

EuropeActive Standards EQF Level 5 Weight Management Exercise Specialist



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I. Executive Summary

This document supports the update of the original EHFA Standards that were completed in 2005. 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 as Personal Trainers in the European health and fitness industry. These are based on the European Qualification Framework (EQF) levels 5.

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

Our modern way of living has largely eliminated physical activity as one of the fundamental stimuli from our lives. The growth of non-communicable lifestyle diseases and the epidemic increase in obesity provide clear evidence of this imbalance between our lifestyles and our physical requirements. Physical inactivity has become a **major risk factor for chronic non-communicable diseases** in populations. In fact, opportunities to be physically active tend to decrease as we become adults and recent lifestyle changes have reinforced this phenomenon (EU PA Guidelines, 2008). According to available data, between 40 and 60% of the EU population lead a sedentary lifestyle, and only about 31% are able to complete the EU guidelines of 30 minutes of moderate physical activity daily (Eurobarometer, 2010).

Physical activity, exercise, health and quality of life are closely interconnected. The human body was designed to move and therefore needs regular physical activity in order to function optimally and avoid illness. Furthermore, living an active life brings many other social and psychological benefits and there is a direct link between physical activity and life expectancy, so that physically active populations tend to live longer than inactive ones. Sedentary people who become more physically active report feeling better from both a physical and a mental point of view, and enjoy a better quality of life.

Overweight and obesity are defined as abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that may impair health. Especially **obesity** is a medical condition that it may have an adverse effect on health, leading to reduced life expectancy and/or increased health problems. Worldwide obesity has more than doubled since 1980. In 2008, more than 1.4 billion adults, 20 and older, were overweight and over 500 million adults were obese. Obesity is a leading preventable cause of death worldwide, with increasing prevalence in adults and children, and authorities view it as one of the most serious public health problems of the 21st century. A systematic healthy diet and customised physical exercise with supervision consist the mainstays of treatment obesity and weight management generally. That's why there is a need of professionals in the European fitness industry who are trained in this specific group of people.

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

- Chapter III: The essential Skills and Knowledge written as Learning Outcomes, based on job purposes, required to work as an Exercise Specialist in the European Health and Fitness Industry at the EQF-Fitness Level 5, where EQF 4 Personal Trainer knowledge is a prerequisite.
- Chapter IV: The **EUROPEACTIVE** Competence Framework and the essential Competencies, associated to Skills and Knowledge written as Learning Outcomes, based on occupational purposes, required to work as a Weight Management Exercise Specialist in the European Health and Fitness Industry at the EQF-Fitness Level 5.

Finally, it is to be noted that a qualified group of technical experts across Europe representing the different stakeholders of our sector volunteered to assist with the development of the **EUROPEACTIVE** Standards, and that relevant experts around the world have been involved on the external consultation process.

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 (2014):

- Dr. Thomas Rieger, BITS University, Germany

Technical Expert Group (2014):

- Alexis Batrakoulis, GR.A.F.T.S., Greece (TEG Leader)
- John van Heel, EFAA, Netherlands
- Pauline Jacobs, EFAA, Netherlands
- Charlotte Dean, Careers in Fitness, UK
- Dr. Nuno Pimenta, ESDRM, Portugal

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

III. EuropeActive Skills and Underpinning Knowledge for Weight Management Exercise Specialists (EQF Level 5) 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 job purposes, required to work as a **Weight Management Exercise Specialist** in the European Health and Fitness Industry at the EQF-Fitness Level 5. These standards and the education associated are purpose and outcome driven, aligned with the industry main goal to get 'more people, more active, more often'.

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 5 qualification:

1. EQF Level 4 Personal Trainer skills and knowledge or equivalent accredited certification is recommended as a prerequisite if the Exercise Specialist wants to deliver personal training sessions.
2. EQF Level 3 Group Fitness Instructor or equivalent accredited certification is recommended if the Exercise Specialist wants to deliver group exercise.
3. If aquatic activities are planned, the adequate qualifications for conducting exercise in water are required.
4. They must have at least 3 months fulltime equivalency of working as an Exercise Professional. This is a prerequisite before starting the EQF Level 5 qualification and this specialisation of the EQF Level 4 Personal Trainer.
5. The Weight Management Exercise Specialist as a certified Exercise Professional ideally should be 1 out of 4 or 5 members of multidisciplinary task force: General Practitioner (optional), Dietician-Nutritionist, Physiotherapist, Psychologist, Exercise Specialist.
6. The Weight Management Exercise Specialist should work with an overweight or obese client only if he receives from its physician or GP a referral for exercise.

Exercise Specialists 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 5 mean 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 5 are	Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge.	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change; - Review and develop performance of self and others.

What does level 5 mean at Fitness QF?

EQF Level	Occupation	EuropeActive Standards	Target Audience
Level 5	Weight Management Exercise Specialist	EuropeActive Level 5	Individuals (adults and adolescents) at risk and/or with the chronic health condition of overweight or obesity (low and moderate risk)

Occupational Title

Weight Management Exercise Specialist

Job Purpose

A Weight Management Exercise Specialist (WMES) has a role which includes designing, implementing, evaluating and supervising exercise/physical activity programmes for overweight and obese individuals by collecting and analysing client information to ensure the effectiveness and safety of personal exercise programmes. As part of a team with other professionals, however, a WMS can contribute significantly and uniquely in helping the overweight and obese clients to improve their health and life through a monitored and specific exercise programme.

