

Chapter Preview

Group Fitness Instructor Study Program

Thank you for your interest in the ACE Group Fitness Instructor Certification! You've taken the first step toward a new career where you'll help inspire people to live healthier, happier lives.

Enclosed is a free chapter preview from the textbook, *The Exercise Professional's Guide to Group Fitness Instruction*. With the ACE Group Fitness Instructor Study Program, you'll gain the foundational knowledge you'll need to deliver memorable and inclusive group fitness experiences. Whether you're going to lead outdoor high-intensity interval training, dance-based classes in a fitness facility, online small-group circuit training, or any of the countless variations and opportunities group fitness has to offer, this in-depth study program will prepare you for a long and rewarding career in the fitness industry.

If you have any questions about what to expect, we're here to help! Our ACE Advisors are standing by and excited to help you move closer to getting certified. Whether you're looking to become a group fitness instructor—or you're part of an institution, health club or group and want to get your staff ACE Certified—please don't hesitate to get in touch at the number below or by chatting with us on our website!

We hope to hear from you soon!



ACE Advisors

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Monday-Friday, 7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (PT)



Leading Group Fitness Classes

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this chapter, the reader will be able to:

- Differentiate between styles of teaching for group fitness classes
- Apply effective teaching strategies for group fitness classes
- Modify teaching styles, methods, and strategies to meet the needs of participants during group fitness classes
- Solicit meaningful feedback from a variety of sources and incorporate information to enhance the class experience or modify teaching strategies
- Understand leadership strategies that can be utilized to manage and enhance the group fitness class experience
- Implement strategies to avoid group fitness instructor burnout



ACE UNIVERSITY

If your study program includes ACE University, visit www.ACEfitness.org/MyACE and log in to your My ACE Account to take full advantage of the ACE Group Fitness Instructor Study Program and online guided study experience.

A variety of media to support and expand on the material in this text is provided to facilitate learning and best prepare you for the ACE Group Fitness Instructor Certification exam and a career as a group fitness instructor.

While previous chapters help ACE Certified Group Fitness Instructors (GFIs) decide what to teach (i.e., appropriate exercises and general sequencing of movements), this is only half of the challenge. GFIs must also explore how to teach each movement, which is one of the most exciting aspects of group fitness instruction.

Teaching **pedagogy** applies to all subject matter and forms the basis of learning and application. The way one learns to tie their shoes is the same way one learns to cut hair or perform a choreographed dance. Learning to teach human movement is complex because the learner must possess the motor skills necessary to execute the movements, be able to memorize the steps or sequence, understand how an exercise is supposed to look and feel, and have the body awareness to perform movements correctly and repeatedly. Additionally, GFIs must possess the ability to build **rapport** and provide effective instructions that are clear and concise. Teaching mastery evolves over time and with practice.

To accommodate the variety of formats and styles of modern group fitness classes, instructors must understand different strategies of teaching in the group fitness setting. Yoke and Armbruster (2020) identify two major styles of teaching: coaching-based teaching, which has become more popular in recent years, and the more traditional beat-based teaching styles. Table 10-1 outlines the major differences between coaching-based teaching and beat-based teaching styles and strategies. This chapter explores coaching-based teaching strategies, beat-based teaching strategies, and general leadership considerations for GFIs.

TABLE 10-1
Teaching Techniques

| | Coaching-based Teaching | Beat-based Teaching |
|--|--|---|
| Music | The musical beat/tempo is not utilized, and participants move at their own pace. | The musical beat/tempo is utilized, and participants move together, in rhythm. |
| Instructor Demonstration/ Performance | The instructor acts as a coach and demonstrates the movement a few times before moving around the room to provide feedback to participants individually. | The instructor performs the majority or all movements, seeking replication and uniformity among participants. |
| Cueing | Cueing is flexible; precise anticipatory cueing is not necessary. | Timing of cues is important; anticipatory cues are essential. |
| Participant Performance | Individual performance and effort are encouraged. | Group uniformity and performance are encouraged. |
| Choreography | Not choreographed | Choreographed to music, often utilizing chorus and phrase segments of a song to determine how the choreography flows and maintain consistent movement |
| Formats/Class Types | High-intensity interval training (HIIT), boot camp, cycling, sports conditioning, kickboxing, and aquatic exercise | Dance, kickboxing, step aerobics, aquatic exercise, barre classes, and most pre-choreographed formats |
| Instructor Communication Style | Practice style or self-check style | Command-based style |

The logo for ACE Mover Method features the text "ACE" in white on a red rectangular background, followed by "M" in a blue speech bubble, "OVER" in black, "METH" in black, and "D" in a yellow speech bubble. A red horizontal bar is positioned to the right of the "D".

An Introduction to the ACE RRAMP Approach™

Shannon Fable, owner of SF Resources; ACE Certified Group Fitness Instructor, Health Coach, and Personal Trainer

Learning to teach multilevel classes is essential for all GFIs. Doing so in a way that allows participants to progress through the stages of learning and experience the intended outcomes of class while having a positive experience is the ultimate goal. Creating a caring and task-involving climate using the ACE RRAMP Approach, which was introduced in Chapter 2, is the secret.

ACE → RRAMP APPROACH

The ACE RRAMP Approach helps the GFI create compelling class openings, successful programming, powerful cueing, and meaningful closings that all support a positive motivational climate.

RRAMP is an acronym for the five “ingredients” that allow GFIs to build an environment and experience that considers and serves everyone who participates in class.

R – Respect

R – Recognition

A – Alignment

M – Mistakes

P – Participant

Throughout this chapter, ACE Mover Method™ features will teach GFIs how to bring each element to life before, during, and after classes.

Coaching-based Teaching

Coaching-based teaching is driven by the class plan and often utilizes music in the background, meaning that this style of teaching does not use the musical beat to organize participant movement. In fact, it encourages participants to move freely at their own pace and intensity. The instructor performs the movement, offering visual, auditory, and kinesthetic cues, and then asks participants to join in, often using a timer to organize the class. The instructor is free to move around the room and act as more of a coach.

GFIs using a coaching style of teaching are tasked with providing a supportive environment that celebrates effort and participation rather than performance and perfection. Therefore, it is important that instructors using this method integrate a variety of movement options, including **progressions** and **regressions**. GFIs must ensure all participants are able to participate in a way that allows them to feel challenged and successful.

PRACTICE STYLE OF TEACHING

In a coaching-based class, participants may be performing movements together, such as in an indoor cycling class, or they may be performing movement at their own pace, such as in a time-based **high-intensity interval training (HIIT)** or boot-camp class. This **practice style of teaching** provides opportunities for individualization and one-on-one instructor **feedback** for participants within the group experience. Each workout is viewed as an opportunity to practice, rather than achieve a specific result determined by the instructor. For example, in a HIIT class, all participants are working on the same task, such as performing as many push-ups as possible during a one-minute round. The GFI encourages everyone to choose their own intensity level [e.g., speed, **range of motion (ROM)**, **lever length**, and push-up variation] to promote individual success. The effect created is one of nurturing and support, as it provides participants the freedom to discover what works best for them via practice.

