



PRE & POSTNATAL FITNESS SPECIALIST CERTIFICATION

Course Overview

Welcome to the overview of the ProNatal Fitness® Pre & Postnatal Fitness Specialist Certification. We appreciate your interest in this course, and, more significantly, your dedication to serving the pre & postnatal population.

This course equips you with the knowledge and resources to safely, effectively, and *confidently* train pre & postnatal clients. Updated every 1-2 years to incorporate the latest research and participant feedback, the most recent version dates from **February 2024**. In this overview, we will cover:

1. The Approach You Will Learn
2. Course Structure
3. Course Completion
4. Resources Included
5. Course Outline
6. The ProNatal Certified Opportunity
7. Course Developers and Contributors

The Approach You Will Learn

One of the aspects that sets this course – and our graduates – apart is our **Performance Training Approach**. In other words, we believe the most *effective* way to train for this journey is to approach it like you were training for any other athletic event – looking at the specific stresses and demands placed on the body and designing a training program to prepare the body to successfully manage those stresses.

In other words, **training specificity** is at the core of this approach. Just as the way you'd train for a marathon looks very different from the way you'd train for a golf tournament or tennis match, the same is true for pregnancy. We have carefully analyzed the unique physical and physiological stresses placed on the body throughout pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period – and we've developed a training protocol to prepare the body to more successfully manage those challenges and not just "recover" but *emerge stronger*.

That's why you will not find a laundry list of rules and modifications to memorize in this education. Instead, you will learn clear, easy-to-follow, adaptable prenatal and postpartum programming frameworks that will enable you to *easily* design training programs for pre and postnatal clients of all stages and fitness levels.

In fact, the overwhelming feedback we get from participants after taking this course is just how confident they feel about their ability to apply what they learn. We hear all the time things like "*it feels so good to just know what to do!*"

Remember that for many people, pregnancy is a once or twice-in-a-lifetime experience. We want them to enjoy this journey. We want them to move with energy and ease, and we want them to be ready to tackle the very physical – but absolutely incredible – demands of life with young children.

You have the power to help your clients achieve their *personal best* in one of life's most thrilling athletic events. We created this certification to help you make that happen.

Course Structure

This is a self-paced online course. You have 1-year access to the online learning platform to complete the course. However, since all the written materials are available for you to download, you have lifetime access to the course materials.

There are 17 learning modules. The course is estimated to take approximately 30 – 35 hours to complete. Each learning module contains a **downloadable PDF**, a **video lesson**, and a **self-check** to check your comprehension.

We include both PDFs and video lessons to accommodate different learning preferences. While the information is largely the same in each, we recommend utilizing both learning resources for the optimal learning experience, as the PDFs offer the most in-depth information with links to additional resources and the video lessons contain helpful visuals, explanations, and demonstrations.

Course Completion

The course concludes with a final exam. There are **80 multiple-choice questions**. You must receive an **85%** (68 questions correct) to pass and receive your certificate. You can use any notes you want, but you must complete the exam within the **2-hour time limit**. If you do not pass, exam re-tests can be purchased for \$35.

Upon passing your exam, you will immediately be able to download your certificate as a **Pre & Postnatal Fitness Specialist**. Your certificate will also have all the CEU information on it for those organizations that the course is approved through.

Below is a listing of the organizations that the course is *currently* approved for. If you do not see your organization listed here, you can typically petition for CEUs with your organization. See our [FAQs](#) for more details and a course overview document that you can submit to your organization. If you have any questions, email info@pronatalfitness.com.

- ACE 3.6
- NASM 1.9
- AFAA 15
- ISSA 20
- NSCA 2.0 (Category C)
- AUSACTIVE 14
- CANFITPRO 4
- USAT 4.0 institutional CEUs

Resources Included

In addition to the downloadable PDFs, video lessons, and self-checks, your course also comes with the following:

- **Full Course Electronic PDF:** All modules are consolidated into one file with a hyperlinked table of contents for easy navigation. If you prefer hard copies, you can take this file to a printer and compile your modules into a convenient binder.
- **Reference Links Summary:** Throughout the PDFs, we provide additional links to information or resources you may find helpful. For your convenience, we've consolidated all the links into one file, categorized by module.
- **Templates and Forms:** Your course also contains editable New Client Intake Forms, Movement Assessment Forms, Physician Consent Forms, Client Handouts, and more.
- **Video Exercise Library:** Access an extensive library comprising over 130 exercises and stretches, each linked to video demonstrations.
- **Programming Templates and Sample Workouts:** You will receive an Excel programming template based on the programming structure you learn in your course, along with 12 sample workouts completed in this template.
- **Case Studies:** To provide programming practice, case study work is incorporated at the end of the prenatal and postpartum programming modules. Case study responses are also included to guide you through our recommendations and rationale.
- **Client Handouts:** You will also receive helpful handouts for your clients (compiled by different subject matter experts) so you can provide them with even *greater* value beyond the training work you do with them – including **Building Your Ultimate Birth Team** and **Pregnancy Weight Gain & Nutrition Guidance**.

