

NASM CPT Cheat Sheet 2026

The night-before summary, built like the exam.

100 Questions	2h Time limit	70 (scaled score) Passing score
\$599 Exam fee	National Academy of Sp... Governing body	

The numbers to remember

- 120 total questions — 100 scored, 20 unscored pretest items you can't identify.
- 2-hour time limit.
- Passing score: scaled 70 or higher (not a raw percentage).
- Exam-only fee: \$599 (excludes prep materials).
- Purchase window: 180 days to sit for the exam after buying.
- Proctored by PSI.
- Rescore requests: within 30 days of your exam date.
- Cancel/reschedule: up to 24 hours before your appointment.
- Retest waits: 1 week (1st fail) -> 30 days (2nd fail) -> 1 year (3rd+ fail).
- Certification valid 2 years; renewal needs 2.0 CEUs (~20 hours), including 0.1 CEU from CPR/AED.

Content domains and weights

- Domain 1 — Basic and Applied Sciences and Nutritional Concepts: 15%
- Domain 2 — Client Relations and Behavioral Coaching: 15%
- Domain 3 — Assessment: 16%
- Domain 4 — Program Design: 20%
- Domain 5 — Exercise Technique and Training Instruction: 24% (largest domain)
- Domain 6 — Professional Development and Responsibility: 10%

High-yield review areas

- Program Design + Exercise Technique together carry nearly half the exam — prioritize movement mechanics, exercise selection, and progression/regression logic.
- Assessment findings feed directly into program design; review them as a connected pair, not isolated topics.
- Basic science and nutrition concepts underpin terminology used across every other domain — don't skip the fundamentals even though the weight is modest.
- Professional development content is lower-weight but usually fast to review since it covers scope of practice and conduct rather than dense technical detail.

Top traps

- Assuming the passing score is a raw percentage — it's a scaled score of 70, so don't try to count how many you can miss.
- Ignoring the 20 unscored pretest questions and assuming you can spot which items don't count — you can't, so treat all 120 as real.
- Ordering CPR/AED certification too late — it's required both to sit for the exam and to show at check-in alongside your photo ID.

- Waiting until the last days of your 180-day purchase window to schedule, leaving no cushion if a rebooking is needed.
- Studying domains as isolated silos instead of practicing mixed-domain questions, when the real exam interleaves all six domains throughout.

Official sources

- National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) — NASM Candidate Handbook — Certified Personal Trainer (CPT) (Updated 9/2025):
<https://support.nasm.org/hubfs/NASM%20Website/Web%20Resources/NASM%20Candidate%20Handbook%20.pdf>
- National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) — Become a NASM Certified Personal Trainer | Start Your Fitness Career:
<https://www.nasm.org/certified-personal-trainer>
- National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) — NASM Certified Personal Trainer Exam Details | NCCA Accredited:
<https://www.nasm.org/certified-personal-trainer-exam-info>

Free practice questions for this exam: www.everyexamprep.com/exams/nasm-cpt/practice-test