When utilizing the coaching style of teaching, it is important for GFIs to move around the room to effectively instruct all participants. Viewing and coaching participants from different places in the room allows the GFI to observe from different angles and to offer assistance and/or specific feedback on form. A GFI should consider demonstrating a movement for several repetitions, then, if possible, focus on observing and coaching. Instructors should keep in mind that when teaching group fitness classes, the focus is on providing the best experience possible for participants, rather than the performance of a personal workout.

SELF-CHECK STYLE OF TEACHING

When implementing coaching-based teaching, GFIs can also utilize the **self-check style of teaching** (Mosston, 2001). The self-check style relies on participants to provide their own feedback. Self-check is often used in equipment-based classes that utilize machines like rowers, treadmills, or indoor cycling bikes with electronic consoles. Participants may be striving to attain a certain distance in a given time or maintain a certain level of effort for a specific amount of time. Participants perform a given task and then view or record the results, comparing their performance against given criteria or past performances.

Instructors who emphasize **target heart rate** or **recovery heart rate** with their participants, or who opt to utilize other intensity-gauging measures such as **rating of perceived exertion (RPE)** or the **talk test**, may incorporate self-check into any group fitness format to encourage individuals to be active participants in the class experience.





R – Respect

Shannon Fable, owner of SF Resources; ACE Certified Group Fitness Instructor, Health Coach, and Personal Trainer

The first R in the ACE RRAMP Approach—Respect—reminds the GFI that each class participant should feel valued. Each participant in every class deserves, and should receive, the same amount of care. More importantly, the participants should, at all times, believe this is the case. Their experience should be as rich as that of the person in front of, behind, or next to them in class.

GFI should keep this question in mind when creating, scripting, and delivering classes:

How can I create a kind and respectful environment?

ACE → RRAMP APPROACH™

GFI should consider the following ideas:

Arrive with enough time to get situated before participants begin to arrive. That way, the GFI will be ready to greet as many people as possible when participants start to arrive. Greetings should be made with open body language, a warm smile, and a genuine appreciation of their presence. If possible, the GFI should engage with one or two new or less-familiar faces. It is tempting to catch up with the regulars, but focusing on those who have not yet become regulars will go a long way toward helping them feel valued.

During the introduction to class, consider building in a request for each class member to acknowledge another. For example, it may be as simple as including, “Please turn to a person beside or behind you and introduce yourself,” right before the warm-up commences.

Once class begins, intentionally focus on cueing toward all rows and all corners of the room. No matter where someone is in the room or on their journey, they should receive the instruction and encouragement needed to believe the GFI created the class with them in mind. The GFI should plan to teach in a way that allows them to maintain eye contact as often as possible and with as many participants as possible. To do so, the GFI should practice **mirroring** while teaching, walking the room (if appropriate), and avoiding looking at themselves in the mirror.

When closing out the class, include sincere appreciation for all participants and, when possible, encourage class members to do so, as well. For example, the GFI may end class by saying, “I greatly appreciate you taking time out of your lives to attend class today. Turn to a person beside you and thank them for helping you have a great experience today!”

If possible, keep the music playing once the class is complete and hold off on clean-up. Instead, the GFI can position themselves near the door or wherever participants will go to put away their equipment. The GFI should seek out two or three participants to whom they will express their gratitude individually. Consider using their names, express appreciation for them showing up, and, if possible, point out something specific they did during class that stood out, such as increasing the weight during a set, trying something new, or helping another class participant.

ADDITIONAL COACHING-BASED TEACHING CONSIDERATIONS

GFI who use the coaching-based teaching method should consider utilizing cues that address visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners. A successful GFI teaches in a way that will help all participants feel included and successful, regardless of their physical-fitness level or competency. GFIs should focus on providing appropriate movement progressions and regressions and consistently employ the tell-show-do method sometimes utilized in personal training:

Tell-Show-Do

- ▶ Tell participants what you want them to do.
 - “We are going to perform burpees next.”
- ▶ Show them what to do.
 - Demonstrate the movement with proper form and provide **instructional cues**. Show two to three options, preferably a progression and a regression, to accommodate diverse needs. (Note that these should always be described as “options” when talking to participants, rather than as easier/harder, beginning/advanced, or levels 1, 2, and 3. This language encourages participants to choose the option that works best for them, rather than feeling the need to compete with others and labels the skill or intensity of the movement rather than the individual participant.)
 - Option 1: Traditional burpee (squat, hands to floor, jump back to plank, jump up to squat, stand up)
 - Option 2: Regression (squat, place hands on elevated surface or floor, step one foot and then the other back to plank, step up to squat, stand up)
 - Option 3: Progression [squat, jump back to a plank with an option to lower the entire body to the floor (belly button touching the ground), jump forward to squat, jump squat].
- ▶ Let participants Do it.
 - Demonstrate and coach: “Let’s try a few burpees together. First, step back to plank, step up to squat. Next, squat, jump to plank, squat, stand. Finally, if you want, try the belly-button-to-floor option, and add a jump! Choose the option that suits you today.”
 - Observe and provide feedback (specific group and individual feedback): “Great tempo everyone! I see your efforts. Let’s make sure to keep the spine straight and core engaged in the plank position.” “Great job, Alex, make sure to use your exhale to stabilize your core.”

The tell-show-do method is a simple way to ensure that participants clearly understand the task ahead. It clarifies what the exercise is and how it should be performed and addresses a variety of learning styles and participants in different stages of competency.

Beat-based Teaching

Music has the ability to affect human emotion and **motivation**. Baker, Garcia, and Belity (2019) found that participants experience a heightened level of motivation or inspiration while using music as an external stimulus during exercise. GFIs who use the beat-based style of teaching rely on music as a focal point, and use it to deliver **choreography**, maintain **rhythm**, and create uniform movement among class participants.

COMMAND STYLE OF TEACHING

In most beat-based classes, the instructor makes all decisions about **posture**, rhythm, and duration, seeking imitation by all participants. The GFI provides a specific way in which to perform an exercise or sequence, and participants follow along. This **command style of teaching** creates an effect of uniformity (Mosston, 2001). This style requires proper planning to ensure an inclusive class experience for participants of varying ability levels.

The command style of teaching is most commonly used in choreographed classes such as dance, kickboxing, or step classes. Effective leaders using the command style are able to follow the gist of a standardized script (such as those required in pre-choreographed classes), while still offering purposeful options, progressions, and regressions to create a successful experience for all.

ACE → M[?]OVER METH^{...}D

R – Recognition

Shannon Fable, owner of SF Resources; ACE Certified Group Fitness Instructor, Health Coach, and Personal Trainer

The second R in the ACE RRAMP Approach—Recognition—reminds GFIs that effort and improvement should be prioritized and honored. Specific acknowledgment, instead of general statements such as “good job” or “well done,” are essential. Aim to recognize individuals’ achievements for all behaviors that contribute to positive outcomes of the class, such as showing up, trying something new, smiling, or helping another participant. While working hard, performing progressions, and improving are important, GFIs must look beyond achievements that focus solely on physical outcomes.

GFIs should keep this question in mind when creating, scripting, and delivering classes:

How can I create opportunities for recognition?