Occupational Description

Weight Management Exercise Specialists are fitness professionals who are using an individualized approach, to assess and motivate overweight and obese clients to an active and healthy lifestyle. They also have the priority to educate and provide the training of this type of special population. The Weight Management Exercise Specialist will analyse

and evaluate clients’ health and fitness needs, they work either preventively or therapeutically and are always in a multidisciplinary collaboration with healthcare professionals.

Occupational Roles

The Weight Management Exercise Specialist should be able to:

1. Analyse and implement an exercise management programme for this metabolic disorder;
2. Employ exercise protocols within the realm of personal training for overweight and obesity;
3. Examine and integrate physicians’ recommendations into the personal training exercise programme for overweight and obese clients;
4. Educate the overweight and obese participant on the response of the body to exercise, during and after exercise;
5. Identify safe, effective, and targeted prehabilitation exercises for this special population;
6. Recognize and respond to emergency situations;
7. Receive referrals from and refer clients to other healthcare providers as appropriate;
8. Promote an active and healthy lifestyle as a major preventive and life long process in order to affect positively and inspire optimally these clients.

Core Knowledge Areas and Skills Requirements

The educational standards for the WM Exercise Specialist EQF Level 5 include the following core knowledge areas:

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT EXERCISE SPECIALIST

Level 5 Core Knowledge Areas				
Role of the WMES	Diagnosis and Epidemiology of Overweight and Obesity	Causation and Pathophysiology of Obesity	Lifestyle Intervention for Overweight and Obese Clients	
Nutrition for Overweight and Obese Clients	Psycho-social Aspects and Management of Overweight and Obese Clients	Health & Fitness Assessment for Overweight and Obese Clients	Training Adaptation in Weight Management	Exercise Planning and Programming in Weight Management
Case Studies – Preparation and Review				

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

Section 1 - Role of the Weight Management Exercise Specialist

Section Overview

Learners will:

- Understand the Medical and Political need for Weight Management Exercise Specialists in Europe
- Understand the place of the Weight Management Exercise Specialist in the healthcare system and the cooperation with other professionals in Medical Fitness industry
- Know the career development opportunities available as a Weight Management Exercise Specialist

Section Headings

1.1 The Rationale for Exercise in Overweight and Obese Individuals

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- The prevalence of overweight and obesity globally, within Europe and nationally
- The economic impact of obesity and the reason for political intervention in policy-making to tackle its increasing incidence
- How Weight Management Exercise Specialists can support existing healthcare provision in the management of obesity
- The national, European and worldwide initiatives to raise awareness of the importance of exercise for overweight and obesity
- The necessity of creating a multidisciplinary task force with 4 main members (Nutritionist, Exercise Specialist, Psychologist, Physiotherapist). The Physician (General Practitioner or Cardiologist) is the general supervisor of the client and is responsible for referral or exercise prescription

1.2 Professional Development in Exercise for Overweight and Obesity

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Opportunities for career development as a Weight Management Exercise Specialist
- The importance of the specialisation in Personal Training relating special populations as the obese individuals
- How to maintain continuous professional development as a Weight Management Exercise Specialist
- The place of the Weight Management Exercise Specialist within the Level 5 Exercise for Health Specialism's.

Section 2 - Diagnosis and Epidemiology of Overweight and Obesity

Section Overview

Learners will:

- Know the definition and classification of overweight and obesity
- Have an overview about obesity statistics (national, European and global level)
- Know how to identify credible information sources and conduct structured research into this chronic condition

Section Headings

2.1 Definition of Overweight and Obesity

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- The definition of overweight and obesity according to the World Health Organization (WHO)
- The 'Body Mass Index' (BMI) as the determination of overweight and obesity ranges in adults
- The individual's waist circumference because abdominal fat is a predictor of risk for obesity-related diseases

2.2 Facts of Overweight and Obesity

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- The prevalence of overweight and obesity on national, European and global level
- The prevalence of overweight and obesity by age (children and adolescents)
- The obesity related diseases (hypertension, (pre)diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, musculoskeletal disorders, psychosocial problems) and their prevalence in relation to obesity
- The risk factors of overweight and obesity (genetics, family history, age, ethnicity, social economical status, physical inactivity, nutrition) and their prevalence in relation to obesity
- The progressive nature of the overweight and obesity epidemic
- The raising medical health costs related to overweight, obesity and obesity related diseases

Section 3 - Causation and Pathophysiology of Obesity

Section Overview

Learners will:

- Understand the underlying pathophysiology of obesity
- Apply the knowledge of the pathophysiology of obesity to design weight management programs

Section Headings

3.1 Pathophysiology of Obesity

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- The influence of energy intake (nutrition) on energy balance and related outcomes
- The influence of energy expenditure (particularly that associated to resting metabolic rate and physical activity) on energy balance and related outcomes.
- Energy balance in the process of weight change and weight maintenance
- Causes of Obesity particularly those arisen from energy balance
- Abnormalities that predispose to weight gain (including Hypothyroidism and low sympathetic activity)
- Risk factors for the development of overweight and obesity, including: gender, sex, culture and overall lifestyle

3.2 Complications of Obesity

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Overweight and obesity related risk: including higher risk of metabolic and orthopaedic disturbances and premature mortality, in the general population, and including also lower risk of mortality in specific subpopulations (obesity paradox):
 - Overweight and obesity related metabolic risk, particularly diabetes, dyslipidemia, hypertension and overall cardiovascular disease
 - Overweight and obesity related orthopaedic risk, particularly osteoarthritis in the lower limbs

