

De Anza College

Adapted Physical Education

Exercise Assistant Training Manual

De Anza College Adapted Physical Education (APE) provides exercise and fitness education and experiences for adults with disabilities for whom participation in the non-adapted setting would be inadvisable or impossible. A key component of a successful APE program is the ability to personalize each student's exercise/education plan. Often the primary means to accomplish this is through the use of in-class Exercise Assistants. APE Exercise Assistants assist students with disabilities accomplish their individual exercise and fitness programs.

An Exercise Assistant's duties can vary greatly from class to class and from student to student. Some may be involved in providing a student with a comprehensive passive stretching program while others may strap-on a student's weights or set-up the exercise machines. Some Exercise Assistants will be involved in helping students get into specialized equipment like a standing frame or tilt table. Others will help transfer students to and from their wheelchairs to the mats or exercise equipment. Some Exercise Assistants will assist students with disabilities wherever and whenever they are needed most by the APE program. APE Exercise Assistants work in the college APE classrooms (PE 13 and the pool) and sometimes in off-campus facilities.

Who are the Exercise Assistants?

Most Exercise Assistants are recruited from the De Anza College Massage Therapy Assistant program, however, any student in any major can volunteer or work as an Exercise Assistant in the APE program (i.e. liberal arts, pre-med, pre-physical therapy, pre-occupational therapy, pre-recreation therapy, physical education, adapted physical education, nursing, etc.). Many of the Exercise Assistants are exploring the possibilities of pursuing some career in rehabilitation or working with people with disabilities. Regardless of Exercise Assistant's background and/or educational goal, assisting in the APE program provides opportunities for valuable and practical life experiences.

Exercise Assistants are required to read this document before working in the program. All Exercise Assistants (unless granted a specific waiver) start out as volunteers or interns for at least one quarter. Those who receive APE program approval are asked to stay on and become paid assistants. All paid Exercise Assistants must be enrolled as a De Anza College student (6 units or more). The APE program currently pays \$10 -\$14/hour. Non-De Anza students must register as an official community volunteer or as a university intern.

Exercise Assistant Duties and Responsibilities:

An Exercise Assistant is responsible for:

- Notifying the instructor of any health issues that may arise with yourself or with your assigned student
- Notifying the instructor or Larry Bloom if you must leave the classroom or if you will miss, or leave early, or be late for an assignment
- Notifying the instructor or Larry Bloom immediately if you are ill and can not make it to your assignment (We do not expect you to work if you are sick – Stay home – but contact us in PE 13 (408) 864-8465 or Larry Bloom at (408) 864-8978)
- Equipment set-up, takedown, and proper storage
- Returning equipment to it's proper location after use
- Reporting any problems with the exercise equipment
- Attending any trainings or workshops arranged by Larry Bloom

Do:

- Assist students enrolled in the class as assigned by the instructor
- Pay close attention to the student you are assigned
- Be on time and prepared to work during the class times
- Communicate with the instructor and staff any questions or concerns
- Be positive and encouraging
- Be professional
- Be friendly
- Accept your assignments willingly and with a good attitude
- Pull out, read, and ask questions about a student's exercise card
- Follow the exercises and activities on the student's exercise card
- Use the student's exercise card to record progress and benchmarks
- Pay attention to the official class time in which the student is enrolled (try not to begin too soon or go over the class time - check with the instructor if you are unsure of when a class officially starts and ends)
- If doing stretching exercises stick to the time frame assigned by the instructor
- Use the class time well. If your student is absent or you do not have an assignment find something productive to do like clean the mats or exercise machines – ask the instructor
- If you take out equipment to use with a student, put it back when you are finished both where and how you originally found it
- Respect each student's privacy and maintain confidentiality
- ASK QUESTIONS!!

Do Not:

- Neglect or ignore the student you are assigned to work with (Don't just put a student on a machine then walk away and forget to return)
- Add or delete any exercises or activities on the student's exercise card
- Predict student outcomes, i.e. "If you do these exercises you will walk again"
- Give students a prognosis, i.e. "People with that disease don't ever recover"
- Rearrange the exercise room without the instructor's permission
- Administer first aid or medications without the expressed permission and direction of the instructor (see the last page)
- Assist anyone not enrolled in the APE class, including other assistants, without the instructor's expressed permission
- Switch assignments with another assistant without asking the instructor first
- Stretch a student the entire hour when their program also calls for active exercise
- Work with a student beyond the assigned class time
- Keep secrets from the instructor and staff – if a student confides in you something related to their exercise program tell the student that they must also tell the instructor as well and if they don't, you will
- "Borrow" equipment from the middle room without the instructor's permission
- Leave the classroom without the instructor or Larry Bloom's knowledge
- Share information about a student when outside the classroom
- Use the exercise equipment for personal use – walking on a treadmill, playing the Wii, lifting weights, etc. - unless instructor gives permission

The De Anza College Adapted Physical Education Exercise Assistant Assignment Policy

This policy applies to all Adapted Physical Education (APE) classes. **It is the APE instructor's responsibility to decide which Exercise Assistants will work with which students.** This is extremely important especially when there is a limited number of APE Exercise Assistants available in the classroom. Only the instructor can decide if a student's situation warrants a one-to-one assignment. Whenever possible Exercise Assistants will be split between two or more students per class.