ACE → RRAMP APPROACH

GFIs should consider the following ideas:

Whenever possible, GFIs should make a note of class participants’ milestones, such as birthdays, anniversaries, streaks (i.e., the number of classes or weeks in a row they have participated), weight selection in a strength class, mastery of a move, or other goals of which the GFI might be aware. Then, as participants are arriving, the GFI can seek out at least one person and acknowledge one of these milestones. GFIs can offer additional congratulations publicly during class or privately after class.

When creating the opening statement, the GFI should include genuine congratulations for attendance. Respect that participants have choices, and the act of showing up is a reason to celebrate. It is impactful to recognize the effort it took to get there and encourage participants to congratulate themselves for prioritizing this type of self-care.

Throughout the class, GFIs should point out any improvements they see, being careful to include recognition for all individuals rather than focusing on a select few “star” performers. Whether the progress is from set to set or from one week to the next, publicly commenting on participants’ progress toward expressed goals, or task-oriented improvements such as completing all the repetitions in a challenging set of exercises, promotes a positive motivational climate. To help participants with self-recognition, consider ways to build in opportunities for participants to gauge their own progress. For example, in a cycling class, the GFI might ask participants to glance at the peak wattage they achieve during the all-out interval. Then, repeat the interval and ask them to meet or beat their personal high from the previous one.

Encourage participants to congratulate themselves and others. For example, the GFI might say, “Look at yourself in the mirror and give yourself a wink—you just completed the most challenging part of class!” Or, ask each participant to turn to someone beside them and give a thumbs up for finishing a set.

Finally, during the closing, the GFI can provide specific guidance that helps participants focus on what went well in class, which will help increase confidence and get them excited about returning. For example, the GFI could lead the class through a minute of reflection by asking participants to close their eyes and think of at least two things they accomplished in class. After a pause, the GFI can suggest they seal these positive thoughts in with a real or imagined self-hug. Then, the GFI should be sure to find at least one or two individuals to congratulate for specific achievements made during class as everyone is departing.

Beat-based Teaching Strategies

Beat-based classes most commonly utilize choreography or movement combinations paired with music to organize and facilitate a continual movement workout. Dance-based classes or traditional **high-low** classes are typically facilitated using the beat-based teaching strategy. Many instructors teach beat-based classes utilizing a 32-count musical phrase to create a combination.

Musical phrases are made up of multiple measures. Measures are like sentences, strung together to make a paragraph, or a phrase. It is typical for group fitness music to be created in a series of 32 counts, with each sentence (measure) containing eight counts and each paragraph or phrase containing four measures. When creating a class blueprint (see Chapter 7), it can be helpful to arrange beat-based choreography using A, B, C, and D to label each sentence, as in the example below.

- ▶ (A) 8 counts = 1 sentence
 - ▶ (B) 8 counts = 1 sentence
 - ▶ (C) 8 counts = 1 sentence
 - ▶ (D) 8 counts = 1 sentence
-
- 32 counts (total) = 1 phrase

For example:

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------|
| A | Shuffle right, shuffle left | Counts 1–8 |
| B | Alternating high knees | Counts 9–16 |
| C | Jumping jacks | Counts 17–24 |
| D | Body-weight squats | Counts 25–32 |

This combination utilizes four different movements, labeled as A, B, C, and D. Each movement is performed for eight counts, which, when strung together, totals 32 counts, or one musical phrase. This phrase would be considered one block of choreography, which could be linked to other blocks of choreography to fill the class.

The more complicated the combinations are, the more important it is to intentionally plan, strategize, and rehearse methods that can be used to break down or progressively teach the movement patterns, so participants can feel successful. Participants will need to perform each movement repetitively to learn how to execute the movement and then learn how to put the movement in a pattern or combination.

There are five common strategies that GFIs can use to deliver beat-based choreography: slow-to-fast, part-to-whole, repetition-reduction, simple-to-complex, and **linear progression**, which are covered in the following sections. Each method is designed to help participants master each individual movement, as well as form a cognitive understanding of the choreography patterns.

SLOW-TO-FAST

When using the **slow-to-fast teaching strategy**, instructors introduce movement patterns so that participants are first performing the exercise at a reduced speed. This often includes a rhythmic variation, as instructors use the half-time of the music. As outlined in Table 10-2, when introducing a squat to participants for the first time, for example, a GFI may teach the move more slowly so participants can learn proper movement techniques. The squat would first be performed at quarter-time, or a 4x4 tempo, or lower/sit for four



counts and stand for four counts. During this slow tempo, the instructor has more time to provide initial instructional cues, to help participants master the movement. Because the slow pace of this strategy may reduce exercise intensity, GFIs should minimize using this approach for extended periods of time during the peak of the conditioning segment of class.

After a few repetitions at the slow pace, a GFI can increase the tempo to half-time, or a 2x2 tempo, which is lower for two counts and stand for two counts. As the pace increases, the instructor might provide additional **follow-up cues** and corrective cues. Finally, the squat could be instructed at full tempo, or at a 1x1 tempo,

TABLE 10-2**Slow-to-Fast Teaching Strategy Example: Squat**

| Music Timing | Movement Speed | Repetitions |
|-------------------------------|--|-------------|
| 32 counts of music (1 phrase) | 4x4 (quarter-time) 4 counts down, 4 counts up | 4 |
| 32 counts of music (1 phrase) | 2x2 (half-time) 2 counts down, 2 counts up | 8 |
| 32 counts of music (1 phrase) | 1x1 (single-time) 1 count down, 1 count up | 16 |

which involves lowering for one count and standing for one count. This pace of movement is much faster and will require more physical control and effort. GFIs can focus primarily on **motivational cues** when participants move at this pace and should continue to observe participants in order to offer feedback, ensure safety, and promote positive outcomes.

PART-TO-WHOLE

A GFI using the **part-to-whole teaching strategy**, which is also called the **add-in strategy**, breaks down skills and teaches movement in isolation before integration. Starting with each part of the movement in its simplest form, the instructor teaches sections or parts of a move, followed by the performance of an isolated movement. For example, an instructor teaching a squat and biceps curl combination may begin by teaching a squat, and then move on to teaching a biceps curl, each in isolation. When the instructor observes mastery of each part or movement individually, they can then demonstrate the whole movement as a combination, or new integrated move. For example, the GFI might teach a concentric biceps curl while standing up from a squat.

REPETITION-REDUCTION

The **repetition-reduction teaching strategy** involves reducing the number of repetitions that make up a movement sequence. An instructor may have participants learn a knee strike and cross punch combination using the repetition-reduction method (Table 10-3). In this example, the number of repetitions is reduced by half. Eight, four, and two repetitions are used to align with 32 counts of music.

TABLE 10-3**Repetition-reduction Teaching Strategy Example: Knee Strike and Cross Punch Combination**

| Exercise | Repetitions |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Knee strike | 8 |
| Cross punch | 8 |
| Knee strike | 4 |
| Cross punch | 4 |
| Knee strike | 2 |
| Cross punch | 2 |
| Combo: 1 knee strike + 1 cross punch | 1 of each, repeated |

SIMPLE-TO-COMPLEX

The **simple-to-complex teaching strategy** is an advanced teaching strategy that is sometimes called **layering**. Instead of separating movement patterns into sections, the instructor will perform one movement for a few repetitions and then add another movement to the sequence or combination. As the sequence progresses, the GFI adds layers of complexity.

