

EuropeActive Standards EQF Level 4 Active Ageing Trainer



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I. Executive Summary

The EU is in a process of significant population ageing. From 2012, the European working-age population will start to shrink, while the over-60 population will continue to increase by about two million people a year. The strongest pressure is expected to occur during the period 2015-35 when the so-called “baby-boom” generation will enter retirement. The largest impact of this ageing population is likely to be the rise in non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular diseases (CVD), cancer, mental health conditions, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, musculoskeletal conditions and mild depression and anxiety (World Health Organisation Europe Fact Sheet’ EURO/03/06). As a result healthcare systems in the EU are expected to face *substantial challenges, with age-related public expenditure projected to increase on average by about 4.75 percentage points of GDP by 2060*. Consequently age-related public health expenditure is projected to increase by €126 billion by 2060.

The *European Year for Active Ageing* is designed to serve as a framework for raising awareness, for identifying and disseminating good practice and, most importantly, for encouraging policymakers and stakeholders at all levels to promote active ageing. According to updated data from the Eurobarometer (2010), only 7% of women and 8% of men with more than 70 years are involved in regular exercise practice, with 11% and 10% respectively for the age group of 55 to 69 years. Exercise at any age is necessary for a person to maintain strength, balance, co-ordination, mobility and stamina. For older adults in particular, the evidence is well-established that continuing to exercise at sufficient intensity and frequency can reduce the risk of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, musculoskeletal and metabolic conditions, and improve psychological wellbeing. The proven medical benefits of physical activity are succinctly summarised in the *European Union Physical Activity Guidelines (2008)*.

The ageing process traditionally has been viewed as an inevitable decline in health and function. Although many physiological functions are known to decline with age, the merging view of the aging process distinguishes the decline in function and resiliency attributable to biological aging to disuse (DiPietro, 2007). The attenuation in functional decline with exercise in older age is extremely important, because closing the “fitness gap” between active and inactive older people can prolong the time of a disability threshold.

The priority of the *2012 European Year for Active Ageing* warrants a response from the fitness sector in terms of more exercise professionals equipped to support adults over the age of 60 with the underpinning knowledge, skills and competencies to deliver exercise programmes tailored to their individual physiology. Concerns over health and safety increase with age and it is essential that exercise professionals are aware of risks and able to adapt those exercise programmes to meet the needs of healthy older adults.

This document supports the development of new and specific Standards for Exercise Professionals working with Active Ageing. As in the review and update of the original EHFA Standards in 2010, the original B1 Competence Framework and the essential Skills and Knowledge have been updated as Learning Outcomes, based on job purposes, for exercise

professionals working with Active Ageing. These are based on the European Qualification Framework (EQF) level 4.

These Active Ageing Standards and the Education associated are purpose and outcome driven, and are aligned with the sector main goal to get: **'More People, More Active, More Often'**.

The booklet containing the **EuropeActive** Standards for Active Ageing is organized in the following chapters, trying to offer to the reader a comprehensive approach to the requested knowledge, skills and competences for the health & fitness sector:

- Chapter III: The essential Skills and Knowledge written as Learning Outcomes, based on job purposes, required to work as an Active Ageing Trainer in the European Health and Fitness Sector at the EQF-Fitness Level 4, where EQF 3 Instructor knowledge is a pre-requisite.
- Chapter IV: The **EuropeActive** Competence Framework and the essential Competences, associated to Skills and Knowledge written as Learning Outcomes, based on occupational purposes, required to work as an Active Ageing Trainer in the European Health and Fitness Sector at the EQF-Fitness Level 4.

Finally, it is to be noted that a relevant group of technical experts across Europe representing the different stakeholders of our sector volunteered to assist with the review and expansion of the **EuropeActive** Standards.

These standards were fully adopted within the process of external consultation and afterwards approved by the Professional Standards Committee.