- Overweight and obesity related lower risk of mortality in specific sub-populations such as the elderly and cardiovascular disease patients

Section 4 - Lifestyle Intervention for Overweight and Obese Clients

Section Overview

Learners will:

- Have knowledge and understand the possible treatments for obesity in general
- Apply the knowledge of the physical activity programme and behavioural lifestyle education into a lifestyle intervention programme
- Be able to work within a multidisciplinary team, together with physiotherapists, nutritionists, psychologists and under the general supervision of a physician

Section Headings

4.1 Combined Lifestyle Intervention

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- The dose-response relationship between physical activity and health
- Maintaining lifestyle changes by behavioural changes
- The effect of lifestyle modifications and drugs (lifestyle plays a greater role in the prevention of obesity than drugs)
- The role of the Weight Management Exercise Specialist in a multidisciplinary team and in general the roles of the other team members

4.2 Exercise Intervention

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Purpose of a physical activity programme of overweight and obese clients to include:
 - Health gains through an active lifestyle
 - The physical activity standards by the ACSM, CDC, etc. (daily movement, recreational low intensity and high intensity cardiorespiratory exercise, resistance training)
- Role of prevention of physical activity in overweight and obese clients
- The role MET's (Metabolic Equivalent of Task) can play in a physical activity programme
- The role of physical activity and disease education

4.3 Nutritional Intervention

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- The general purpose of a nutrition programme (instructed by a Nutritionist) for overweight and obese clients

4.4 Medical Treatment

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- The usual medical treatment (within people's country) and their effects on obese clients (drug therapy, weight loss surgery)

Section 5 - Nutrition for Overweight and Obese Clients

Section Overview

Learners will:

- Have general knowledge of the guidelines for healthy nutrition for overweight and obese clients
- Understand evidenced-based nutrition guidelines and requirements for healthy weight loss
- Provide general suggestions on food intake modifications for weight management
- Apply targeted communication with the Dietician-Nutritionist who is involved in the multidisciplinary team

Section Headings

5.1 Healthy Way of Eating

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- The dietary role and common dietary sources for each of the six main nutrients (carbohydrate, fat, protein, vitamins, minerals, water)
- How to develop a healthy, balanced way of eating
- Lifestyle advice, to include use of tobacco, alcohol, caffeine (current national government guidelines)
- Energy needs for different activities/sports/fitness plans
- The role of carbohydrate, fat and protein as fuels for aerobic and anaerobic exercise for overweight and obese clients
- The pros and cons of an alkaline diet and the factors that influence it like the body's pH-value, processed products (e.g., sugar, refined grains)

5.2 Calorie Restriction Diets

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Safe and effective advices about eating pattern for weight (fat) loss/gain energy balance, appropriate 'weight' loss goals
- The risks and advantages of reducing calories (500 kcal deficit)
- The risks and advantages of very low calorie diets (<800 kcal)

5.3 Educational Tools and Solutions

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- How to use the most recent national food guide approach (graphs, tables) in general in order to provide food quality and support weight loss
- Necessity of portion awareness, nutrition facts panel, labels claims, dining out strategies, evidence-based dietary supplementation related to the weight management

Section 6 - Psychosocial Aspects and Management of Overweight and Obese Clients

Section Overview

Learners will:

- Have knowledge and understanding of possible psycho-social effect for overweight and obese clients

Section Headings:

6.1 Psychological Effects

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- The risk factors of developing overweight and obesity; parental fatness, social factors, birth weight, physical activity, dietary factors, other behavioural/psychological factors
- Strategies to influence these factors for preventing and manage overweight and obesity (See also 6.3 & 6.4)
- The psychological aspects of physical activity and fitness, which are influential to health and fitness behaviour change
- Signs of depression and stages of depression
- The increased risk of adjustment difficulties.
- Effective interventions cognitive behaviour therapy to manage dysfunction affect as well as illness meaning personality and interpersonal functioning.

6.2 Skills of the WMES according to the Psychosocial Aspects

Learners should demonstrate knowledge, skills and understanding of:

- Short medium long term goal setting using the SMART method
- Empathy with the client throughout the programme
- An understanding of the Potential reasons for this condition lack of education, low social background, family influence, mental disorders, personality disorders, psychological outcome when living with this condition
- Reasons behind a lapse in continuing with the programme set. Such as cost, work commitments, lack of motivation, lack of support from others
- Correct methods for education of the client to enable behaviour change
- Knowledge of when to refer a client e.g.: mild depression a visit to the general practitioner, clinical depression refers

6.3 Motivational Strategies

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Appropriate models for change such as the 'Prochaska & DiClemente' models and the characteristics of an individual at each stage and the appropriate interventions/strategies at each stage (e.g. decisional balance, self efficacy, fitness testing, stimulus control, reinforcement management & counter conditioning etc.)
- Stages of behavior change, according to the Transtheoretical model, that may lead to exercise engagement and active lifestyle
- The selection of an appropriate behavioural goal and the suggested method to evaluate goal achievement for each stage of change
- The application of basic cognitive-behavioural intervention such as shaping, goal setting, motivation, cueing, problem solving, reinforcement strategies, and self-monitoring
- Being aware of the details of self efficacy one's own ability to reach goals and habits of attribution that contribute to detract from self efficacy
- Methods for motivational management such as behavioural goals and evaluation methods e.g.: Fitness test, diary of behaviour, charts, sheets, verbal communication, eye contact, gesturing positive active listening