For example, consider the performance of a grapevine in one direction for four counts, plus two knee lifts for a total of eight counts. Using this teaching strategy, the instructor engages all participants in this pattern from the start. While everyone is performing repetitions of the grapevine with alternating knee lifts, the instructor offers additional options, which could include two leaps instead of two knee lifts and a three-point turn (walking turn) rather than a grapevine. Participants are free to choose any of the following variations, and the GFI relies on a pattern to assist with repetition and skill development.

- ▶ Grapevine + two knee lifts (8 counts)
- ▶ Grapevine + two leaps side to side (8 counts)
- ▶ Three-point turn + two knee lifts (8 counts)

Generally, the available variables for layering additional complexity involve changes in direction, rhythm, and lever length.

Choreography: Elements of Variation

GFI can update or vary choreography in small but meaningful ways to create the perception that new moves or sequences are being utilized. The primary elements of variation used with beat-based teaching styles are listed in Table 10-4. GFIs can change one or more of these elements to change any given exercise or movement.

TABLE 10-4

Elements of Variation

| | Explanation | Example |
|---------------------|---|---|
| Lever Length | Change the lever length from short to long or long to short. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Knee lift progresses to kick ▶ Arms overhead with bent elbow to arms overhead with extended (straight) elbows |
| Direction | Add or change direction (performing a movement facing front or facing side/back). Travel forward, backward, sideways, or diagonally. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Shuffles performed side to side changes to forward/backward ▶ Salsa performed front to back changes to side to side |
| Plane | Change the plane of motion. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Front kick changes to side kick ▶ Front raise changes to side raise |
| Rhythm | Change the rhythm or speed of a move. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Alternating jab, cross, jab, cross can be executed at various speeds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Half-time; 4-count move ▪ Single time; 2-count move |

TABLE 10-4 (continued)

| | Explanation | Example |
|------------------|--|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Double-time: 1-count move ▪ Rhythm could also be changed: jab (2 counts), jab-cross (2 counts), indicating the use of half-time and single-time movement in one pattern ▶ Jumping jacks change from single-time to half-time and become more exaggerated |
| Intensity | Increase or decrease intensity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Step touch changes to side leaps ▶ ROM increases in dance movements ▶ Knee raises/strikes changes to a tuck jump |
| Style | Basic movements change to include a style. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Athletic style ▶ Dance style (e.g., Latin, hip-hop, or tribal) ▶ Martial arts |

Note: ROM = Range of motion

ACE → M?VER METHOD

A – Alignment

Shannon Fable, owner of SF Resources; ACE Certified Group Fitness Instructor, Health Coach, and Personal Trainer

The A in the ACE RRAMP Approach stands for Alignment. This does not refer to physical alignment or including cues focused on proper exercise execution, though this is certainly an integral part of the GFI's job. Creating a caring and task-involving climate requires looking at alignment from a different perspective.

Alignment, in this instance, serves to remind GFIs that participants should feel like they are part of an *alliance* with their classmates. The GFI's job is to ensure that cooperation is fostered and valued in their classes.

GFIs should keep this question in mind when creating, scripting, and delivering classes:

How can I create the feeling that the entire group is in this together?

ACE → RRAMP APPROACH

GFIs should consider the following ideas:

Creating the feeling of camaraderie can begin before class. GFIs should attempt to introduce any new participants to one of the regulars and ask the veteran to help the new class member become acclimated by helping them set up (i.e., find and select the equipment) and giving them an “insider’s perspective” on the experience. The new participant will immediately see that they have an ally in class.

The GFI can also provide a moment toward the end of the warm-up when they encourage all participants to keep in mind that the GFI's role is that of the group facilitator. The GFI will be leading the way, but the entire group is in this together.

Throughout the class, be sure to use inclusive cueing when appropriate. Try to cue using the pronoun “we” (versus “I”) to reinforce the sense of teamwork. For example, while setting up a new section of class, the GFI might say, “We are heading into our second set of lunges. I think we can try to increase our range of motion. What do you say?” If it feels authentic, calling the class a team or squad can help, too.

While it may not work in every class, changing the group's orientation from time to time can enhance their alliance. The GFI can try to identify a point in class that works to turn the group toward one another and perform a drill, exercise, or set. For example, have the participants break out into two groups have them face the center of the room for the next set of jumping jacks. Encourage eye contact and suggest they send positive energy to someone across the room. If this will not work with the entire group, consider doing so with pairs or smaller groups.

Create cooperative games or interaction in class versus competitions. Instead of pitting one participant against another, the GFI can find ways to have the drills be team-oriented (e.g., relay races that will most likely end up being close with no clear winner) or cooperative (e.g., a game that requires everyone to work together to complete a goal).

Toward the end of class, the GFI can reflect on specific moments when the group came together and supported one another. Finally, as participants are putting away equipment and preparing to head out the door, the GFI might suggest they help one another with clean up and let someone else know how much their presence impacted them during class.

LINEAR PROGRESSION

The freestyle method of delivering choreography most often involves linear progression where one move flows into another without specific patterns or combinations. Newer instructors often find the linear-progression method easier because they have to change only one aspect of movement at a time and do not need to create repeating sequences or patterns. The method is simple: one skill at a time.

For example:

- ▶ *Base movement:* Four alternating knee lifts in place (eight counts of music)
- ▶ *Add arms:* Four overhead reaches (eight counts of music)
- ▶ *Add direction:* Travel forward (eight counts of music); travel backward (eight counts of music)

Ready to move on? Change the movements:

- ▶ *Change the legs:* Eight alternating hamstrings curls with same arm movements (16 counts of music)
- ▶ *Change the arms:* Clapping hands while moving front and back (16 counts of music)

ADDITIONAL BEAT-BASED TEACHING CONSIDERATIONS

Beat-based classes generally involve continual movement, as one movement flows into the next. Three common ways to transition movements are **matching**, **mending**, and **patching** (Table 10-5) (Khai-Cronin, Ganulin, & Metzo, 2013).

TABLE 10-5

Transition Techniques

| | Description | Example |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Matching | Complete one exercise in full and then perform the next exercise. | Strength: A barbell front squat followed by an overhead press High-low: Grapevine followed by single-leg hamstrings curls |
| Mending | String two exercises/ movements or combine multiple movements into one exercise. | High-intensity interval training: Thrusters (a squat and overhead press in unison); reverse lunges paired with biceps curls Strength: Reverse lunges and biceps curls (step back to lunge, perform elbow flexion/curl upon standing) Step: Basic right step paired in unison with a lateral arm raise |
| Patching | Perform an additional movement between two exercises or movements for a seamless transition | Mat Pilates: To transition from the 100 to the roll up, the participant pulls their knees into the chest to patch the two exercises together. Dance: Utilize a squat or shimmy, which are neutral, filler moves to patch two different dance-based moves together. |



THINK IT THROUGH

Transitions

Squats are a neutral move, which means that the exercise does not contain a right or left lead. Neutral moves can be utilized to patch any two movements together or to change from a right to a left lead. For example, two knee strikes right (counts 1 through 4) can be paired with a squat (counts 5 through 8). The move can then repeat on the opposite lead—two knee strikes left, then squat. What other moves can be used as neutral moves when executing transitions?