Only students with verified disabilities officially enrolled in an APE class are eligible for assistance. Spouses, family members, attendants, or students putting in extra time (outside their official enrollment class times) are not eligible for exercise assistance.

It is the instructor's responsibility to make the Exercise Assistant assignments after carefully weighing all factors. This often comes down to the instructor's opinion but it is his or her decision. In general, the APE instructor's decision is based on the following factors:

- The student's degree of disability
- The student's fitness/educational goals
- The student's need for an active vs. passive exercise program
- How many assistants are available
- The level and skill of the assistants available
- How much time is needed to complete an assisted program
- The student's attendance and on-time record *
- How long a student has been in the program **
- The student's level of independence or potential for greater independence
- Students enrolled in a single class will have priority over students enrolled in multiple classes.

* Students with sporadic attendance and/or have a poor on-time record may lose their eligibility for assistance.

** In general, newer students are usually in the greatest need of individualized attention or assistance and therefore may be given a higher priority for assistance than students that have been coming to the program longer. As students remain in the program over consecutive quarters it is a generally accepted program policy to "wean" students off of the need for exercise assistance. This is done primarily to foster exercise independence wherever and whenever possible. A fundamental goal of the APE program is for students to become independent exercisers. We know students can't stay with us forever, so we endeavor to teach each student the knowledge and skills necessary to live a healthy lifestyle through daily participation in exercise and physical activity outside the college setting. We also encourage exercise independence as a logistical solution within the APE program since we do not have enough assistants to help every student, in every class, in every quarter.)

Exercise Assistant vs. Personal Attendant

An Exercise Assistant is hired to assist a student with a disability through their exercise program. Students with disabilities enrolled in APE classes are expected to manage their own personal hygiene. For many this means they must hire a personal attendant.

Exercise Assistants are not expected to help a student:

- Go to the bathroom
- Take a shower
- Get dressed
- Administer medications

- Install or remove catheters or other medical devices
- Assist students with disabilities with anything outside the scope of Exercise Assistant responsibilities (See page one)

However, the APE program will assist students in an emergency situation. These are situations that come on suddenly and without warning and the instructor will determine if, and what kind of, assistance will be provided. With the instructor's permission, we will usually assist students with minor dressing like putting on shoes, robes, jackets, etc. We also usually assist students in putting on braces or other assistive devices that were removed so the student could perform their exercises.

APE is not a therapy or rehabilitation program. Medical decisions like which medications to take or which mobility assistive devices would work best are to be made between the student and their physician or therapist.

Exercise Assistant Assignments:

The instructor of record is responsible and accountable for everything that happens in the APE classroom. It is their classroom and it is their job to make decisions in the best interest of the students and the program. Only the instructor is responsible to see the bigger picture and to take into account many variables when making decisions in the classroom. Only the instructor assigns Exercise Assistants to students enrolled in their class. Students, staff, and Exercise Assistants must understand that no prior or on-the-spot arrangements are to be initiated by the student or the Exercise Assistant unless the instructor has given prior approval. Students must also realize that enrollment in an APE class does not guarantee an Exercise Assistant will be assigned to them even if they had one the previous quarters or even in another APE class in the current quarter.

Once an Exercise Assistant is assigned to work with a particular student, the prearranged exercise program is to be carried out. Any changes to be made to any exercise program must be approved by the instructor. Instructors try to give Exercise Assistants and students some latitude for being creative and to try new things but the instructor must be informed and give prior approval before exercising.

For APE students enrolled in multiple sections of the same course: Based on the criteria listed above, the instructor **may** assign an Exercise Assistant to work with a student in one class but **this is not a guarantee** that the same or different instructor will assign an Exercise Assistant to work with that student in every section of the same course in which he/she enrolls.

For example:

Same Day classes: - If a student is enrolled in MWF at 10:00am he/she **may** be assigned an Exercise Assistant to help them with their program, however, if they have also enrolled in the 11:00am class there is **no guarantee** he/she will be assigned an Exercise Assistant for the second class.

or

Everyday classes: - If a student is enrolled in a MWF class they **may** be assigned an Exercise Assistant to help them with their program, however, if they have also enrolled in a TTH class there is **no guarantee** he/she will be assigned an Exercise Assistant five days per week.

Massage Therapy Interns: If massage interns are working in the APE classroom, the instructor determines which students will get massages. In general, the instructor tries to rotate these assignments so more students are served. Students should not set-up their own appointments with the massage interns.

- Priority #1 - students with disabilities enrolled in the class.
- Priority #2 - students without disabilities enrolled in the class.
- Priority #3 – spouses, family members, and attendants not enrolled.
- Priority #4 - the APE faculty, staff, and Exercise Assistants.

Emergency Procedures

In cases of a classroom emergency the faculty and staff are to be in charge of the situation and determine what steps are appropriate. Exercise assistants may be asked to assist but the faculty or staff will make the decisions, i.e. to move the student or not, to start CPR, to use the AED, call the college nurse, call 911, notify the family, call security, etc. An Exercise Assistant may be asked to carry out a directive by the instructor or staff but should never take it upon himself or herself to initiate such decisions.

Accidents and fluid spills.

It is the responsibility of the faculty and staff to handle all first aid and fluid spills in the classroom. The faculty and staff have gone through training to handle such situations. If the help of an Exercise Assistant is needed the faculty or staff will ask for it.