



# *WHAT IS LIFESTYLE MEDICINE?*

AN INTRODUCTION TO ALLIED  
HEALTHCARE FITNESS PROFESSIONALS  
AND THEIR SERVICES

## LIFESTYLE MEDICINE IN 60 SECONDS

- A **skilled preventative or adjunct treatment modality** used to directly or indirectly influence causes or symptoms of a health condition to result in **improvement of subjective and objective patient outcome measures** (e.g. hyperglycemia secondary to T2DM) in combination with standard medical care. This includes skilled global strength & conditioning and corrective exercise appropriate to your patient as well as Health & Wellness Coaching to **empower them with healthy living skills and habits**.
- Does **NOT** replace skilled physical therapy, chiropractic, or standard medical care.
- Can address the **root** cause of many physical dysfunctions (e.g. hyperlipidemia secondary to poor diet).
- Is administered by a **skilled health fitness professional** who designs a program that accounts for current physical capacity, **as well as any guidelines and restrictions given by the primary care physician and relevant specialists** and aims to **improve performance of ADLs** and total health status.

# GOVERNING BODIES OF THE HEALTH COACHING & FITNESS FIELDS

- **National Strength & Conditioning Association (NSCA)**
  - Publishes 5 peer-reviewed journals, provides industry-governing guidelines, certifies professionals, provides continuing education. [www.nscd.com](http://www.nscd.com)
- **American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)**
  - Works closely with healthcare community, certifies professionals, founded and administers the *Exercise Is Medicine* Provider credentialing program which is accredited by the AMA, provides continuing education. [www.acsm.org](http://www.acsm.org)
- **National Board for Health & Wellness Coaching (NB-HWC)**
  - Medical industry standard for Health & Wellness Coaches; certifies Providers, approves training programs, manages continuing education requirements. [www.nbhwc.org](http://www.nbhwc.org)

# LIFESTYLE MEDICINE – WHO ARE THE PROVIDERS?

*Who can provide Lifestyle Medicine services for your Patients?*

- NCCA-accredited Certified Personal Trainers (**CPT**)
  - **NASM** - National Academy of Sports Medicine      **ACSM** – American College of Sports Medicine
  - **NSCA** – National Strength & Conditioning Association      **ACE** – American Council on Exercise
  - **ISSA** – International Sports Sciences Association
- Trainers with Medical Fitness/Healthcare Specialty Certifications
  - **ACSM**: Exercise Is Medicine (**EIM**), Certified Exercise Physiologist (**EP-C**), Clinical Exercise Physiologist (**CEP**)
  - **ACE**: Medical Exercise Specialist (**MES**)      **NSCA**: Certified Special Populations Specialist (**CSPS**)
- Physical therapy professionals (**DPT, PT, PTA, OT**)
- Exercise professionals holding degrees in **kinesiology, exercise science, physiology, or biomechanics**
- Certified Health Coaches (**CHC**)/Board Certified Health & Wellness Coaches (**NB-HWC**)

## WHAT DOES LIFESTYLE MEDICINE LOOK LIKE?

- It starts **low and slow**, well within patient pain tolerance and physical ability, **and follows all guidelines and restrictions as provided by the patient's healthcare team**
- Exercise is **only** performed within **pain-free** range of motion
- There are resistance training and cardiorespiratory components of the exercise plan
- The patient receives nutritional and lifestyle change counseling **within the Provider's scope of practice**
- The patient **builds the mindset** of "I can Move Well and Live Well!"
- **Increase in TDEE** (Total Daily Energy Expenditure) is an overall goal of the plan
- It results in both **objective and subjective improvements** in health and quality of life

## LIFESTYLE MEDICINE DOES NOT...

- Directly treat any healthcare condition **without explicit physician guidance** (e.g. exercise prescribed for weight loss to reduce CVD risk factors).
- **Directly treat any orthopedic injury.** This is still the domain of the physical therapist although Medical Fitness can often work in tandem with skilled PT to improve global patient outcomes.
- **Directly treat any mental health conditions,** though some MH conditions have been shown to benefit from exercise and wellness coaching.
- **Tell you (the main Provider) how to do your job.** The relationship between physician and exercise specialist is driven by the healthcare provider.
- Replace any form of standard medical care. **Lifestyle Medicine is an adjunct treatment modality.**



## BARRIERS TO LIFESTYLE MEDICINE CARE

- Healthcare providers don't know who the Lifestyle Medicine providers are in their area.
- Healthcare providers are concerned about potential liability if a patient is injured or becomes ill during training or health coaching. This is a non-issue, as all qualified Lifestyle Medicine professionals are required to carry liability insurance, and those with their own training facilities must carry studio insurance as well. This also is alleviated when you get to know the Lifestyle Medicine Providers your patients will be working with.
- Healthcare providers often do not get the in-depth exercise science and behavior change coaching training that personal trainers and health coaches receive as part their formal education. This, along with short average office visits, leads to the “prescription” of “diet and exercise” without any meaningful patient support to this goal.