EXPAND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Utilizing Tempo

Tempo in choreographed classes depends on the music's beats per minute (bpm) or the instructor's cueing. In some strength-based classes, tempo can manipulate the cadence or movement speed, which can affect **overload**. For example, when performing a biceps curl, a GFI may choose a one-count concentric movement (flexing the elbows to lift the dumbbells) and a three-count eccentric movement (extending the elbows to lower the weights down to the starting position).

Tempo, however, is not exclusive to music. GFIs can verbalize the tempo of the movement or exercise to better meet the needs of those who prefer auditory learning who are trying to execute the movement but are having trouble mastering the timing and motor patterns of the skill. For example, an instructor might cue “down two, up two” in time with the speed of the music or pace at which the movement is being executed.

Ultimately, all methods and teaching strategies are available to instructors when developing choreography, and GFIs should consider instructing movement patterns using a combination of teaching strategies. Observant instructors continuously monitor their participants to see which techniques work best for which groups and teach using the methods that promote the highest rate of success. There may be times when a particular teaching strategy is not resonating with the class. An observant instructor can decide to alter the teaching strategy or plan to best suit the needs of participants. Understanding how to deliver and adjust teaching methods is key not only to meeting participant needs, but also to ensuring performance success and minimizing the risk of injury.

ACE → M[?]OVER METH[!]D

M – Mistakes

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The M in the ACE RRAMP Approach stands for Mistakes, which are inevitable in the group fitness setting. The GFI will make them, veteran participants will make them, and new participants will make them. Mistakes should be considered a part of learning by both the GFI and the participants. GFIs can take their teaching to the next level by expecting mistakes, being supportive when they occur, and anticipating them in the class experience.

GFIs should keep this question in mind when creating, scripting, and delivering classes:

How can I ensure that mistakes are an acceptable part of the learning experience?

ACE → RRAMP APPROACH

GFIs should consider the following ideas to increase the competence and self-confidence of their participants:

Before class begins, the GFI should ask participants about limitations or preferences they may have so the GFI can strategize before class gets started. For example, if the GFI sees a new participant, they can introduce themselves and provide an overview of what is to come. The GFI can also ask if there are any concerns based on injuries, likes, dislikes, or preferences based on what they are looking for in the class experience.

Then, during the introduction, build in an acknowledgment of how mistakes will show improvement or effort throughout the class. For example, the GFI might set a goal for the number of times they want participants to push their limits and safely “fail,” such as using a weight that makes finishing a set challenging. If the GFI can plan for the class to “mess up” together during the warm-up, that would be a bonus.

Throughout the class, the GFI can use cues to encourage trying something that might not be perfect. Then, celebrate as a group when it does not go quite right. The GFI should be sure to frequently remind participants that mistakes are a sign of growth, learning, or giving maximal effort. When the GFI makes a mistake, they should consider pointing it out and congratulating themselves in the same way.

The GFI should program classes with everyone's success in mind by choosing exercises, choreography, or sequences that will be doable by a majority of participants, with opportunities for increasing or decreasing the challenge without judgment. If possible, repeat exercises and build in practice opportunities during the first set.

At the end of class, the GFI can ask participants to identify one thing they could strive to improve next time and remind everyone that doing everything perfectly is not the goal. Finally, the GFI can aim to provide a personal congratulations to one or two participants who showed courage and growth by taking on the challenge of learning from a mistake during class.

Cueing Strategies

Regardless of the teaching strategies a GFI employs, they must execute cues in an effective manner in order to ensure participants clearly understand what to do and how and when to do it. Mastering the art of cueing takes time and practice. GFIs can practice timing and vocal variety of cues by rehearsing class plans in front of a mirror or with family and friends.

TIMING OF CUES: STAGES OF CUEING

The timing of cue delivery is a crucial part of helping participants know what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. A late cue will cause participants to lag behind, while a cue delivered too early will cause participants to feel confused and disconnected. Cues can be organized in a flexible, but systematic manner. GFIs should consider offering cues in order of the stages of cueing, starting with **anticipatory cues** to indicate a change in movement, providing instructional cues to impart knowledge on exercise technique, offering follow-up cues to provide feedback for corrections or enhancements, and finally providing motivational cues to inspire greater participant effort and emotional connection to the group experience.

Anticipatory Cues

In cueing a new exercise, instructors might utilize anticipatory cues, which tell participants what the next move will be, and when to do it. Anticipatory cues could include a countdown of repetitions, while stating a new exercise or directional gesture. Anticipatory cues should be clear and concise to alert that change is coming. Anticipatory cues are most commonly used in beat-based formats, paired with music, such as "4, 3, step touch right." When using music, anticipatory cues must be delivered in time with the music and in a way that allows participants to understand the transition before it takes place.



APPLY WHAT YOU KNOW

Anticipatory Cues

Anticipatory cues are one of the more challenging skills for new instructors to master. GFIs who teach to music must have an understanding of music structure and choreography strategies in order to properly execute anticipatory cues. When cueing to music, GFIs should provide cues at least four counts before movement is initiated. When not using music, a few moments should be given to allow participants to process instructions before the movement begins. In most group fitness classes, counting down (e.g., “4-3-2”), as opposed to counting up, will help participants know how many movements remain before a change ensues. GFIs can practice their cueing skills by speaking cues out loud in time with music. When practicing, count backward toward an upcoming move. For example, when the GFI counts “4, 3, step touch,” the name of the move is inserted where “2 and 1” would typically be. This indicates to participants that the new move begins directly after 1. Moves that need more time such as “knee-kick right, arms up” would need to be delivered sooner, such as “5, 4, knee-kick right, arms up.” Utilizing half-tempo to provide anticipatory cues can be very beneficial, as well. For example, the GFI would count “4, 3, knee kick,” but start the cue at count 8, and utilize two counts to provide the cue, rather than one.

Practice anticipatory cues: Play music and cue on the fourth sentence of every 32-count phrase: “8, 7, 6, 5, now I start to cue.” Once that cue becomes comfortable, replace “now I start to cue” with any exercise that you might teach. Continue changing the exercise on the fourth sentence of every phrase until the rhythm of anticipatory cues feels more comfortable when spoken with music. Then, progress to practicing the physical movement while cueing.

Instructional Cues

Once the anticipatory cue is delivered, instructional cues can be used to properly set up and execute the exercise. Instructional cues focus on the most important aspects of the exercise, such as posture/alignment, safety considerations, ROM, and speed of movement. Instructional cues might also include exercise variations or modification options.

Follow-up Cues

When the exercise has started, a GFI should observe participant performance, and utilize follow-up cues, which provide tangible and immediate feedback. Follow-up cues might be used to correct form or enhance the exercise. Follow-up cues are specific and help the participant improve performance, such as increasing ROM or improving alignment. Additional progression or regression options can also be offered as follow-up cues.

