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# How to Find a Cancer Trainer

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Last year the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and American Cancer Society launched the Certified Cancer Exercise Trainer program for health and fitness professionals interested in getting certified to work with cancer patients and survivors.

Richard Cotton, the ACSM's national director of certification, says the ACSM and ACS developed this first-of-its-kind program because the population of cancer patients and survivors is growing. "They are coming into clubs as suggested by their physicians to get started on an exercise program, and there are specific guidelines that are necessary for a person who is in cancer treatment or recovery."

The certification course provides a basic understanding of cancer diagnoses, surgeries, treatments, symptoms, and side effects to help trainers develop exercise programs for patients at various stages of cancer treatment.

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—Richard Cotton

Cotton estimates there are about 100 trainers certified across the country so far. People who are interested in finding a certified trainer can inquire at their local health clubs or use the ACSM ProFinder service at [www.acsm.org](http://www.acsm.org) under the "Certification" tab, or call 317-637-9200, extension 115. If a patient or survivor cannot locate a cancer-certified trainer in his or her community, Cotton advises asking for trainers who have expertise in working with people with health challenges.

"Just make sure you don't overdo it," he adds. "I always say do less than you think you are able. Don't push yourself to the limit. Try an amount of exercise and see how it feels an hour to 12 hours later. If you are not over-fatigued, you can do that again. It is always best to start easy with an exercise program than to make the mistake of pushing too hard too soon."