of recommendations to support safe and therefore, effective exercise prescription:

- ▶ All new clients or, if the medical condition of the existing client has changed, must complete a pre-exercise screening questionnaire, e.g., **Adult Pre-Exercise Screening System** or **Pre-Exercise Screening System for Young People**.
- ▶ Verbal confirmation and questioning of the client's health status must be conducted prior to engaging in a session.
- ▶ It is important to gain an understanding of the client's exercise history to assist with program development.
- ▶ Consideration for the client's welfare based on many factors (e.g., health status, ability to use technology, space for activity) need to be prioritised. This may result in identifying that virtual training may not be suitable for some individuals. In this situation, appropriate support should be provided, e.g., re-scheduling to a face-to-face session, referral.
- ▶ Consider the technology clients have access to, e.g., phone, laptop, iPad. Client screens should be turned on. Laptops, iPads, and larger screens are recommended in order for the client to communicate with and view the Personal Trainer adequately during exercise demonstrations. Wireless headphones are also beneficial in increasing client experience and communication.
- ▶ Ensure the client is sufficiently prepared for the session prior by providing them with details around audio visual setup and the delivery platform being used (e.g., Zoom, Google Meet, Facetime).
- ▶ Ensure the client's training environment is safe and free from hazards. Assist them to do a thorough risk assessment and ensure this is documented. Consider the type of flooring, obstacles, children, and pets.
- ▶ Assist the client to check any equipment to ensure it is safe for use, e.g., resistance bands are not perished.
- ▶ Lighting must be adequate to allow for best possible view throughout the session.
- ▶ Plan for an emergency. Obtain the client's physical location before the session and details on gaining access if needed (e.g., a landlord or property manager's contact). Clients are also recommended to download apps such as Emergency Plus.
- ▶ In the event of any serious incident, e.g., injury, illness, or emergency, ensure an incident form is completed.
- ▶ Document training sessions, keep records and store information appropriately.



Program Development

When developing a virtual training program, there are additional programming factors that should be considered:

- ▶ When selecting exercises, it will be more difficult to demonstrate and correct client technique online. It is recommended that exercises that are less complex are initially chosen, particularly for beginner clients.
- ▶ Consider the equipment and space the client has access to.
- ▶ Consider different ways to monitor the client's intensity, for example, rate of perceived exertion (RPE) or they may have a device or application they could use to record their heart rate.
- ▶ How to instruct positioning for viewing the client technique adequately.
- ▶ Be prepared to spend more time instructing and correcting movements compared to face to face delivery.
- ▶ Accommodate participant abilities and provide progressions and regressions when required.

Referral

When personal trainers service offerings change, it is a great opportunity to connect with existing and potential referral networks such as, general practitioners and allied health professionals. This networking ensures they are aware of the variety of services trainers are providing and how they can support clients under their professional guidance.

Insurance

Personal trainers must hold valid Public Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance and understand the coverage. If trainers deliver services to clients internationally, this must be appropriately reflected in the insurance policy.

Informed Consent

Personal trainers should communicate the following prior to commencing exercise:

- ▶ Any identified risks and safety precautions, including avoidable events that may pose a risk to safety, e.g., pets, children, or other interference, are not the trainer's responsibility.
- ▶ Consent documentation is signed, including completion of the pre-exercise screening tool.
- ▶ The agreed goal/s, objective/s and expectation/s of the session.
- ▶ Client fees - always be upfront and clear; having this information in writing will assist this.

Recording of Sessions

Recording the training sessions can provide the client and personal trainer valuable reflection on the session in line with the associated objectives. If personal trainers record any session, they must:

- ▶ Obtain consent from the participant's parent or guardian when the session involves children or young people.
- ▶ Inform the client about why the sessions are being recorded.
- ▶ Store the recording in line with Privacy regulations.
- ▶ Provide access to the recorded session, should the client request.

Acknowledgement

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