Motivational Cues

When participants have mastered the exercise and are able to perform the movement in a safe and effective manner, GFIs can offer motivational cues, which enhance the overall experience, foster enjoyment, and encourage participants to give stronger effort.

This systematic timing of cueing continuum, outlined in Figure 10-1, can be used each time a new exercise is introduced.

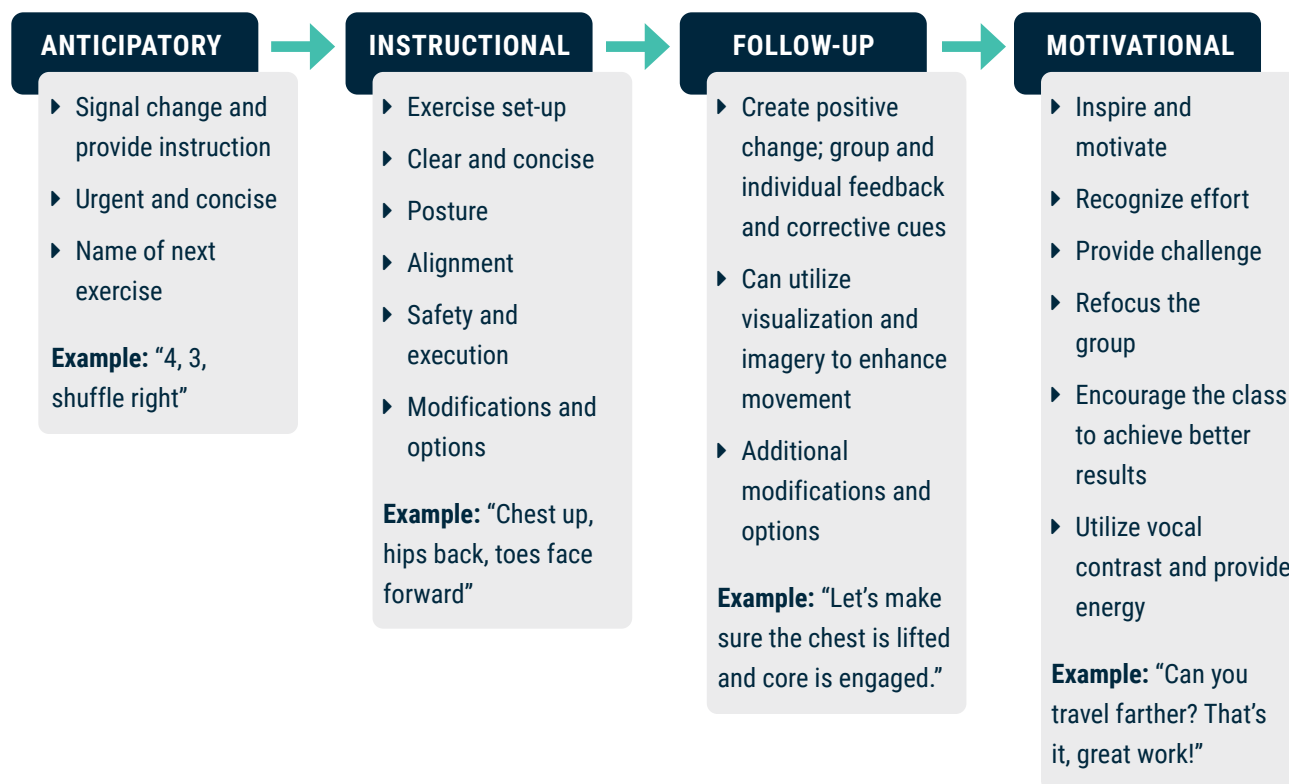


FIGURE 10-1
Timing of cueing techniques

New GFIs may benefit from pre-planning or scripting verbal cues to match the class plan. However, as the class is taking place, it is important for the instructor to observe the skills and abilities of participants in order to tailor teaching strategies and ensure the safety and success of all individuals. Verbal cues may be necessary to assist participants with correcting their form, such as “slide the shoulders away from the ears” or “push the hips back farther.” GFIs might occasionally feel as though they have already effectively cued a movement, but perhaps it was not understood by some participants. A cue like “shoulders back” might need to be restated as “lift the chest.” It is important to continue to try to connect with participants in different ways in order to help them learn proper movement techniques.

Mastering the art of cueing takes practice and dedication. GFIs can enhance their cueing skills by rehearsing the class plan. This might entail practicing cues out loud while performing movement with music or scripting specific verbal and nonverbal cues for each segment or exercise. GFIs can practice teaching with friends, family, or fellow instructors to see if cues and teaching strategies are well received. Purposeful practice will enable the GFI to refine the class plan and associated cues in order to ensure a positive and successful experience for participants. As a GFI becomes more effective at delivering cues, less practice will be required.

CUEING CONSIDERATIONS

Instructor Orientation

In addition to mastering the timing and execution of verbal cues, GFIs must consider methods to enhance visual cues provided to participants. For example, GFIs should think about the orientation they will use when delivering information and evaluate the pros and cons associated with it. If teaching in a room with a mirror, a GFI may choose to face the mirror when cueing, observing participants' movements in the reflection. An advantage of teaching while facing the same direction as the participants is that this positioning gives the participants an easy understanding of movement orientations and directions, allowing participants to follow the GFI exactly as they move. A disadvantage to this approach is that the personal connection with each participant diminishes because instructors can only make indirect eye contact through the reflection in the mirror.

An advantage of the GFI facing the class with one's back to the mirror or front wall is that this position allows the GFI to build rapport with participants through direct eye contact. It also allows participants to see the front of the instructor's body more clearly with no reflection. A disadvantage of facing the class, however, is that participants often initially have difficulty understanding how to follow an instructor cueing "reach the right arm," if the GFI is reaching with their right arm (which would be to the participants' left).

One solution to reducing this confusion is to use a technique known as mirroring, where an instructor provides a mirror image of the movements that participants are performing. An example of mirroring is when the GFI, positioned facing toward the participants, moves their left arm while calling out to the participants to move their right arms. This enables the participants to see a mirror image of the move they are being cued to perform. However, mirroring can be difficult to learn. Therefore, the GFI must thoroughly practice this technique before using it in a class.

Vocal Quality

The vocal quality or intonation of the cues a GFI uses can impact the effectiveness of the cue, as well as the overall class experience for participants. To enhance the experience, GFIs can include different pitch tones or voice inflections to evoke excitement and urgency, enhance motivation and focus, or create calm and relaxation. The voice a GFI uses is a reflection of their personality, and also an effective way to set the tone of the class. For example, the warm-up might have a lighter, more conversational tone, while the peak intensity of a class would require a more urgent and effort-focused tone. Voice inflection makes the workout more relatable and enjoyable for the participant. GFIs can use any of the following tips to enhance verbal cueing:

- ▶ **Clarity:** Overemphasize enunciations or exaggerate delivery by using facial muscles.
- ▶ **Pitch:** Maintain a strong and lower tone by using purposeful breathing when cueing.
- ▶ **Speed:** Speak slowly enough for the class to understand, but fast enough to convey urgency and the feeling that things will continue moving. Increase the speed of speech without losing clarity.
- ▶ **Contrast:** Create the mood or tone of class with the voice (e.g., quiet, loud, celebratory, or creative).