Course Outline

MODULE 1: Evolution of Childbirth

Explore the historical evolution of childbirth to gain insights into effective strategies for preparing and supporting clients through this most complex and taxing journey.

MODULE 2: Rationale for a Performance Training Approach

Discover the benefits that research has uncovered about the effects of exercise during pregnancy (on parent and child). Then, understand why we believe that a Performance Training Approach is the most *effective* way to prepare clients for this journey.

MODULE 3: The Demands of Pregnancy (How the Body Changes)

Understand the eight significant physical and physiological changes of pregnancy that have the greatest impact on physical activity.

MODULE 4: The Demands of Childbirth and Early Parenthood

Examine the stresses placed on the body during childbirth and early parenthood that you'll want to prepare your prenatal clients for.

MODULE 5: Prenatal Programming Framework (Overview and Stage 1)

Now that you understand the demands placed on the body during pregnancy, childbirth, and early parenthood, learn how to prepare your clients for all of these using the ProNatal Fitness® 3-Stage Prenatal Programming Framework. This module introduces you to the framework and covers Stage 1 (Foundation) in detail.

MODULE 6: Prenatal Programming Framework (Stages 2 and 3)

Delve into the details of Stage 2 (Strength) and Stage 3 (Birth Prep). By the end of each module, you will have a good sense of the objectives you'll need to accomplish with your prenatal clients and the order in which to do so. *More detailed programming guidance comes in Module 10.*

MODULE 7: Assessing the Pregnant Client Part 1: Overview & Key Questions

A critical component of prenatal program design is understanding your client's *starting point*. This module introduces you to the ProNatal Fitness® 3-step assessment process and covers the key questions to ask your new prenatal clients.

MODULE 8: Assessing the Pregnant Client Part 2: Movement Assessment

One component of the 3-step assessment process is the Movement Assessment. Discover a unique and powerful goal-based assessment strategy that will give you deeper insight into how your clients move *outside the gym*.

MODULE 9: Managing Pregnancy Pains & Injuries

Before we get into the detailed programming guidance in Module 10, it's important to understand the common pregnancy pains and injuries, as the movements you select will play a significant role in the degree to which your clients experience these. Learn eight of the most common ones (including Diastasis Recti, Pelvic Floor Dysfunction, SI Joint Pain, and more). Understand their causes and learn strategies to help mitigate or manage them.

MODULE 10: Prenatal Program Design

Now you have all the pieces of information needed to develop your prenatal training programs. This module covers the details on how to design training programs for clients of all stages, starting points, and fitness levels – including how to structure your sessions, how to select movements, guidance on what moves to avoid or regress by trimester, and case study practice.

MODULE 11: Pregnancy Psychological Changes and Coaching Strategies

In this final prenatal module, explore important psychological considerations when working with prenatal clients. Learn how to support your clients in the best way as they navigate this major life transition, and how to manage the difficult situation of a pregnancy loss.

MODULE 12: Postpartum Recovery: Physical Considerations

In this first postpartum module, delve into the physical considerations of the postpartum body, covering aspects such as the implications of vaginal and Cesarean births, weight loss, and healing of skin and fascia. Learn strategies to share with your clients to support their recovery during the initial weeks before they resume exercise.

MODULE 13: Postpartum Recovery: Psychological Considerations

While a new baby brings many wonderful changes, it also brings a fair share of challenges. Discover coaching strategies for some of the most common challenges postpartum clients face. This module also includes an overview of Perinatal Mood & Anxiety Disorders (PMADs), including how to spot and manage them.

MODULE 14: Postpartum Programming Framework: Overview & Stage 1

Similar to prenatal, in this module you will learn the ProNatal Fitness® 3-Stage *Postpartum* Programming Framework, then dive into Stage 1 (Foundation). Since there are many similarities to prenatal, we'll focus on the biggest difference in the Foundation Stage – the **Core Recovery Protocol** that you will take all postpartum clients through.