6.4 Motivational Interviewing

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Motivational Interviewing:
 - Developing "importance", "confidence" and "readiness"
 - Dealing with resistance to change

- Screening with open-ended questions to ensure true feelings and knowledge. Such as Why, How or Tell me about it
- Reflective questioning to prompt them to be more aware of themselves example: if what you have been doing is not achieving the results you want what could you do differently?
- Summarizing
- Technique of decisional balance sheet
- Removing barriers, problem solving and enhancing benefits of practicing physical activity

Section 7 - Health and Fitness Assessment for Overweight and Obese Clients

Section Overview

Learners will:

- Know appropriate screening and referral protocols for use with overweight and obese individuals
- Know which anthropometric and resting measurements are appropriate to use with overweight and obese individuals
- Know a range of suitable functional assessments, and test adjustments, to be used with overweight and obese individuals
- Understand the cooperation with the other professionals and members of the multidisciplinary task force relating assessment field

Section Headings

7.1 Collecting Information (Interview and Questionnaire)

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Interviewing overweight and obese clients and building rapport
- Using preliminary screening tools, such as the Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PAR-Q & You) to assess safety or possible contraindication to exercise, and also the need of medical doctor referral
- Using a preset (e.g. ACSM Health Status & Health History Questionnaire) or customized medical history questionnaire to characterize the overweight or obese client and assess risk of adverse outcomes associated to exercise and exercise testing
- Using a validated risk classification tools, such as that of the European Association for Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation (EACPR) or American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)
- Collecting information regarding the overweight and obese client lifestyle, including nutritional and physical activity related habits
- Assessing client' motivation and readiness for behavioural change, based on comprehensive psychological theories and models (e.g. Self-determination Theory, Attitude – Social Influence – Self-Efficacy Model (ASE-model), I-Change Model, Transtheoretical model)

7.2 Collecting Information (Physical Evaluation)

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Assessing the overweight and obese health-related fitness, including body composition, cardiorespiratory endurance, muscular strength and endurance and flexibility

- Collecting information from overweight and obese clients including health related fitness
- Assessing hemodynamic data, including heart rate and blood pressure, during rest and exercise
- Appropriate measurements, including preferable anthropometric measurements (e.g., body circumferences), body fat distribution markers and other body indexes, to assess body composition in overweight and obese individuals
- Appropriate tests (e.g., Astrand 6 minutes test Rockport, 6 minutes walking test) and tests adjustments, including the use of low initial load and subsequent load increments, using leg or even arm cycle ergometer, select equipment suitable for high loading and the use of large and adjusted saddles to assess cardiorespiratory fitness in overweight and obese individuals
- Appropriate tests and test adjustments to assess muscular strength (e.g. 10 RM or 1RM prediction equations) and muscular endurance in overweight and obese individuals
- Appropriate static and dynamic tests to assess posture, functionality and overall autonomy in overweight and obese individuals
- Appropriate physical activity assessment (pedometers, accelerometers, and/or questionnaires such as the 7 days physical activity recall or others)

7.3 Analysing and Presenting Information

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Ensuring the collected information regarding the overweight or obese client is kept confidential
- Interpreting field (e.g., anthropometry) and laboratory (e.g., dual energy x-ray absorptiometry) data regarding the assessment of health related fitness
- Making sound reports including charts, notes and diagrams to help the presentation of the assessments to the client
- Organize weight related information, including charts, notes and diagrams, to enhance communication to clients, employers, policy makers, stakeholders and other professionals and general population
- Determining reassessments to assess the progression of the overweight or obese client and to make program adjustments when needed

Section 8 - Training Adaptation in Weight Management

Section Overview

Learners will:

- Understand the necessity of regular physical activity and exercise in the prevention and management of overweight and obesity
- Know specific evidence-based sources related to the benefits of exercise for overweight and obese individuals
- Understand specific training adaptation of overweight and obese clients
- Know acute and long-term effects of exercise in overweight and obese clients

Section Headings

8.1 Role of Physical Activity and Exercise in Weight Management

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Overweight and obesity have continued to rise at an alarming rate and physical inactivity has become an urgent public health concern

- Lately there are many evidence-based references which supports the vital role of physical activity in the prevention and treatment of overweight and obesity
- Physical activity is recognized to produce multiple general and weight management-specific health benefits
- Structured and supervised exercise in overweight and obese individuals and its role in a multidisciplinary task force
- Evidence-based approach: Combination of low intensity recreational and high intensity cardiorespiratory fitness and resistance training as the prevention and treatment of overweight and obesity
- Low NEAT (Non-Exercise Activities Thermogenesis) and low EPOC (Excess Post-Exercise Oxygen Consumption) play a highly negative role in weight control