II. Technical Expert Group Members & External Consultation Experts

Chairman of EHFA Standards Council (2012):

- Prof. Alfonso Jimenez, PhD, CSCS, NSCA-CPT

Technical Expert Group (2012):

- Dr. Andres Nedergaard, Fit&Sund, Denmark (TEG Leader)
- Dr. John Searle, FIA Chief Medical Officer, UK
- Sabine Braunegger, Body Street, Germany
- Bjorn Vergers, Vergers SportAdvies & Training, Netherlands
- Susana Moral, European University of Madrid, Spain
- Dr. Andrea Ermolao, University Padova, Italy

Experts who participated in the external consultation process:

- Dr. Christopher Andersen, Fit&Sund, Denmark
- Dr. Oscar Garcia, European University of Madrid, Spain
- Dr. Silvano Zanuso, Technogym Research Department, Italy
- Dr. Antonino Bianco, University of Palermo, Italy
- Ben Gittus, SkillsActive, UK
- Steven Mann, FIA Research Institute, UK
- Prof Rita Santos Rocha, ESDRM, Portugal

Julian Berriman MA
Director
EuropeActive's Professional Standards Committee
Brussels, June 2017

III. EuropeActive Skills and Underpinning Knowledge for Active Ageing Trainers (EQF Level 4) as part of the EuropeActive Learning Outcomes Framework

Specific Prerequisites

This chapter supports the **EuropeActive** Competence Framework and contains the essential Skills and Knowledge written as Learning Outcomes, based on occupational purposes, required to work as an Active Ageing Trainer in the European Health and Fitness Sector at the EQF-Fitness Level 4. These Standards and the Education associated are purpose and outcome driven, aligned with the sector main goal to get 'more people, more active, more often'.

All Trainers will require both Basic Core Knowledge and specific knowledge related to the context in which they work: Fitness or Group Fitness and must hold an EQF Level 3 or equivalent accredited certification. The Level 4 Active Ageing Trainer knowledge, skills and competences build on those achieved at Level 3 to enable instructors to safely and effectively adapt their delivery for apparently healthy adults over the age of 60.

All exercise professionals will require both basic core knowledge and specific knowledge related to the context in which they work and there are specific prerequisites before starting the EQF 4 qualification:

1. EQF Level 3 Group Fitness Instructor or equivalent accredited certification is recommended if the Instructor wants to deliver group exercise.
2. If aquatic activities are planned, the adequate qualifications for conducting exercise in water are required.

Active Ageing Trainers are **not** endorsed to:

- Prescribe rehabilitation programmes;
- Provide exercise testing and prescription for at risk populations;
- Prescribe any kind of medication or supplements;
- Prescribe nutritional programmes;
- Diagnose any psychological disorders or mental health conditions;
- Provide any kind of psychological counselling;
- Diagnose diseases, disabilities or other clinical conditions;

Introductory Information

What does level 4 means at EQF?

Level of the EQF	Knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.	Skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).	Competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.
The learning outcomes relevant to Level 4 are	Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change. Supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities.

What does level 4 mean at Fitness QF?

EQF Level	Occupation	EuropeActive Standards	Target Audience
Level 4	Active Ageing Trainer	EuropeActive Level 4	Healthy adults over 60 years of age

Occupational Title

Active Ageing Trainer

Job Purpose

The purpose of the Active Ageing Trainer is to build fitness participation of new and existing exercisers over 60 years of age through group or individual fitness experiences that meet their needs.

Occupational Description

An Active Ageing Trainer delivers fitness instruction to individuals with the use of equipment in a gym (Fitness Instructor Pre-Requisite) or to a group through fitness classes (Group Fitness Instructor Pre-Requisite). The Active Ageing Trainer differs from a Level 3 Instructor in their understanding of the physiology of ageing and their ability to work safely with older adults through the adaptation of exercise programme design and delivery. Active Ageing Trainers create a fitness environment that is welcoming and not intimidating for older exercisers.