MODULE 15: Postpartum Programming Framework: Stages 2 and 3

Understand the objectives of Stage 2 (Strength) and Stage 3 (Performance) – learning strategies for gradually progressing core work and a step-by-step process for introducing impact and higher-intensity activities.

MODULE 16: Assessing the Postpartum Client

The postpartum assessment process is nearly identical to prenatal, but adds in one additional assessment -- the **Diastasis Recti (DR) check**. Learn how to check for DR in a manner that improves your testing accuracy and gives you a clearer understanding of your client's core integrity.

MODULE 17: Postpartum Program Design

Finally, just as in prenatal, learn how to design postpartum training programs for clients of all stages, fitness levels, and starting points. Since there are many similarities to prenatal, we will focus on the specific differences with postpartum, and conclude with case study practice.

ProNatal Certified Opportunity

In addition to everything we just covered that is included in your course, we also offer the *additional* opportunity to receive further resources, support, and marketing promotion to help you and your business GROW by joining the **ProNatal Certified Network (PCN)**. The PCN membership is \$150 per year (\$100 for your first year when bundled with your course purchase) and includes the following benefits (*#1 – 3 require meeting the three criteria outlined in the following section*).

Featured Endorsement on ProNatal “Find a Coach” Page

The #1 traffic driver to the ProNatal Fitness® homepage is clients searching for a prenatal or postpartum personal trainer. We direct all of this traffic to our [Find a Coach](#) page where clients can search for a ProNatal Certified Coach near them. If a client clicks on your profile, it opens up a [full-page layout](#) with your unique URL, links to your website and social media accounts, and all the real estate you need to market yourself and your credentials.

ProNatal Certified Badge

In addition to your website feature, you also receive a ProNatal Certified Badge that you can place on your website and marketing materials, you’ll receive print and online logo files with different color options.



Marketing Promotion

We love promoting our ProNatal Certified Coaches on social media. We offer several ways to partner – including collaborations, reposting and crediting your content, and much more.

Exercise Library + Workout Builder

While your course includes over 130 video exercises, your PCN membership gives you access to our *full* library with many more exercises and the ability to create workouts using our filtering criteria. Save your workouts and print or send them to your clients. You can also add your own exercises to this library that only you can see.

Private Support Network

No matter how much information you learn in your course, when working with the pre & postnatal population, questions will ALWAYS come up. That’s why we offer a private PCN Facebook Group where you can get answers to your questions and support from our team, and your fellow coaches, at any point.

Monthly Webinars and Q&As

To help you consistently learn and grow as a pre & postnatal coach, we have monthly live sessions – alternating between webinar presentations (from our team and outside experts) and Q&As where we work through the specific questions and challenges you and your fellow coaches might be facing.

Video Content Library

As a PCN member, you have access to a video content library with education on a variety of topics. This library includes all historical webinars and video clips of specific questions answered. Search topics by category or type your query into the search bar to find the topic you’re looking for.

Access to all Course Updates

We update this course every 1-2 years to reflect new research and participant feedback. As a PCN member, you will always have access to the latest course materials – including a summary of what changed from the previous version.

ProNatal Certified Criteria

Anyone can join the ProNatal Certified Network by enrolling in the **ProNatal Certified Package** at checkout. This gives you \$50 off your first year in PCN. Your membership renews annually at \$150 per year, but you can always set it to not auto-renew.

To earn the ProNatal Certified Coach website endorsement and badge, you must also meet the following two criteria:

1. Pass the exam at the end of the course.
2. Hold at least ONE of the following:
 - ✓ Current nationally accredited Personal Training Certification
 - ✓ Current nationally accredited Comprehensive Pilates Certification
 - ✓ Current Registered Yoga Teacher Certification (minimum 200-hr)
 - ✓ An Undergraduate or Graduate degree in Exercise Science or a related field.

If you do not hold one of these qualifications, you can still purchase the ProNatal Certified Package and receive all the other resources that come with the membership except the website endorsement and badge.

Course Developers

Carolyn Appel, ProNatal Fitness® Chief Content Officer

With a background in competitive tennis, Carolyn has built a career on her passion for fitness and athletics over her two decades in the fitness industry. She received her master's degree in Motor Learning and Control from Columbia University and continues to spread the message about the importance of the teaching and learning process in client skill development when presenting at national and regional conferences for IDEAFIT, NSCA, ACSM, and fitness facilities big and small. As a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) through the NSCA, Carolyn spent several years on the faculty of the Equinox Fitness Training Institute and used to consider teaching her number one joy, until having her son, who shot to the top of the rankings in 2015.