8.2 Benefits of Exercise for Overweight and Obese Individuals

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Improvement of all fitness parameters (cardiovascular conditioning, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, body composition, mental health)
- Increased energy expenditure: excess post oxygen consumption, increased fat loss, preservation of lean body mass, increased metabolic rate
- Preventive role for any potential future cardiac health risk related to chronic disease simultaneously
- Association with the prevention of diabetes mellitus type 2 (lower blood glucose concentration during and after exercise, improved insulin sensitivity and decreased insulin requirement, lower HbA1c levels)
- Association with the prevention of dyslipidemia (decreased triglycerides, slightly decrease low-density lipoprotein, increased high-density lipoprotein)
- Association with the prevention of hypertension (improvement in mild to moderate blood pressure)
- Association with the prevention of most prevalent musculoskeletal disorders (low back pain, osteoporosis, poor posture)
- Improved sense of well-being and enhanced quality of life
- Relationship between energy intake, appetite control and exercise

Section 9 - Exercise Planning and Programming in Weight Management

Section Overview

Learners will:

- Know the importance of compliance with national and international legislation with overweight and obese individuals
- Know specific evidence-based exercise guidelines for overweight and obese individuals
- Have a general overview to weight loss training methodologies
- Know strategies in avoiding and breaking weight loss plateaus
- Summarise the exercise risks to overweight and obese individuals
- Know the contraindications relating exercise for clients who are either overweight or obese
- Know and understand of preparing and delivering an exercise session for overweight and obese clients
- Know and understand of applying detailed medical, health and fitness assessment, lifestyle and other information in order to develop an weight management programme

Section Headings

9.1 Planning Exercise with Overweight and Obese Individuals

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Potential national and local legislation, quality assurance frameworks or other policies and guidance relating to the provision of exercise services to participants
- The importance of compliance to legislative or best practice guidelines for working with overweight and obese individuals
- Applying health and fitness data in the provision of an effective exercise plan
- Recording the programme in an appropriate format ensuring that the information is usable to the overweight or obese people
- Collect detailed medical, lifestyle and other information and set goals in a consultation in order to construct a programme that meets the client's wants and needs
- Necessity to suggest appropriate goals within lifestyle and genetic parameters
- The importance to express the scientific rationale behind plateaus

9.2 Guidance Parameters for Exercise in Weight Management

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Potential national and international (position statements) evidence-based guidelines for credible and safe programme design on overweight and obese clients
- Effects of resistance training on overweight and obese clients and recommended guidelines for all the parameters of training (frequency, intensity, time, type of exercise)
- Effects of cardiovascular training on overweight and obese clients and recommended guidelines for all the parameters of training (intensity, frequency, duration, type of exercise)
- Other resistance training methodologies that can be applied to assist in enhancing weight loss (circuit, power, metabolic)
- Other cardiorespiratory training methodologies that can be applied to assist in enhancing weight loss (aerobic interval, anaerobic interval, multimode, stepwise/pyramid, fartlek)
- Applying principles of periodization and progressiveness within the limits of recommended guidelines to achieve client's desired long-term outcomes without compromising health
- Structure exercise programmes to facilitate behaviour change in the long-term, leading to self-sustained increases in physical activity
- Using appropriate methods of intensity monitoring relevant to the client, its goal, medical history and the exercise environment

9.3 Adaptation and Modification of Exercise in Weight Management

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- The acute risks and know in-depth the safety considerations or potential medication usage considerations relating the exercise for overweight and obese clients
- The precautions for overweight and obese individuals
- Acute contraindications to exercise for overweight and obese individuals and how to detect it
- Detailed health and fitness assessment in order to provide an individualised programme
- Exercises that are appropriate to overweight and obese individuals
- Exercise programmes and modifying planned activities in response to a client's acute needs on the day of a planned exercise session

- Regular performance reviews with client's to evaluate progress against expectations and identify new goals

9.4 Exercise Session Preparation and Delivery for Weight Management

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Applying a risk assessment before the planned first session
- Advising client on safety procedures and underlining the goals of the session
- Preparing the required portable equipment controlling the parameters of the session (heart rate meter, glucose meter, blood pressure meter)
- Adapted training parameters (frequency, intensity, time, type) and structure of a specific session for overweight and obese clients
- Supervision in cardiovascular and resistance training in order to ensure optimal health benefits while minimising the risk of injury
- Monitoring clients regularly to achieve a suitable and safe process
- Managing potential risk to the client during the session
- Applying motivational techniques to the client during the session
- Adapting exercises during the session where is necessary
- Necessity to be prepared for client compliance challenges and strategies for resolution

Section 10 - Case Studies – Preparation & Review

Section Overview

Learners will:

- Prepare themselves to specific scenarios of exercise for overweight and obese individuals with low and moderate risk
- Know and understand the connection between theoretical learning and practical application
- Have the opportunity to examine carefully the key points of theory (core knowledge) and practice (skills and competencies) before providing exercise services to overweight and obese clients
- Realise where they have serious insufficiencies related to the learning objectives and where exactly should improve more before starting work with overweight and obese individuals
- Have to be able to evaluate the gathered information of the interview, evaluate the gathered information of the health and fitness assessment and use this information when implementing in a training program for a given specific weight management-related case
- Know and understand of reviewing and reflecting on the individualised weight management programme for overweight and obese clients
- Modify and revise the planned programme for the next sessions while recording the most important points for future improvements

Section Headings

10.1 Preparing on the Exercise Session and Programme for Weight Management

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Handle different and realistic case studies related to the exercise programming for overweight and obese clients

- Manage exercise scenarios for overweight and obese individuals with low or moderate risk regarding the session structure, pre-exercise evaluation, programme parameters and supervision
- Deal all the material of the education of Weight Management Exercise Specialist and will try to create a focused and individualised programmes for overweight and obese clients
- Develop a closer relationship and cooperative environment with the other professionals and scientists from the multidisciplinary task force (General Practitioner optionally, Dietician-Nutritionist, Physiotherapist)