Occupational Roles

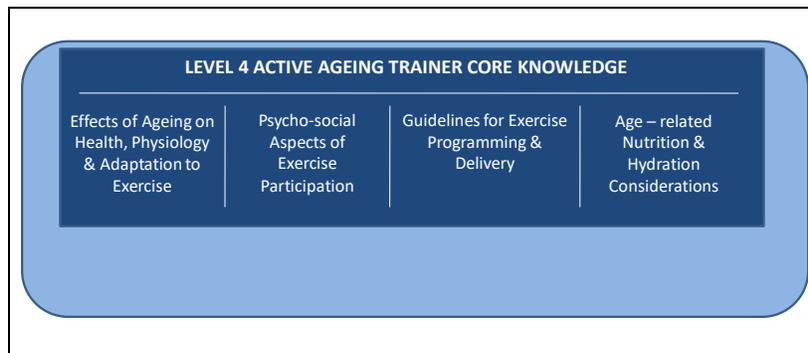
The active ageing trainer should be able to:

1. Build rapport and collect information from individual older adults clients
2. Implement appropriate pre-participation screening for older adult clients
3. Analyse health and lifestyle information relating to individual older adult clients
4. Make the appropriate decisions relating to older adult client's health status and goals, where required refer the client to a more appropriate professional
5. Provide a range of exercise programmes in accordance with the needs of older adult clients by applying principles of exercise programming and an understanding of common biomechanical and physiological changes associated with ageing
6. Develop and apply strategies to motivate older adult clients to join and adhere to an exercise programme
7. Deliver exercise sessions to individuals or groups of older adults based on evidence-based guidelines for the age group and have been tailored to their individual and collective needs
8. Deliver good customer service and be a positive role model at all times and keep up to date with sector developments
9. Promote healthy activities and related strategies for daily living to older adult clients
10. Provide emergency aid to an older adult during or following an exercise session if required

Core Knowledge Areas and Skills Requirements

The educational standards for the Active Ageing Trainer EQF Level 4 include the following core knowledge areas:

ACTIVE AGEING TRAINER Level 4 Core Knowledge Areas



The core knowledge and skill requirements are divided into the following sections:

Section 1: Effects of Ageing on Health, Physiology & Adaptation to Exercise

Section Overview

Learners will:

- Understand the increasing risk of experiencing ill-health through non communicable diseases (NCD's) with increasing age, to include; *cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, cancers, osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, osteopenia and osteoporosis, back pain*
- Know the effects of ageing on the human body including; *cardiorespiratory system, muscular system, skeletal system, nervous system, metabolism (energy systems), senses*
- Understand the effects of ageing on the body's capacity to recover from, and adapt to, training stimuli including effects on; *Range of motion, muscular strength and power, local muscle endurance, VO₂max, Lactate Threshold, body composition, motor skills (reaction time, coordination, balance, agility, quickness and speed)*

Section Headings

1.1 Effects of ageing on health

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- The relationship between increasing age and increasing risk of developing a NCD including Coronary Artery Disease, Stroke, cancers e.g. prostate cancer, type 2

diabetes, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, osteopenia and osteoporosis, low back pain, dementia, Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease

- Risk factors, signs and symptoms of age-related conditions that may be identified in pre-participation screening
- The appropriate medical referral and consent process to use when an NCD risk is identified during pre-participation screening

1.2 Effects of ageing on physiology

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- The effects of the ageing process on the human body to include; Heart, blood vessels, respiratory tree, lung tissue, muscular system, skeletal system, nervous system
- The effect of ageing on the senses; vision, hearing, proprioception, olfaction,
- The effect of ageing on daily energy expenditure and metabolism
- The effect of ageing on pathways of ATP re-synthesis

1.3 Effects of ageing on adaptation to exercise

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- The effect of age related tissue changes on range of motion
- The effect of age related neuromuscular changes on strength, power and local muscle endurance development
- The effect of age related changes in ATP re-synthesis on VO₂max and Lactate Threshold
- The effect of age on body composition
- The effect of age related neuromuscular changes on motor skills; reaction time, quickness, agility, speed, co-ordination and balance

Section 2: Psycho-Social Aspects of Exercise Participation

Section overview

Learners will:

