

DELTA COLLEGE
COUNSELING/ADVISING & CAREER SERVICES
AEROBIC INSTRUCTOR

Salary Range: \$15,000 to \$75,000+

Personal Interests: Health and fitness, teaching and motivating others.

Work Environment: Primarily indoors in a gymnasium or exercise room.

Description

Just a couple of decades ago, athletic trainers worked only with professional athletes. But around the late 1970s or so, the popularity of weight training, running, and aerobics led to the birth of the physical fitness craze. Early aerobic activities included running and aerobic dance, which began around the late 1970s and early 1980s. Other aerobic activities, such as rowing machines and stair steppers, were still unheard of. Today, aerobics does not refer only to dance classes, but includes step aerobics, aqua aerobics, interval training, and interval circuit training (ICT).

Physical fitness experts and trainers help people improve and maintain their fitness through regular exercise. The best exercise programs usually include a variety of activities, including stretching and relaxation, weight lifting for strength training, and aerobic activities.

Aerobics, which are a vital part of most physical fitness programs, help to increase cardiovascular fitness by improving the body's use of oxygen and allowing the heart to work less strenuously. Aerobic exercises include any of the following: jogging, running, swimming, cycling, and brisk walking, as well as various aerobic dance programs.

The growing variety of aerobics classes includes low-impact, moderate, high-intensity, aqua, step, interval, interval circuit training, box aerobics, spinning and more. Most classes begin with a warm-up period and stretching designed to warm up muscles and prevent injury. Then they include about a half hour or

more of aerobic activity designed to get participants working within their target heart zone. The last 15 minutes or so ends with a cool-down period designed to bring the heart gradually back to normal levels, and again stretch the muscles to prevent injuries and soreness later. Participants benefit by improving their physical health and fitness, improving their mental health, reducing stress, and burning excess fat in their bodies, which also helps them improve their energy and stamina. Many aerobics classes also include muscle toning exercises at this point, which allow participants to pay extra attention to trouble spots, such as abdomen or thighs. Since the late 1970s, aerobic exercise programs have grown dramatically in popularity.

Working Conditions

The work environment for aerobics instructors can be in health clubs, park districts, high schools and colleges, the local YMCA or YWCA, private resorts and spas, and even aboard cruise ships. Many aerobics instructors decide to open their own businesses.

Some instructors work only with a specific group of people. For instance, those who work for a school may specialize in working with children and young adults, while others may teach aerobics at a senior citizen center or retirement home. Others work with people with disabilities or who are getting fit for medical reasons. Maintaining personal physical fitness is a must for all fitness instructors.

Training, Other Qualifications

Aerobics instructors need a minimum of a high school diploma and a certificate. Organizations that offer certification include the IDEA Foundation, the American Council on Exercise (ACE), the Aerobics and Fitness Association of America (AFAA), and the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM). To keep their licenses current, instructors need to be re-certified every two years, or show that they have taken continuing education courses in the field.

Delta College offers an Aerobic Instructor Certificate program providing the education and certification needed to teach safe and effective exercise to a wide variety of populations. Upon completion of this program, you will be eligible to sit for the American Council on Exercise (ACE) certification exam.

Job Outlook

Opportunities are expected to be good for fitness workers because of rapid growth in the fitness industry. Many job openings also will stem from the need to replace the large numbers of workers who leave these occupations each year.

Employment of fitness workers—who are concentrated in the rapidly growing arts, entertainment, and recreation industry—is expected to increase much faster than the average for all occupations through 2014. An increasing number of people spend more time and money on fitness, and more businesses are recognizing the benefits of health and fitness programs and other services such as wellness programs for their employees.

Earnings

Median annual earnings of personal trainers and group exercise instructors in May 2004 were \$25,470. The middle 50 percent earned between \$17,380 and \$40,030. The bottom 10 percent earned

less than \$14,530 while the top 10 percent earned \$55,560 or more. Earnings of successful self-employed personal trainers can be much higher. Median annual earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of fitness workers in May 2004 were as follows:

Other amusement and recreation industries	\$28,670
Other schools and instruction	22,320
Civic and social organizations	20,530

Salaried instructors, who may not only teach aerobics but work at the front desk, give tours to prospective members, and assist with sales, earn \$15,000 to \$25,000 per year. Top trainers in elite health clubs in major metropolitan areas may earn as much as \$75,000 per year, but these opportunities are very limited.

In Michigan, the average salary for Fitness Trainers and Aerobics Instructors was \$26,820 in May 2005. Again, their exact salaries will vary with the size of the club and its geographic location.

Related Occupations

Personal Fitness Trainer, Physical Education Teacher, Corporate Fitness Director and Athletic Trainer.

Aerobicinstructor.doc SC 08/2005 updated 9/06
Sources Delta College Catalog, Michigan Labor Market Information, Careers Research No. 70, The Institute for Research, Vocational Biographies, and the Encyclopedia of Careers and Vocational Guidance.

Career Center, D 132
Bay City/Saginaw: (989) 686-9072
Midland/Auburn: (989) 495-4000, Ext. 9072
Frankenmuth, Birch Run, Reese & Vassar: (989) 758-3400, Ext. 9072
<http://www.delta.edu/careercenter>

These materials were developed under a grant awarded by the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth. (Project 7021-4)

It is the policy of Delta College not to discriminate in employment, education, public accommodation or public service on the basis of religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, height, weight, arrest record, veteran status, disability, or other classifications as required by applicable U.S. federal, state or local law. Direct inquiries to the Equity/Compliance Officer, Delta College, 1961 Delta Road, Office J101, University Center, MI 48710, telephone 989-686-9122, or email: equityoffice@delta.edu