10.2 Reviewing on the Exercise Session and Programme for Weight Management

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Recording any potential problems and modifications during the session
- Checking and evaluating client's response to the planned programme for future sessions
- Revising the programme according to client's feedback and response to the planned session in accordance to the predefined goals
- Identifying ways to improve personal performance and instructional skills in order to develop more quality, safety and self-confidence in future sessions

IV. EuropeActive Weight Management Exercise Specialist - EQF L5 - Standards & Competencies Framework

This document describes the EHFA Competence Framework and contains the essential Competences, associated to Skills and Knowledge written as Learning Outcomes, based on occupational purposes, required to work as a Weight Management Specialist in the European Health and Fitness Industry at the EQF-Fitness Level 5. These Competence Framework, the Standards and the Education associated 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 **EHFA European Level 5 Weight Management Exercise Specialist Knowledge Requirements** which describe the knowledge which underpin the skills of the exercise professional working specifically with overweight and obese individuals.

Section 1: Role of the Weight Management Exercise Specialist

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:
Understand the Medical and Political need for Weight Management Exercise Specialists in Europe	a. Apply the knowledge of possible treatments of care providers in good communication within the multidisciplinary team b. Apply the knowledge of medical and political influences in good health care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevalence of overweight and obesity • Economic impact of obesity • Weight management initiatives • Prevention • Multidisciplinary approach 	1.1 The Rationale for Exercise in Overweight and Obese Individuals 4.1 Combined Lifestyle Intervention
Understand the place of the Weight Management Exercise Specialist in the healthcare system and the cooperation with other professionals in Medical Fitness industry	a. Demonstrate proper communication skills and professionalism in cooperation within the multidisciplinary team b. Apply the knowledge of possible treatments of care providers in good communication within the multidis-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidentiality • Multidisciplinary approach • Communication 	1.2 The Rationale for Exercise in Overweight and Obese Individuals

	disciplinary team		
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Section 2: Diagnosis and Epidemiology of Overweight and Obesity

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:
Communicate and converse about medical condition of overweight and obesity with clients and medical professionals	<p>a. Correct use of medical terminology and the ability to explain medical terms to clients in accessible language</p> <p>b. Possibility to separate and determine the stages of overweight and obesity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General medical information • Terminology specific to the aetiology of overweight and obesity • General information • Body Mass Index • Waist Circumference 	2.1 Definition of Overweight and Obesity
Adapt exercise techniques and programme variables during sessions to minimise the client's risk	<p>a. Able to explain to clients the role of exercise in prevention and/or as an adjunct to the treatment</p> <p>b. Look for appropriate warning signs when observing and monitoring clients through pre-exercise evaluation and during exercise sessions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevalence, epidemiology statistics (national, European, world-wide) • Prevalence by age • Risk factors • Obesity related diseases 	2.2 Facts of Overweight and Obesity

Section 3: Causation and Pathophysiology of Obesity

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:
Search and identify of the latest research and literature related to the causes of obesity, and the biological mechanisms involved in the process	Inform the overweight and obese clients, and general population about the risk factors and key mechanisms for the development of obesity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence-based references which supports the current understanding of obesity pathophysiology • The role of nutrition in the development of obesity and its potential for intervention • The role of physical inactivity in the development of obesity and its connection with the weight management • The importance of energy balance in the process of weight change and weight maintenance • Pathologies associated to weight gain and the development of obesity • Risk factors for the development of obesity 	3.1 Pathophysiology of Obesity
Search and identify of the latest research and literature related to the consequences of obesity	Inform the overweight and obese clients, and general population about obesity related risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overweight and obesity related metabolic risk, particularly diabetes, dyslipidaemia, hypertension and overall cardiovascular disease • Overweight and obesity related to orthopaedic risk, particularly osteoarthritis in the lower limbs • Overweight and obesity related lower risk of mortality in specific subpopulations such as the elderly and cardiovascular disease patients 	3.2 Complications of Obesity

Section 4: Lifestyle Intervention for Overweight and Obese Clients

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:
Integrate Core Knowledge of physical activity and behavioural lifestyle into a lifestyle intervention programme	<p>a. Apply the knowledge of possible treatments of care providers in good communication within the multidisciplinary team</p> <p>b. Educate client on the components of a healthy lifestyle and the health implications for each component</p> <p>c. Provide client with accurate information about recommended amount of physical activity required to achieve health benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions within Lifestyle intervention programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exercise ○ Nutrition ○ Medical Treatment ○ Education • Exercise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Health gains through an active lifestyle ○ Effects of exercise as intervention ○ Standards of physical activity by the ACSM, CDC, etc. ○ Physical activity as prevention ○ MET's • Nutrition (general knowledge) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dietary role of the nutrients ○ Portions awareness ○ Energy balance • Medical treatment (general knowledge) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Body weight monitoring ○ Drug therapy • Weight loss surgery 	<p>4.1 Combined Lifestyle Intervention</p> <p>4.2 Exercise Intervention</p> <p>4.3 Nutritional intervention</p> <p>4.4 Medical Treatment</p> <p>5.1 Healthy Way of Eating</p> <p>6.1 Psychological Effects</p> <p>8 Training Adaptation</p>