- Understand how to communicate and build rapport with older adult clients using multisensory communication and taking account of any sensory impairments they may have
- Know how to explain exercises and other technical information in terminology that is familiar to older adults and builds their self-efficacy to support independent exercise
- Know common barriers to participation and ways to overcome some of these through planning the location and timing of exercise classes or sessions targeted at older adults
- Understand that there is an increased level of responsibility for older adult clients and how to meet this duty of care
- Know the importance of social interaction in exercise programmes for older adults and how to facilitate this in programme planning and delivery

Section headings

2.1 Psychological considerations

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- The specific communication techniques to be employed with older adult clients
- The importance of building rapport with older adult clients
- How to use familiar language to explain unfamiliar or technical concepts
- Physical and psychological barriers to exercise that are specific to older adults
- How to create an environment and atmosphere in which older adult clients feel comfortable and confident to participate in exercise
- The increased responsibility for duty of care when working with older adult clients that may be considered vulnerable

2.2 Social considerations

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- The importance of social interaction in maintaining health & independence
- How to facilitate social interaction through delivery of exercise programmes
- The value of keeping attendance records and contacting regular attending older adult clients that miss a session

Section 3: Guidelines for Exercise Programming & Delivery

Section overview

Learners will:

- Know how to screen older adult clients using appropriate methods
- Know when to refer an older adult client to a medical profession prior to beginning exercise
- Understand when to use different methods of health & fitness evaluation for older adult clients
- Know the current guidelines for adapting exercise prescription for older adults and understand the importance of regularly checking credible sources e.g. ACSM, peer reviewed journals for updated information about exercise guidelines for older adults
- Understand the effects of ageing physiology on planning and achievement of goals and know how to adapt programme design to take account of this
- Know how to adapt exercise session delivery to increase safety and take account of the challenges faced by many older adults when exercising

Section headings

3.1 Pre-participation Screening

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- The appropriate screening processes to use with older adult clients (e.g. PARQ-R or ACSM Health/Fitness Facility Pre-Participation Screening Questionnaire)

- When and how to refer an older adult client to a medical professional to gain consent for exercise
- The information that should be collected from older adult clients and how to select the most appropriate methods of collecting information; including questionnaire, interview, measurements, assessments
- How to select and conduct measurements of functional ability appropriate for the assessment of older adult clients

3.2 Exercise Programme Design

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Credible, evidence based guidelines for cardiovascular, resistance, proprioceptive and flexibility exercise prescription for older adults
- Appropriate goals and realistic time frames for achievement of fat loss and lean body mass gain in older adults
- Designing exercise programme structures that take into account the physiological changes associated with ageing

3.3 Exercise session Delivery

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Guidelines for adapting exercise session structure and timings to make them safe for older adult clients
- How to adapt exercises so they are safe for older adult clients to perform with good technique
- Adapting teaching/instructing methods to communicate effectively with older adult clients
- Signs indicating that an older adult client should stop exercising immediately or requires medical attention
- How to manage an emergency situation when instructing an older adult client or group

Section 4: Age-related Nutrition & Hydration Considerations

Section Overview

Learners will:

- Understand the impact poor nutrition can have on exercise capacity and safety
- Know the common nutrition deficiencies associated with older adults
- Understand the barriers to drinking adequate fluids for many older adults
- Know how to address these barriers and communicate the importance of adequate hydration within exercise sessions

Section headings

4.1 Nutrition and exercise capacity

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- The potential impact on exercise capacity of common nutrient deficiencies among older adults including; iron, vitamin B12
- Issues surrounding dietary beliefs and habits of older adult clients
- The importance of adequate energy intake and regular eating for older adult clients

4.2 Hydration

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- The reasons why older adult clients are more often dehydrated than younger adults
- The importance of encouraging older adult clients to drink water before, during and after exercise
- How to structure exercise sessions to provide opportunities for comfort breaks



IV. EuropeActive – Active Ageing Trainer - EQF L4 - Standards & Competencies Framework

This document describes the EuropeActive Competence Framework and contains the essential competences, associated with skills and knowledge written as learning outcomes, based on occupational purposes, required to work as an Active Ageing Trainer in the European Health and Fitness Industry at the EQF-Fitness Level 4. These Competence Framework and Standards are purpose and outcome driven, aligned with the industry main goal to get 'more people, more active, more often'.