Brittany Citron, ProNatal Fitness® Founder and Chief Executive Officer

After nearly 12 years in the corporate world, Brittany Citron took her career in an entirely different direction after an eye-opening experience during her first pregnancy alerted her to the critical need for better education and resources to support people during the pregnancy and postpartum period. Brittany launched ProNatal Fitness® in 2015 – recruiting a team of experts to bring her vision of offering the Gold Standard in pre and postnatal resources and education to life. Brittany holds a BBA from the University of Michigan, a Personal Training Certification from the National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM), a Group Fitness Certification from the American Council on Exercise (ACE), and several pre and postnatal specializations, including Program Design, Corrective Exercise, and Diastasis and Pelvic Floor rehabilitation. In her role in creating ProNatal Fitness® courses, Brittany brings her years of corporate experience presenting complex information in a simple and systematic way so that the listener truly comprehends the information presented.

Course Contributors

[Dr. Mukta Chauhan DPT, OCS, WCS](#)

Dr. Mukta Chauhan holds a double board certification in orthopedics & women's health. After completing her doctorate in physical therapy, she began an advanced training program in manual therapy at the renowned institute of physical art (IPA). She worked in the field of orthopedic PT for a few years before getting advanced training in pelvic health. Because of this dual training, Dr. Mukta understands the delicate interplay between neurophysiology, biomechanics, musculoskeletal, fascial and organ systems and their combined contribution to a person's overall wellbeing. She is an active member of the International Society for Studies of Women's Sexual Health (ISSWSH) and the International Pelvic Pain Society (IPPS), and she regularly participates in community education to raise pelvic health awareness.

[Dr. Sneha Gazi, PT, DPT](#)

Dr. Sneha Gazi is the owner of Sneha Physical Therapy, an in-home and telehealth physical therapy practice in New York, New Jersey, and Maryland. She holds a Doctorate in Physical Therapy from Columbia University and specializes in pelvic floor physical therapy. She treats patients holistically and particularly loves working with pregnancy-related issues such as incontinence, back pain, and pelvic pain. Her podcast, *Fit as a Fiddle*, provides weekly health and wellness tips to her community of mindful movers. She is the founder and Executive Director of a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, Physical Therapy International Foundation, that brings free PT services globally to underserved populations while teaching students in PT doctoral programs across the United States.

[Lindsey Vestal, MS, OTR/L](#)

Lindsey Vestal is a pelvic floor occupational therapist, and the founder of The Functional Pelvis, the first "in-home" pelvic health practice in New York City run by an Occupational Therapist. She is a mother of two who has dedicated her career to empowering people to find relief from pelvic floor complications without resorting to invasive surgeries or prescription drugs. She has helped thousands of people overcome chronic pelvic health challenges and has been featured in *The New York Times*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Motherly*, and more.

[Ashley Brichter, CCCE, CLC](#)

Ashley Brichter is the founder of Birthsmarter, a company that provides relevant and inclusive education for new and expecting parents. She is also a Certified Cooperative Childbirth Educator through CEA/MNY, a DONA trained Birth and Postpartum Doula, Certified Lactation Counselor, and mother of two. Ashley is also trained in Comforting Touch for Labor, Rebozo Techniques for Childbirth, Dream Birth Imagery, Spinning Babies, Prenatal Yoga, and Pelvic Health.

[Nicole Dietrich, LMSW](#)

Nicole Dietrich is a psychotherapist in private practice specializing in women's reproductive psychology. She received her specialty training and research under a nationally recognized reproductive psychiatrist and has advanced training in maternal mental health from Seleni Institute. Nicole has additional clinical training in psychodynamic psychotherapy from the William Alanson White Institute and in family therapy from the Ackerman Institute for the Family. She received her MSW from NYU and her BS in Management Information Systems from Virginia Tech.

[Allison Beck, LCSW](#)

Allison is a psychotherapist in private practice, specializing in reproductive psychology, parenting and life stage transitions. Allison holds certifications in Maternal Mental Health from the Seleni Institute and has advanced training in Perinatal Mental Health with Postpartum Support International. Allison is an active member of the Hudson Valley Birth Network and has served as an advisor and written contributor on perinatal mental health for various professional service providers and organizations. A graduate of Cornell University and NYU, Allison has been supporting women and families in the NYC metro area for over a decade.