Section 5: Nutrition for Overweight and Obese Clients

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:
<p>Inform clients of benefits of a healthy lifestyle according to good and healthy nutrition</p>	<p>a. Provide general suggestions on food intake modifications for weight management</p> <p>b. Illuminate the fad diets and risky nutritional approaches in weight management</p> <p>c. Modern and effective approach in education and support of overweight and obese clients</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy balance • Healthy eating patterns • Alkaline diet • Lifestyle advice, to include use of tobacco, alcohol, caffeine (current government guidelines); • Energy needs for different activities/sports/fitness plans • Safe and effective advices about eating pattern for weight (fat) loss/gain • Communication with Dietician-Nutritionist • Eating pattern for weight (fat) loss/gain energy balance, appropriate 'weight' loss goals • Calorie restriction of 500 kcal • Very low calorie diets (<800 kcal) • Know to use the most recent food guide approach (graphs, tables) to provide food quality and support weight loss • Portion awareness, nutrition facts panel, labels claims, dining out strategies, evidence-based dietary supplementation related to the weight management 	<p>4.3 Nutritional Intervention</p> <p>5.1 Health Way of Eating</p> <p>5.2 Calorie Restriction Diets</p> <p>5.3 Educational Tools and Solutions</p>

Section 6: Psychosocial Aspects and Management of Overweight and Obese Clients

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:
Exercise management and supervision in contexts of working with the psychosocial aspects of overweight and obesity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Summarize and evaluate risk b. Process and evaluate information collected c. Working with other healthcare professionals and referring as and when appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People at risk • Signs of depression • Risk of adjustment difficulties • Communication with the client • Stage of readiness • Empathy • The need for support • Psychological aspects of fitness • SMART goal setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.1 Psychological Effects 6.2 Skills of the WMS according to Psychosocial Aspects
<p>Understand and work with the psychosocial aspects of overweight and obesity and motivational interviewing</p> <p>Develop and apply strategies to motivate participants to join and adhere to an exercise programme</p>	Integrate appropriate motivational strategies to encourage long term adherence to the programme and to positive lifestyle practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivational theories • Motivational methods • Stages of change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Precontemplation ○ Contemplation ○ Preparation ○ Action ○ Maintenance • Decisional balance awareness • Self-efficacy • Short medium and long term SMART goal setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.3 Motivational Strategies 6.4 Motivational Interviewing

Section 7: Health and Fitness Assessment for Overweight and Obese Clients

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:
<p>Collect information from overweight and obese clients to assess risk profile, identify contraindications to exercise and need for GP referral and to assess the overall characterization of the client</p>	<p>Use and conduct standardized and/or customized questionnaires and interview modes to assess clients' information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapport • Preliminary screening tools, such as the Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PAR-Q & You) • Medical history questionnaires • Validated risk classification tools, such as that of the European Association for Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation (EACPR) or American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) • Tools to assess lifestyle information, including nutritional (food frequency questionnaire or other) and physical activity (pedometers, accelerometers, 7 days physical activity recall or others) related habits 	<p>7.1 Collecting Information (Interview and Questionnaire)</p>
<p>Collect information from overweight and obese clients regarding health related fitness</p>	<p>Use and conduct standardized and/or customized tests to assess health related fitness components</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health-related fitness components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Body composition ○ Cardiorespiratory endurance ○ Muscular strength and endurance ○ Flexibility • Preferable measurements, including anthropometric measurements (e.g. body circumferences), body fat distribution markers and other body indexes, to assess body composition in overweight and obese individuals • Appropriate tests and test adjust- 	<p>7.2 Collecting information (physical evaluation)</p>

		<p>ments to assess cardiorespiratory fitness in overweight and obese individuals, including the eventual need of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use of low initial load and subsequent load increments ○ Use leg or even arm cycle ergometer ○ Select equipment suitable of high weight loading ○ Use oversized saddles in cycle ergometer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of hemodynamic data, including heart rate and blood pressure, during rest and exercise testing • Selection of appropriate cuff size for blood pressure assessment • Appropriate tests and test adjustments to assess muscular strength and endurance in overweight and obese individuals • Appropriate static and dynamic tests to assess posture, functionality and overall autonomy in overweight and obese individuals • Special needs and cautions related with overweight and obese associated comorbidities and eventual use of specific medications 	
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<p>Analyse and use the collected health and fitness information from overweight and obese clients</p>	<p>Interpret and understand the collected health and fitness information use it in exercise programing and communicate to clients and general population</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidentiality of the collected information regarding overweight or obese clients • Comprehensive motivation and behaviour change theories (e.g., self-determination theory and transtheoretical model) • Data from field health related fitness assessment data, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Anthropometry for assessing body composition ○ Submaximal exercise tests (e.g. 6 min. walk test) for the assessment of cardiovascular endurance ○ Estimation tests to assess muscular strength (including 1RM estimation equations) ○ Timed maximal number of repetitions for the assessment of muscular endurance ○ Sit-and-reach for the assessment of flexibility • Data from laboratory health related fitness assessment data, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dual Energy X-Ray absorptiometry for assessing body composition ○ Exercise maximal test using gas analysis for the assessment of cardiovascular endurance ○ Isokinetic muscular assessment 	<p>7.3 Analysing and Presenting Information</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Goniometers for the assessment of flexibility • Data report including charts, notes and diagrams to help the presentation of the assessments to the client • Organized weight related information, including charts, notes and diagrams, to enhance communication to clients, employers, policy makers, stakeholders and other professionals and general population • Health and fitness reassessment determination and scheduling • Assessment of the progression of the overweight or obese client 	
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Section 8: Training Adaptation in Weight Management