The Units in the document are broken down in to competencies, skills and range. This document should be read in conjunction with the EuropeActive European Level 4 Active Ageing Trainer Knowledge Requirements which describe the knowledge which underpin the skills of the Fitness and Group Fitness Instructor working specifically with individual older adults or groups of older adults.

Section 1: Effects of Ageing on Health, Physiology & Adaptation to Exercise

WORKPLACE COMPETENCY Learners should be able to demonstrate the following competencies	SKILLS Learners should be able to demonstrate the following skills	RANGE Learners should be able to cover the following range	UNDERPINNING KNOWLEDGE Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:
Writing exercise programmes that meet the needs of older adult clients by applying principles of exercise programming and an understanding of common biomechanical and physiological changes associated with ageing	a. Write exercise programmes and sessions appropriate for older adult clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmes designed to facilitate client's goals including: (Improved body composition Improved health & well being Improved sports performance) Programmes designed considering to the age, ability level and needs of the client(s) 	1.1 Effects of ageing on health 1.2 Effects of ageing on physiology 1.3 Effects of ageing on adaptation to exercise 3.1 Pre-participation Screening 3.2 Exercise Programme Design
Delivering exercise sessions to individuals or groups of older adults tailored to their individual and collective needs based on an understanding of the effects of each activity on their physiology	b. Deliver safe, effective exercise sessions to older adult clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sessions delivered using multi-sensory communication skills and awareness of reduced visual and hearing acuity Sessions adapted to provide a suitable level of challenge for older adults with levels of fitness from inactive with low functional capacity to fit recreational athletes 	3.3 Exercise session Delivery
Maintain CPD to remain familiar with current understanding of ageing and its effects on adaptation to exercise	c. Provide accurate and current advice on age-related health and fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General healthy lifestyle advice Specific adaptations to exercise training 	1.1 Effects of ageing on health 1.2 Effects of ageing on physiology 1.3 Effects of ageing on adaptation to exercise

Section 2: Psycho-Social Aspects of Exercise Participation

WORKPLACE COMPETENCY Learners should be able to demonstrate the following competencies	SKILLS Learners should be able to demonstrate the following skills	RANGE Learners should be able to cover the following range	UNDERPINNING KNOWLEDGE Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:
Develop and apply strategies to motivate older adult clients to join and adhere to an exercise programme	<p>a. Explain the benefits of an exercise programme tailored for older adults to prospective clients</p> <p>b. Structure the programme to include opportunities for social interaction</p> <p>c. Create a fun, secure environment that welcomes new participants</p> <p>d. Plan session scheduling to meet the needs & preferences of the target audience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written information • Conversation • Testimonials • Before and/or after exercise sessions • At regular intervals or on special occasions • Induction process • Session content • Buddy systems • Quiet/low usage times during day • Daylight hours • Convenient travel times if using public transport 	<p>2.1 Psychological considerations</p> <p>2.2 Social considerations</p> <p>3.2 Exercise Programme Design</p>
Deliver good customer service to older adult clients, be a positive role model at all times and support the confidence, self-esteem and independence of older adult clients	<p>e. Adapting communication style to meet the expectations of older adult clients</p> <p>f. Providing regular opportunities for achievement and positive reinforcement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body positioning, body language, volume, tone and pitch of speech • Choice of language used, acceptable level of formality • Goal setting • Praise for attendance • Recommending appropriate complexity/intensity exercise alternatives • Seeking opportunity to give genuine compliments 	<p>2.1 Psychological considerations</p> <p>1.3.3. Exercise session Delivery</p>