**APPLY WHAT YOU KNOW****Voice Care Tips**

A GFI must take care to protect their voice to ensure that verbal cues can be delivered safely, properly, and consistently from class to class. Employing the following tips can help minimize the potential for vocal injuries and issues:

- ▶ Project from the diaphragm, regardless of whether a microphone is being used.
- ▶ Speak at a normal volume when using a microphone.
- ▶ Keep music at a decibel level that does not require shouting over the music (see Chapter 6).
- ▶ Avoid frequent coughing, which can stress the voice box (larynx).
- ▶ Avoid cueing at biomechanically inopportune times (e.g., in positions that constrict the vocal tract, such as when performing push-ups). It is preferable to give cues before the exercise is executed or to not perform the exercise yourself and instead walk around while providing verbal cueing.
- ▶ Take small, frequent sips of water to keep the larynx lubricated.


M  **OVER** **METH**  **D**
P – Participant

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The last piece of the ACE RRAMP Approach puzzle is P, which stands for Participant. The P shines a light on how each person's uniqueness contributes to the overall class experience. More specifically, it reminds the GFI that the class they are teaching with this particular group can happen only once. The GFI will never have this opportunity again—it is not possible to replicate—so they should treat the event as the special, unique occasion it truly is.

GFI should keep this question in mind when creating, scripting, and delivering classes:

How can I ensure that each individual understands their unique and important role in the class?


RRAMP APPROACH

GFI should consider the following ideas:

As participants are arriving, the GFI can choose one or two people to greet privately. Focus on acknowledging each participant's presence, uniqueness, and contribution in

previous classes or, if they are newcomers, greet them and tell them how exciting it is that they have joined the group for the class that is about to start.

Then, during the class opening, the GFI might remind participants that never again will they be in this class, at this moment, with these people, under these circumstances. Encourage each member to recognize the gifts they bring to the group and celebrate the contributions of others throughout the experience.

Personalized cueing reinforces the unique part each participant plays. The GFI should consider using the word “your” instead of this, that, and those. For example, the GFI could say, “Focus on moving your handweights in a slow and controlled manner.”

Programming to honor each unique individual is more challenging. Rethinking the way to present progressions, regressions, or modifications will benefit everyone in attendance. GFIs allow participants to embrace their uniqueness when considering different versions of exercises as tools, resources, options, and choices. To make this work, the GFIs needs to explain the goal of the activity and provide the ways a participant might choose to get there. For example, if doing a set of push-ups, explain how many sets, repetitions, and rest periods there will be, then explain the intended outcome (e.g., “to feel as if you couldn’t do one more at the end of the set”). The GFI should provide options and allow the participant to make the best choice for themselves in the moment. For example, the GFI could say, “You can choose to do the push-ups on your toes, your knees, or anything in between. You do you! Just be sure you choose the version that will make you feel like you couldn’t do one more when we’re done.”

At the end of class, the GFI should encourage participants to reflect on what they brought to the room that day. Or, they can thank everyone in the room for the unique experience the group created together. Also, the GFI should be sure to remind them it would not have been the same without every person present. If the instructor spotted someone who made an exercise their own or otherwise showed up uniquely, they should be sure to acknowledge them privately before they head out the door.

Leadership Considerations

Although group fitness classes are typically a positive environment, when a group of people convene, no matter the purpose or setting, conflicts can arise. From disruptive participants and lack of equipment to arguments over someone’s favorite spot in the room, conflicts can arise when least expected. As leaders, GFIs must address concerns in a professional and timely manner. Prior to concerns arising, GFIs can take steps to create a positive and collaborative motivational environment.

RESOLVING CONFLICT

Despite an instructor’s best intentions, it is possible that they may experience moments of conflict with participants, before, during, or after the class experience. GFIs must be

prepared to de-escalate situations of conflict should a situation arise. Some common conflicts are as follows.

- ▶ **Lack of equipment:** If equipment availability is an issue, participants may need to share equipment or the GFI might have to change the format to a circuit or interval-based class so less equipment is needed. GFIs should also be prepared to lead the class without using any equipment, if necessary.
- ▶ **Location preferences in the room:** Regular attendees often enjoy standing in the same place for each class. If two participants are arguing over the same spot or piece of equipment (e.g., bike) in the room, the GFI should institute a first-come, first-served rule. Moving forward, politely make this announcement at the beginning of each class so that all participants are aware.
- ▶ **Music:** When participants voice concerns or ideas about music, GFIs can incorporate their ideas into the next class, if appropriate. Some branded formats, however, require instructors to use specific music. If this is the case and someone does not like the music, explain that it is a requirement to teach the format and that a new set of songs will be launched soon. Most branded formats have a customer service email or phone number that participants can use, which is something GFIs may choose to share with participants as well.
- ▶ **Partner exercises:** Some classes call for partner exercises. This can be uncomfortable for some participants, since there may be body contact with another person. Some participants may simply be shy. First, the class description on the schedule should clearly indicate it is a partner-based class. Before the start of class, the GFI should announce, “If you would like to partner with someone, please do so now. If you would like me to help you find a partner, please come to the front of the room.”
- ▶ **Odors:** If body odor from another person is an issue, this can create conflict because participants may not wish to partner with, or set up near, that person. If a GFI is not comfortable addressing the issue with the participant, they should notify a supervisor. If the GFI does choose to resolve the conflict, it is a good idea to first try to indirectly address the issue to the entire class by saying, “Everyone, please be mindful of others around you and wash your gym clothes and bathe in between workouts. I know we’re all busy, but personal hygiene can affect other participants’ class experiences.” If this approach does not resolve the issue, politely address the individual directly without other participants around or ask a supervisor to do so.
- ▶ **Interpersonal issues between participants:** Interpersonal issues can arise in class, especially if the class is held at a community-based, corporate, or school facility where participants know each other and may have issues outside of the group fitness class. If arguments arise due to interpersonal conflicts, the GFI should ask participants to refrain from talking or respectfully ask them to leave the room. If unforeseen conflicts arise, such as a participant becoming irate because the person in front of them keeps obstructing the view of the mirror, suggest the participant move to an alternative location in the room and return their attention back to class. If the conflict continues to elevate, or be repeated, notify a supervisor who can take further action.
- ▶ **Intercultural nuances:** Each of these conflicts can be further complicated by cultural and identity-based nuances. For example, some women, for cultural reasons, may

need to partner only with other women. A GFI should welcome these types of requests, respond with sensitivity and openness, and be sure to meet the needs of all participants. Hygiene concerns may sometimes result from socio-economic barriers that limit access to washing machines. In such situations, GFIs can find a community resource that can be shared with participants to support this need. Finally, cultural differences may escalate the interpersonal issues between participants. A GFI should be prepared to navigate these types of concerns with a person-first approach and **cultural competency**. Considering how differences in culture and identity might intensify conflicts in classes is a key consideration to advance **equity, diversity, and inclusion** in the fitness industry.