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:
<p>Search and identify of the latest research and literature related to the exercise in overweight and obese individuals</p>	<p>a. Inform the overweight and obese clients for the key role of exercise and its benefits</p> <p>b. Inform and motivate in order to provide exercise services which works both short and long-term for overweight and obese individuals</p> <p>c. Instruct clients regarding the multiple role of structured and supervised exercise in weight management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The alarming rate of physical inactivity and its connection with the weight management • Evidence-based references which supports the vital role of physical activity in the prevention and treatment of overweight and obesity • Multiple general and weight management-specific health benefits • Structured and supervised exercise in overweight and obese individuals and its role in a multidisciplinary task force • Combination of low intensity recreational, high intensity cardiorespiratory fitness and resistance training as the prevention and treatment of overweight and obesity • Low NEAT (Non-Exercise Activities Thermogenesis) and low EPOC (Excess Post-Exercise Oxygen Consumption) play a highly negative role in weight control • Improvement of all fitness parameters • Increased energy expenditure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Excess post oxygen consumption ○ Increased fat loss ○ Preservation of lean body 	<p>8.1 Role of Physical Activity and Exercise in Weight Management</p> <p>8.2 Benefits of Exercise for Overweight and Obese Individuals</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ mass <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased metabolic rate • Improved sense of well-being and enhanced quality of life • Preventive role for any potential future cardiac health risk related to chronic disease simultaneously • Association with the prevention of diabetes mellitus type 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lower blood glucose concentration ○ During and after exercise ○ Improved insulin sensitivity ○ Decreased insulin requirement ○ Lower HbA1c levels • Association with the prevention of dyslipidaemia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Decreased triglycerides ○ Slightly decrease LDL ○ Increased HDL • Association with the prevention of hypertension (improvement in mild to moderate blood pressure) • Association with the prevention of most prevalent musculoskeletal disorders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Low back pain ○ Osteoporosis ○ Poor posture • Improved sense of well-being and enhanced quality of life • Relationship between energy intake, appetite control and exercise 	
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Section 9: Exercise Planning and Programming in Weight Management

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:
Maintain compliance with legal and professional guidelines for the provision of exercise for overweight and obese individuals	Select appropriate practice guidance when providing exercise services for overweight and obese individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National and local legislation • Quality assurance frameworks • Professional codes of practice • Applying health and fitness data • Recording the programme • Collecting medical, lifestyle and other detailed information • Setting goals in a consultation which meets the client's wants and needs • The importance to express the scientific rationale behind plateaus 	9.1 Planning Exercise with Overweight and Obese Individuals
Maintain familiarity with current exercise guidelines for weight management	<p>a. Accomplish regular research into current exercise guidelines and new discoveries relevant to clients they are work with</p> <p>b. Adapt exercise programmes and modifying activities in response to a client's acute needs on the day of a planned exercise session</p> <p>c. Control and manage any potential risks while keep the parameters of exercise and the whole procedure as it has planned</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National and international evidence-based guidelines • Effects of resistance training and recommended guidelines for all the parameters of training • Effects of cardiovascular training and recommended guidelines for all the parameters of training • Other resistance and cardiorespiratory training methodologies that can be applied to assist in enhancing weight loss • Periodization and progressiveness principles • Structure exercise programmes to facilitate behaviour change in the long-term • Acute risks and knowledge in-depth the safety considerations 	9.2 Guidance Parameters for Exercise in Weight Management

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precautions • Acute contraindications • Detailed health and fitness assessment • Appropriate selection of exercises • Regular performance reviews with client's to evaluate progress against expectations and identify new goals • Adapted training parameters (frequency, intensity, time, type) and structure of a specific session for overweight and obese clients • Supervision in cardiovascular and resistance training in order to ensure optimal health while minimising any risk • Risk assessment before the planned session • Safety procedures and the goals of the session 	
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Section 10: Case Studies – Preparation & Review

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:
<p>Know and understand the connection between theoretical learning and practical application</p>	<p>a. Prepare themselves to specific scenarios of exercise for overweight and obese individuals with low and moderate risk</p> <p>b. Realise where they have serious insufficiencies and where exactly they should improve more before starting work with overweight and obese individuals</p> <p>c. Reviewing and reflecting on the individualised programme for weight management</p> <p>d. Modifying and revising the planned programme for the next sessions while recording the most important points for future improvements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies related to the exercise programming for overweight and obese clients • Exercise scenarios for overweight and obese individuals regarding the session structure, pre-exercise evaluation, programme parameters and supervision • Focused and individualised programmes for weight management • Professional relationship and cooperative environment with the other members of the multidisciplinary task force (GP, Dietician-Nutritionist, Physiotherapist) • Potentials to record problems and modifications during the session • Client’s response to the planned programme for future sessions • Revision of the programme according to client’s feedback and response to the objectives of the planned session • Report to the client according to the review of the programme • Ways to improve personal performance and instructional skills in order to develop more quality, safety and self-confidence in future sessions 	<p>10.1 Preparing on the Exercise Session and Programme for Weight Management</p> <p>10.2 Reviewing on the Exercise Session and Programme for Weight Management</p>