Section 3: Guidelines for Exercise Programming and Delivery

WORKPLACE COMPETENCY Learners should be able to demonstrate the following competencies	SKILLS Learners should be able to demonstrate the following skills	RANGE Learners should be able to cover the following range	UNDERPINNING KNOWLEDGE Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:
Build rapport and collect information from individual older adults clients relevant to planning an exercise programme	<p>a. Initiating conversation and engaging in small talk on topics relevant to the client</p> <p>b. Using appropriate body language to encourage the client to speak</p> <p>c. Following a structured consultation process that creates a sense of security</p> <p>d. Discussing health & lifestyle factors that inform programme design</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioning • Posture • Empathic listening • Questionnaires • Interview • Note taking • Lifestyle/occupational activity • Eating habits • Sleep patterns 	<p>3.3 Exercise session Delivery</p> <p>4.1 Nutrition and exercise capacity</p> <p>4.2 Hydration</p>
Implement appropriate pre-participation screening for older adult clients	<p>e. Administration and interpretation of a pre-participation screening form suitable for use by older adults</p> <p>f. Administration and interpretation of health measurements and functional tests relevant to older adults</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised PAR-Q • AHA/ACSM Health/Fitness Facility Pre-participation Screening Questionnaire • BMI • Waist measurement • Blood Pressure • Sit to stand test • Range of motion testing 	<p>3.1 Pre-participation Screening</p>
Make the appropriate decisions relating to older adult clients health status and goals, where	g. Evaluate collected information against recognised referral and programming guidelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening and medical consent for exercise • Lifestyle 	<p>3.1 Pre-participation Screening</p>

<p>required refer the client to a more appropriate professional</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition • Exercise history 	
<p>Provide a range of exercise programmes in accordance with the needs of older adult clients by applying current guidelines for safe, effective exercise programme design for this population group</p>	<p>h. Research and remain informed of current exercise guidelines and updates</p> <p>i. Incorporate general recommendations in all programmes for older adults</p> <p>j. Adapt specific programmes as required to suit individual needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership of national/international professional bodies • Journal subscriptions • Regular reading of new publications • Overall session structure and duration • Duration of individual session components • Lower intensity options for exercise techniques • Recovery, hydration & comfort breaks • Goal specific • Preferred training modes • Considering ability level & risk of falling including; mobility, balance & coordination 	<p>1.1 Effects of ageing on health</p> <p>1.2 Effects of ageing on physiology</p> <p>1.3 Effects of ageing on adaptation to exercise</p> <p>3.2 Exercise Programme Design</p>
<p>Deliver exercise sessions to individuals or groups of older adults using multisensory communication</p>	<p>k. Use visual, verbal and kinaesthetic cues to elicit safe exercise technique in older adult clients</p> <p>l. Recognise when older adult clients require exercise modifications or rest breaks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body language • Visual cues & demonstrations • Variations in volume tone and pitch of voice • With consent physical manipulation of client technique to assist kinaesthetic learning • Observation of technique, posture and body language • Listening for signals that exercises need modifying or additional instruction is required 	<p>3.3 Exercise session Delivery</p>

<p>Provide emergency aid to an older adult during or following an exercise session if required</p>	<p>m. Administering first aid, provide reassurance and contact emergency services when necessary in the case of an emergency</p> <p>n. Complete the necessary accident and incident records after the event</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassurance • Minor musculoskeletal injuries including; sprains & strains • Falls including; fractures & head injuries • Unconscious casualty • CPR • Accident/incident book • COSHH 	<p>3.3 Exercise session Delivery</p>
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Section 4: Age-Related Nutrition & Hydration Considerations

WORKPLACE COMPETENCY Learners should be able to demonstrate the following competencies	SKILLS Learners should be able to demonstrate the following skills	RANGE Learners should be able to cover the following range	UNDERPINNING KNOWLEDGE Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:
Promote strategies for healthy living to older adult clients	a. Providing information about the benefits of physical activity, healthy eating and staying hydrated in a way that is not patronising to the target audience	Information targeted at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfit older adults • Fit older adults • Athletic older adults 	4.1 Nutrition and exercise capacity 4.2 Hydration 2.1 Psychological considerations
Inform older adult clients of general healthy eating guidelines and specific nutrition guidelines for their goals and age related health risks	b. Giving general healthy eating information to groups or individual clients based on credible guidelines and relevant to their specific goals and needs	Goals including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight loss • Health & vitality • Weight gain (LBM) • Athletic performance 	4.1 Nutrition and exercise capacity 4.2 Hydration 2.1 Psychological considerations