## BARRIERS TO LIFESTYLE MEDICINE CARE, CONT.

- Healthcare providers are overworked, overstressed, and often feel like they “don’t have the time” needed to network, learn about, and refer patients to Lifestyle Medicine professionals.
- Cost: health insurance does not cover medical fitness under personal trainers in many cases, unless administered by a physical therapist or clinical exercise physiologist within the context of specific injury treatment or surgical rehabilitation, usually in a clinical setting. However, some insurances will cover medical fitness, but only with a doctor’s prescription and regular patient progress reports.
- Patient understanding: the patient needs to be educated on how this is an investment into their long-term health and quality of life, especially if the patient will be paying for the service out of pocket.



# BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS TO LIFESTYLE MEDICINE

- Start with local gyms and health clubs. Often, trainers there will already have experience working with low-to-moderate risk patients who need exercise & health coaching. High-risk patients are those who require exercise supervised in a clinical setting by a medical professional such as an exercise physiologist.
- Check with large hospitals and clinics in your area to see if they have a “lifestyle medicine” program. These are rapidly becoming more popular, widely available, and are covered by insurance in many cases.
- See if the physical therapy providers in your service area already have a referral network with movement professionals they trust with their patients, or if they have a Lifestyle Medicine Program.
- Check the Medical Fitness Network ([www.medfitnetwork.org](http://www.medfitnetwork.org)), which is the largest directory of healthcare-oriented movement professionals in the United States. You may find specialists nearby your patient who have the applicable experience needed to help you help your patient better.
- Host a meet-and-greet with the local fitness, movement, and health coach professionals in your area. You already understand the value of networking, now it’s time to broaden that network.



# PATIENT-CENTERED, PREVENTATIVE HEALTHCARE IS THE FUTURE

- The **biopsychosocial (BPS) model of healthcare** is rapidly gaining traction and is the “holistic” way of treating patients with respect to them as **total human beings**. The fitness community has adopted this model in its best practices and guidelines.
- It is **easier and less costly** in both time and money to **prevent** conditions such as diabetes than it is to manage and treat them once they have set in.
- Healthier, more active patients means **your job gets easier and less stressful**, and you can dedicate more time to your complicated patient cases.
- You gain peace of mind as the provider, knowing **your patient is being taken care of fully**, and that their global health and wellness is improving.

# HOW TO WORK WITH LIFESTYLE MEDICINE PROVIDERS

1. Understand that a competent health fitness professional is **not** going to “over exercise” or otherwise harm your patient. While accidents can happen during physical fitness training, these are the exception when care is given under skilled guidance.
2. Provide the movement professional with any guidelines or restrictions appropriate to the patient (e.g. no knee flexion past 45 degrees due to varicose veins, or no cardiorespiratory training in excess of 5 on the 1-10 Revised Borg RPE scale due to COPD).
3. Request a monthly progress summary from the Lifestyle Medicine Provider. This should summarize the work the patient has done with the exercise specialist and should include the subjective and objective evaluation of the trainer on the patient’s progress, relative to their conditions and health status. Biometrics such as FBG, lipid levels, and other laboratory work your office performs will provide many objective markers of progress as well.



## HOW TO WORK WITH LIFESTYLE MEDICINE PROFESSIONALS, CONT.

4. Ask the patient how they “feel” about the health coaching or exercise intervention. Are they gaining self-efficacy? Increased energy levels and motivation? Do they become fatigued less quickly than before starting the program?
5. Don’t be afraid to ask the trainer or coach questions! If you have a patient with severe diabetes, quiz them on how they will design their program to address this. A competent trainer/coach will understand the basics of the health conditions or injuries your patient has and will seek additional guidance from you when necessary. This can also be one of the ways you educate yourself on the exercise science field and gain some valuable insight.
6. Encourage the patient. While the trainer/coach will be doing appropriate behavior change coaching with your patient, it is essential you as the physician foster faith in the Lifestyle Medicine Provider and keep supporting the patient to continue with the program, especially if a plateau is reached in patient progress.



# WHO I AM AND HOW I CAN HELP YOU HELP YOUR PATIENTS

- Certified Exercise Physiologist through the American College of Sports Medicine
- Certified Personal Trainer through the National Strength & Conditioning Association
- Certified Health Coach through the Dr. Sear's Wellness Institute in Colorado, USA
- Bachelor of Arts in Exercise Science w/300hr orthopedic internship completed at High Desert Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation Group under Dr. Matthew Briscoe, DPT
- Level 1 Provider under the AMA recognized, American College of Sports Medicine's, *Exercise Is Medicine* program,
- Professional Member of the Medical Fitness Network
- Practical expertise in Post-Covid-19 Syndrome/PACS, Type 2 diabetes, Ehler-Danlos, orthopedic injuries, general strength & conditioning, sports conditioning, tactical fitness, and behavior change coaching
- Patient-centered, “holistic” and evidence-based approach to care

The background features abstract, flowing, smoke-like shapes in shades of blue and red against a light grey gradient. The blue shapes are on the left and center, while the red shapes are on the right.

***THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!***

**ANY QUESTIONS?**