

The 5 secrets (+ 1 Bonus!) for passing the ACSM Exam

1. Have a strong emphasis put on the anatomy and physiology from this book. This makes up chapter 3 of ACSM's textbook and it will represent a major chunk of the exam as a whole. Be sure you are well versed in all things musculoskeletal and also are able to describe the positioning of the body parts using the anatomical position. This will give you a major advantage going into the exam.
2. Formulas, formulas, formulas. One of the more memorization-based things to study are the formulas presented throughout the book. Make sure that you are able to calculate the many different things in the book. As you are studying, make sure to note any of the formulas that come up. There are not a crazy amount of these formulas, but you should ace them fast.
3. Go into the exam well-prepared for the wording of the questions. Use a variety of practice tests to really have a firm understanding of how ACSM will use wording to trip you up. A big part of this comes down to being able to eliminate half of the answers off the bat, and then essentially just having to choose between two. This gives you a 50% chance every time.
4. The prescription of exercise is the main thing that people think about regarding personal trainers, so it does you well to know the ins-and-outs of it. Make sure you know how you as a trainer are able to prescribe exercise for people, and also specifically the varying populations of people. Know your variables that you have at your disposal as a trainer and how they change based off of the goals set by your client.
5. The last major part of this exam is the risk stratification. This chart below is over CVD and its many risk factors. Make sure you have a firm grasp on these.

Positive risk factors for CVD	The defining criteria
Family history	Myocardial infarction, coronary revascularization, sudden death before 55 years old in father or in other male first-degree relatives. Or, before 65 years old in mother or other female first-degree relatives.
Cigarette smoking	Either a current cigarette smoker or those who have quit within the previous six months or have exposure to environmental tobacco smoke.
Sedentary lifestyle	Not participating in at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity (40% to 60% VO ₂) physical activity on at least three days per week for at least three months.
Obesity	Having a body mass index $\geq 30 \text{ kg} \times \text{M}^2$ or a waist circumference of $\geq 102 \text{ cm}$ (40 inches) for men $> 88\text{cm}$ (35 inches) for women.
Hypertension	Systolic blood pressure $\geq 140 \text{ mm Hg}$ and/or diastolic $\geq 90 \text{ mm Hg}$, confirmed by measurements on at least two separate occasions, or on antihypertensive medication.
Prediabetes	Impaired fasting glucose (IFG) = fasting plasma glucose $\geq 100 \text{ mg} \times \text{dL}^{-1}$ (5.50 $\text{mmol} \times \text{L}^{-1}$) – or Impaired glucose tolerance (IGT) = 2 hour values in oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT) $\geq 140 \text{ mg} \times \text{dL}^{-1}$ (7.70 $\text{mmol} \times \text{L}^{-1}$) but $\leq 200 \text{ mg} \times \text{dL}^{-1}$ (11.00 $\text{mmol} \times \text{L}^{-1}$) confirmed by measurements on at least two separate occasions.
Dyslipidemia	Low density lipoprotein (LDL-C) cholesterol $\geq 130 \text{ mg} \times \text{dL}^{-1}$ (3.37 $\text{mmol} \times \text{L}^{-1}$) – or High density lipoprotein (HDL-C) cholesterol $\leq 40 \text{ mg} \times \text{dL}^{-1}$ (1.4 $\text{mmol} \times \text{L}^{-1}$) – or On lipid lowering medication if total serum cholesterol is all that is available, use $\geq \text{mg} \times \text{dL}^{-1}$ (5.18 $\text{mmol} \times \text{L}^{-1}$).

Bonus Tip: Utilize study guides, practice tests and flashcards.

On my website I have a free study guide, practice tests and flashcards for the ACSM CPT exam. **You can check them out here <https://www.ptpioneer.com/study-acsm/>.**

A good study guide

A good study guide will help you navigate the huge ACSM textbook. Not all of the material that you read out of the textbook will show up on the exam. Knowing what parts to focus on, and which parts to skim over is extremely important. If you try to memorize the whole entire textbook, you are setting yourself up for failure.

Practice exams

Taking multiple different practice exams before you sign up to take the real exam is crucial. I know so many students that have to come to me after they failed asking me what they did wrong. Typically, All of the students had one thing in common. None of them even attempted 1 practice exam to see if they were fully prepared to take the test. If they would have, they would have seen that they were not ready. If you can pass multiple full practice exams with 80% or above, you will know you are ready.

Flashcards (especially spaced repetition)

The flash cards on my website have approximately 100 terms for you to go over. The best way to study flashcards is to use spaced repetition. This helps you focus on your weaker areas of study by showing them more frequently. This saves a lot of time over all when trying to memorize the thousands of terms for the ACSM CPT exam.

The study materials on my website is a good place to start. But, if you want to guarantee that you pass the exam I recommend checking out the study materials from Trainer Academy. They have the best study guide, full practice exams and spaced repetition flashcards. My students that have gone through their program have a 99% pass rate. They even provide an exam pass guarantee. Being a subscriber to PT pioneer, you can save on their ACSM MVP study package by using my personal discount code **PTPSUB** or by **[clicking this link](#)**.

[Check their website](#) to learn more about their study materials.

Or, check out **[my full review of them here](#)**.