HARASSMENT OR THREATS

Any complaints about harassment or threats from other participants or facility members must be reported to management or the facility operator immediately. This is not just a conflict; it is a potential violation or criminal act. Overall, a GFI should act as the “quiet professional,” resolving any issues as quickly as possible without becoming emotional or drawing too much attention to the conflict. Resuming class and maintaining a positive environment is the goal when faced with unforeseen challenges.

RECEIVING AND UTILIZING FEEDBACK

Personal and career development is important in any industry. A GFI's class is a reflection of their personality, breadth of knowledge, and passion. Accepting feedback is one of the best ways to develop one's craft. Along with education and experience, feedback from participants, supervisors, and colleagues can help shape one's personal “brand” and enhance marketability.

Feedback from Participants

Some participants will be brutally honest, while others may be more passive with their feedback. There will be feedback to which an instructor can immediately adjust, while other times the feedback may lead an instructor to solicit the advice of their supervisors. Common comments that a GFI can respond to may concern the following:

- ▶ Fan use
- ▶ Music or microphone volume
- ▶ Audibility of the instructor's cues
- ▶ Music selection
- ▶ Exercise variety
- ▶ The need for exercise progressions or regressions

Feedback a GFI may need to forward to supervisors includes the following:

- ▶ Temperature of the room
- ▶ Lack of equipment
- ▶ Equipment quality and cleanliness
- ▶ Crowdedness

- ▶ Odors (in the room or from other participants)
- ▶ Complaints about other instructors
- ▶ Class schedule (formats and times)

When possible, GFIs should make changes to respond to the feedback provided by participants. A successful GFI understands that the workout is for the participants, and that satisfied participants are more likely to adhere to a regular fitness routine, reducing attrition rate. If a participant has a question that a GFI cannot readily answer, the GFI should agree to have an answer for the next class or refer the participant to someone who can answer the specific question.

Some participants may not want to approach the GFI in class to provide feedback. Some ways GFIs can overcome this include offering an email address or communication channel through social media, suggesting that participants leave feedback with the front desk or facility supervisor at any time, and periodically handing out evaluation surveys to be completed anonymously.

Feedback from Supervisors

Most group fitness managers perform periodic evaluations of their instructors, which typically include verification of credentials and continuing education, as well as a practical in-class appraisal. Occasionally, supervisors may ask for participants' feedback as well. Following the evaluation, the GFI and supervisor meet to review the GFI's performance. Supervisors will offer constructive feedback and provide advice on implementing constructive feedback moving forward. Some GFIs may receive feedback about their professional conduct, attire, or failure to adhere to format or facility guidelines. This type of feedback should be corrected immediately. Performance evaluations are conducted in almost all fields of business, as they are a normal and valuable part of professional development. Group fitness instruction is a soft science, meaning there are very few absolutes and more than one way to successfully lead group fitness classes.



Feedback from Peers and Colleagues

Soliciting feedback from colleagues is a great way to receive constructive feedback outside of evaluation periods. Moreover, this is an opportunity to seek advice and industry guidance from other practicing professionals. Bear in mind that the need for constructive criticism is not exclusive to new instructors, as the fitness industry is always evolving and new techniques and standards emerge continuously. Attending other instructors' classes and even observing people speak, present, and teach outside of the fitness industry is beneficial in terms of enhancing one's instructional abilities.



APPLY WHAT YOU KNOW

Tips for a Positive Evaluation

- ▶ Maintain a positive attitude and coaching demeanor.
- ▶ Dress in a professional manner.
- ▶ Arrive to class early and prepared.
- ▶ Maintain an appropriate music and microphone volume.
- ▶ Avoid touching participants without permission.
- ▶ Utilize music from a variety of genres.
- ▶ Avoid using explicit language or making remarks regarding sensitive subjects (e.g., politics).
- ▶ Cool the room by using fans, if needed.
- ▶ Be a supportive team player.
- ▶ Maintain professional credentials and education.
- ▶ Confide in supervisors and veteran instructors or seek out additional resources to best accommodate participants.

AVOIDING INSTRUCTOR BURNOUT

Teaching fitness classes demands mental and physical energy, which can result in burnout and/or overtraining. **Signs** and **symptoms** of **overtraining syndrome** may include sleep loss, elevated **resting heart rate**, fatigue, and changes in weight. Burnout symptoms may include disinterest in exercise and teaching classes, lack of motivation, poor class preparation, and **depression**. Many health and exercise professionals will experience this phenomenon to some degree at some point in their careers. The following strategies are designed to help the GFI remain engaged and enthusiastic about their craft:

- ▶ Talk with other GFIs about how to prevent or address burnout.
- ▶ Take a vacation to relax and recharge, both physically and mentally.
- ▶ Learn a new class modality.
- ▶ If possible, hone other teaching skills such as imagery or the use of informative cueing to minimize the amount of time physically demonstrating with the class (e.g., instruct

off the bike during an indoor cycling class or lead a yoga class without physically performing all of the poses along with the group).

- ▶ Attend classes as a participant or engage in activities outside of the gym, such as hiking or road cycling (provided signs and symptoms of overtraining syndrome are not present).
- ▶ Explore other self-care strategies such as meditation, creative outlets, nourishment, rest, or sleep.
- ▶ Speak with a mental health professional.

ACE → MOVER METHOD

ACE RRAMP Approach Conclusion

Shannon Fable, owner of SF Resources; ACE Certified Group Fitness Instructor, Health Coach, and Personal Trainer

While it is important to break down each letter in the ACE RRAMP Approach for understanding, GFIs should keep in mind that the lines between the five elements are blurry. When considering specific ways to integrate Respect, Recognition, Alignment, Mistakes, and Participant into classes, the GFI should avoid treating this like a bullet-pointed “to-do list.”

ACE → RRAMP APPROACH

GFIs should consider the following plan to implement the ACE RRAMP Approach and realize the full benefits over time:

Step 1: Develop a deep understanding of the ACE RRAMP Approach as a whole, then each of the elements individually. The GFI should keep the five letters in the back of their mind while teaching.

Step 2: Next, commit to integrating one element at a time. Start by layering them in before class and during class openings. Then, try using one at the end and after class. Finally, incorporate a letter into cueing and programming.

Step 3: Set goals to use all five ACE RRAMP Approach elements in one class section (e.g., warm-up, conditioning segment, and cool-down).

Step 4: Attempt to weave the entire approach throughout the class. Then, over time, plan to expand, evaluate, and improve the use of the ACE RRAMP Approach.



ACE UNIVERSITY

If your study program includes ACE University, visit www.ACEfitness.org/MyACE and log in to your My ACE Account to take full advantage of the ACE Group Fitness Instructor Study Program and online guided study experience.

A variety of media to support and expand on the material in this text is provided to facilitate learning and best prepare you for the ACE Group Fitness Instructor Certification exam and a career as a group fitness instructor.

SUMMARY

Teaching group fitness classes extends beyond just leading exercises and emulating ideal form and technique; GFIs need to transfer knowledge. To do this effectively, GFIs must develop and adopt diverse teaching methods to meet the needs of participants. This is accomplished by incorporating various instructional styles and strategies and maintaining an aura of positive leadership.

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